



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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Our ref: RFI 6340
Date: 25 March 2014

Dear [redacted]

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: NOTES OF MEETINGS BETWEEN RICHARD BENYON AND THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FISHERMEN'S ORGANISATIONS TO DISCUSS MCZs

Thank you for your request for information about all the notes and minutes from meetings between Fisheries Minister Richard Benyon and the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations to discuss Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) since July 2012, which we received on 26 Feb 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).

I confirm that Richard Benyon has not met with representatives from the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO) to specifically discuss MCZs since 2012. Notes of informal discussions are not routinely held, however I enclose an extract of an informal note of a discussion relating to MCZs, which took place at the NFFO AGM on 2 July 2013.

"As part of a lengthy statement about how little fishing impacted on the marine environment (comparing with agriculture) [redacted] expressed concern about how our approach to EMS, especially the lack of clarity over the precise management measures envisaged. [redacted] hoped there was an opportunity to learn lessons here as we moved ahead with MCZs."

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the EIRs, 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

[redacted]

T: [redacted]
E: [redacted]

Annex A

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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