



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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www.defra.gov.uk

Our ref: RFI 5696
Date: 20 August 2013

Dear

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: Defra budget allocation decisions

Thank you for your request for information on how Defra decides how to allocate its annual budget to different priorities/programmes, which we received on 31 July 2013. We are handling your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). In keeping with the spirit and effect of the FOIA all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless exempt.

The Secretary of State for Defra has set out four clear priorities for the Department. These are growing the rural economy, improving the environment and safeguarding plant and animal health. Running through all four of these priorities is the Government's commitment to boosting growth.

Defra's business planning process requires each business area to set out a clear, consistent picture of what will be done over a given period, the resources required and how these are expected to deliver the department's priorities. A finance panel made up of senior officials, including the Director General for policy delivery and the Finance Director, considers the department's strategy and priorities in setting indicative allocations from the Departmental Expenditure Limit for each business area at the start of the annual business planning process. The panel will then review plans before recommending to Ministers how final budgets should be allocated to Directors.

Defra's Accounting Officer (our Permanent Secretary) then delegates to Defra Directors and the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of the Department's Executive Agencies and Executive Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) the authority to commit resources within these predefined limits, together with the responsibility for proper stewardship of



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these resources and compliance with the requirements of HM Treasury's *Managing Public Money*.

During the course of the year the Finance Panel will also scrutinize the forecast expenditure position and performance against business plans; challenge any business cases for new funding as required (ahead of a recommendation to Ministers) and approve revised budgets where warranted; and consider material matters of a financial or commercial nature as required.

Further details on these processes are set in the following publications:

- Defra's Business Plan for 2012-15 sets out the actions we will undertake to deliver our priorities along with summary financial and performance management information.

<http://transparency.number10.gov.uk/business-plan/10>

- The Annual Report and Accounts records the department's success in delivering its priorities and in managing its resources. The Accounting Officer's Accountability Systems Statement summarises the systems in place to ensure that departmental resources are spent in a manner which ensures regularity, propriety and value for money.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defra-annual-report-and-accounts-2012-to-2013>

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. I also attach an annex giving contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received.

Yours sincerely,

David Collins

Email : david.collins3@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Annex A

Complaints

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request you may make a complaint or appeal against our decision within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to Mike Kaye, Head of Information Standards, Area 1B, Ergon House, Horseferry Road, London, SW1P 2AL (email: requestforinfo@defra.gsi.gov.uk) and he will arrange for an internal review of your case. Details of Defra's complaints procedure are on our [website](#).

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. Please note that generally the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted Defra's own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF