



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

T: 08459 33 55 77
helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/defra

Your ref: [REDACTED]
Our ref: RFI 5554
Date: 1 August 2014

Dear

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: EXTERNAL LEGAL ADVICE IN 2012

Thank you for your request for information about external legal advice the department sought in 2012, which we received on 7 June 2013. We have handled your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

You asked:

Please provide details of all external legal advice (i.e. from non Treasury Solicitors) the department sought in 2012, and (a) how much it cost, (b) for what reason it was sought and (c) from whom it was received.

In working through the response to an FOI submitted last month, your reference [REDACTED] our reference RFI 6690, we have realised that we inadvertently responded incorrectly to this FOI.

The question asked for spend on external legal advice in 2012, and the response we provided was spend of £94,570.70 on legal services. This value should have been £814,477.40 as the payments for legal services and related costs in 2012. The reason for the difference is because a subset of data was inadvertently excluded from the data collection exercise.

Our central finance records show that the department spent £814,477.40 on legal services and related costs in 2012 excluding services from the Treasury Solicitors Department and services obtained by the Treasury Solicitors Department in relation to Defra matters. The reason for procuring these services is recorded as asset recovery under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, matters relating to the Agricultural Wages Board for England & Wales, charity law matters, advice and expertise on commercial structures, securitisation, project finance, incentives, property, state aid and procurement, drafting and negotiating agreements, lease exit matters, cautioning offenders and prosecutions advice, and legal



expenses including subscriptions to legal societies.

Suppliers are recorded on our finance systems as Pinsent Masons, Keystone Law, Simpkins Edwards LLP, Thompsons Solicitors, Ross Owen Solicitors, Cumberland Ellis, Eversheds LLP, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer (via Treasury Solicitors), Stone King (via Treasury Solicitors), Anthony Collins Solicitors LLP, Clive Lewis QC, James Maurici (via Treasury Solicitors), Andrew Marshall, Mark Watson, Brendan McGurk, Wendy Outhwaite, Hannah Willcocks, Thomas Payne, Martin Lanchester, Nigel Hamilton, Martin Downs, Jacqueline Duff LLB, and Barbara Webster .

Payments above £25,000 are published on www.data.gov.uk under the government transparency agenda.

The data does not include advice from Treasury Solicitors and Parliamentary Counsel. Defra cannot distinguish between payments relating to fees incurred for work done for Executive Agencies as opposed to the Core Department. Defra do not hold data on any payments made to legal firms direct by Executive Agencies.

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 me.

Yours sincerely,

Jon Lowi
Defra Finance

Annex A Copyright

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Annex B

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) 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