Following plans to water down FOI by making information less freely available, the UK government now seems to be making a U-turn.

The government had proposed to allow public authorities to add more activities (such as reading documents and consulting with other staff) to the list of items that are counted in the reckoning for charging—anything over £600 for central government and £450 for local authorities will not be disclosed.

But there is now to be a further opportunity to comment on the proposals.

According to the official statement, the government is issuing a supplementary paper to consult on the principle of amending the 2004 Freedom of Information Fees Regulations, specifically on whether they should be amended to deal with requests that impose a disproportionate burden on public authority resources.

The supplementary paper is aimed at members of the public, public authorities, the media and campaign groups with an interest in the proposed changes.

Information Rights Minister Baroness Ashton said, “The Freedom of Information Act has benefited the public enormously. We must continue to build on its success.

“It is entirely right a reasonable amount of money and time is spent dealing with requests for information. But public money is limited and it is the Government’s

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