



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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Your ref:
Our ref: RFI 6317
Date: 27 February 2014

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: SOMERSET DRAINAGE BOARDS CONSORTIUM (SDBC)

Thank you for your request for information about Defra ministers meeting with SDBC, which we received on 10 February 2014. As you know we have handled your request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs).

The EIRs apply to requests for environmental information, which is a broad category of information defined in regulation 2 of the EIRs. Public authorities are required to handle requests for environmental information under the EIRs. They give similar access rights to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Please find the information you requested:

Richard Benyon, the former Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Defra, visited the Somerset Levels on 23 April 2012 and 18-19 April 2013, where he met with a range of local stakeholders including representatives of the Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium. Our records show that Richard Benyon also held a meeting on 8 November 2012 in London with some Somerset farmers, which Peter Maltby, Chair of the Somerset Drainage Boards, also attended.

David Heath, former Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Defra, was present at the two visits Richard Benyon undertook in April 2012 and April 2013. He may also have met with representatives of the Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium in his MP constituency role for Somerton and Frome during 2012/13 but we do not hold any information on this.

There were no minutes or notes taken of those Ministerial meetings and we do not hold any copies of correspondence between Defra officials or the Minister and SDBC from that time.

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the FOIA , and in keeping with the government's Transparency Agenda, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless exempt. Therefore, the information released to you will now be published on www.gov.uk together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context. Please note that this will not include your personal data.

I attach Annex A, which explains the copyright that applies to the information being released to you.

I also attach Annex B giving contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact us at:
fmpso@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

Flood Management Team