



Department
of Energy &
Climate Change

Department of Energy & Climate Change

3 Whitehall Place,
London SW1A 2AW
www.decc.gov.uk

Redacted
Redacted

Our ref: FOI2014/18934

16 September 2014

Dear **Redacted**

Re: Environmental Information Regulations

Thank you for your email of 20 August in which you requested the following:

“Please provide all information/documents generated in or around meetings and correspondence between one of the following ministers/civil servants from DECC:

*Ed Davey MP
Gregory Baker MP
Mathew Hancock MP
Michael Fallon MP
Amber Rudd MP
Baroness Verma
Stephen Lovegrave (Permanent Secretary)
David MacKay (Chief Scientific Advisor)
Katrina Williams (Director General International, Science and Resilience Group)
Angie Ridgwell (Director General of Finance and Corporate Services Group)
Clive Maxwell (Director General, Consumers and Households Group)
Simon Virley (Director General, Markets and Infrastructure Group)*

and representatives from any of the following oil and gas companies:

*Igas,
Island oil and gas,
Star energy
Dart
GP energy
Greenpark*



Department
of Energy &
Climate Change

*Alkane
Regents park
Severn star
Cuadrilla
Bolney resources
Bowland resources
Elswick resources
Tanglewood resources
Viking petroleum
Dorset exploration
Egdon resources
Connaught Oil and Gas
Rathlin energy
Uk Onshore gas ltd
UK methane ltd
Eden
Adamo
Coastal oil and gas
Celtique
Megellen
Perenco
Cluff natural resources*

which relate to i) planning permission regarding shale gas sites, ii) planning guidance regarding shale gas sites and iii) access rights regarding shale gas sites;

I am look for documents from 1st January 2014 to date.”

We have considered your request in accordance with the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 ('the EIRs') as some of the information you have sought disclosure of, may in our view, fall within the definition of 'environmental information' as stated in the EIRs. However to the extent that any of the information requested is not environmental, we have also considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). Accordingly, your request has been dealt with under the terms of the EIRs and the FOIA.

The Department wishes to be as open as possible in answering requests, and to help people obtain the information they are looking for. Unfortunately in this case, from our preliminary assessment, it is clear that to determine whether the Department holds the information you have requested and to locate, retrieve and extract the information would require a substantial volume of work.

After careful examination of your request under the EIRs, we have determined that Regulation 12(4)(b) would apply. Regulation 12(4)(b) states that a public authority may refuse to disclose information to the extent that the request for information is manifestly unreasonable.

In applying the exception, we have considered the public interest test in respect of your request. We have applied a presumption in favour of disclosure as



Department of Energy & Climate Change

required by Regulation 12(2). We acknowledge that there may be public interest in the information you have requested. Greater transparency makes the government more accountable to the electorate and increases trust and also enables the public contribution to policy making to become more effective.

Your request is broad and voluminous. Gathering the information you requested is likely to involve a significant cost and diversion of resources from the teams concerned and the Department's other work. In order to provide you with the information on the scale that you have requested above would require a search of all the records, computer drives and email accounts of any of those ministers, ex ministers, the Permanent Secretary, senior civil servants and their private office staff and, Special Advisors including their support staff for the period mentioned in your request. Therefore, we will not process your request as currently drafted at this stage.

To the extent that any information held may not be environmental, your request is also refused in accordance with Section 12 of the FOIA. From our preliminary assessment, we estimate that complying with your request would exceed the cost limit of £600 provided under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act. This represents the estimated cost of spending 3.5 working days: (i) determining whether the department holds the information, and (ii) locating, retrieving and extracting the information. The Act provides that we are not obliged to comply with requests where the estimated cost of complying would exceed this limit.

Given the nature of your request you may wish to refine it by narrowing its scope and being more specific concerning the precise nature of the information you wish to obtain. You could, for example focus on information relating to correspondence or meetings relating to a specific subject, with a particular person or fewer number of companies and reduce the time period that you wish to obtain information for.

You may wish to be aware that details of DECC Ministers and the Permanent Secretary's meetings with external organisations are published on a quarterly basis on the www.gov.uk website at the following link:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?departments%5B%5D=department-of-energy-climate-change&publication_type=transparency-data

Information covering the period of the first quarter of 2014 (January – March) is being compiled and checked and will be published in due course.

Appeals procedure

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 the Information Rights Unit (foi@decc.gsi.gov.uk).



Department
of Energy &
Climate Change

Information Rights Unit (DECC Shared Service)
Department for Business, Innovation & Skills
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

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.

Yours sincerely,

Redacted
Redacted