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for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

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RF16202

21 January 2014

Dear

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: Communication with Centrica**

Thank you for your request for information about communication between Defra and the energy company Centrica, which we received on 20 January. We have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

We want to be as open as possible in answering requests. The FOIA itself also requires us to help people obtain the information they are looking for. Unfortunately, your request is very broad and could cover an enormous amount of information. Gathering it together would therefore involve a significant cost and diversion of resources from the Department's other work.

Section 12(1) of the FOIA allows us to refuse a request for information if we estimate that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit, which currently stands at £600. On the basis of our estimates, we consider that the cost would exceed this limit and, as such, we are refusing your request.

However, if you were to make a new request for a narrower category of information, it may be that we could comply with that request within the appropriate limit, although I cannot guarantee that this will be the case.

The best way we can help you is to ask you to consider narrowing down your request to focus more clearly on the precise information you are seeking. You could, for example:

- if you specified a time period in your request, consider reducing it (e.g. if you requested information on a particular topic from the last 10 years, would you be content with information from the last 5 years?);
- explain more fully and precisely the kind of information you are looking for, such
- as the request covers the work of a number of business areas, please consider asking for information on specific business areas such as farming or climate change in order to cut down the scope of the request and make the response simpler to coordinate;

- ask us to omit information that falls within the scope of your request but would add nothing to your understanding of the matter, e.g. housekeeping emails, such as meeting requests and acknowledgements; draft documents, where the finalized document also falls within the scope of the request; and personal information, such as names and email addresses of junior staff and third parties, etc; or
- browse through the material that has already been made publicly available by Defra to see if this would help you identify more precise questions that we might be able to answer at less cost.

Please note that if you modify your request, we will handle it as a new request and so the 20-working-day deadline for responding to requests would then commence from the date that we receive the modified request.

I attach an annex giving contact details should you be unhappy with the service that you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter please contact me.

Yours

## **Annex**

### **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 under section 17(7) of the FOIA or under regulation 18 of the EIRs, as applicable, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to Mike Kaye, Head of Information Standards, Area 4D, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR (email: [requestforinfo@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto: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, section 50 of the FOIA and regulation 18 of the EIRs gives you 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