

Department of Energy & Climate Change
3 Whitehall Place,
London SW1A 2AW
www.decc.gov.uk

Your ref:
Our ref: FOI Request 12/0619

April 2012

Re : REQUEST FOR MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD BETWEEN GREG BARKER AND ENERGY SUPPLIERS ON 1 FEBRUARY 2012.

Thank you for your email of 17 April 2012 where you requested copies of the minutes of the meeting held between the Minister of State, Greg Barker, and representatives of the energy supply industry on 1 February 2012.

As you will be aware from the written answer tabled to your Parliamentary Question 2010/5500/5503/5502, the Minister of State (Greg Barker) has decided to withhold this information on the grounds that release would prejudice the commercial interests of the companies involved.

The documents requested include information that is exempt from disclosure by virtue of Section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act. This provides that information may be exempt information, again subject to the public interest test, because its release would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of the companies concerned.

While there is a general public interest in the disclosure of information – as greater transparency makes Government more accountable – there are public interest considerations in favour of withholding the information in order to ensure that commercial confidentiality is not prejudiced or undermined by disclosure of information which is not common knowledge, as this could adversely impact on future business discussions. We are satisfied that disclosure of this information could prejudice future discussions with the companies concerned and adversely affect the ability of the UK Government to undertake detailed policy discussions with commercial stakeholders in this case. It is also a matter of public interest that the commercial interests of external businesses should not be damaged or undermined by disclosure of information which is not common knowledge and which could adversely impact

on their ability to compete in overseas markets. We therefore consider the balance of the public interest to lie in withholding the information we hold.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be addressed to: Tracy Vegro, Director, Green Deal, Department of Energy and Climate Change, 3 Whitehall Place, London SW1A 2AW.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF