



Department
of Energy &
Climate Change

Department of Energy & Climate Change
3 Whitehall Place,
London SW1A 2AW
www.decc.gov.uk

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Our ref: FOI 14/ 0639

16 May 2014

Dear **Redacted**

Re: Environmental Information Regulations Request

Thank you for your email of 15 April in which you asked for the following:

"1) I am seeking information on meetings between Baroness Verma and representatives of the Global Warming Policy Foundation, and those publicly associated with the charity. This would include:

- *Dr Benny Peiser*
- *Lord Lawson*
- *Lord Donoghue*
- *Lord Fellowes*
- *Rt Reverend Peter Fisher*
- *Sir Martin Jacomb*
- *Baroness Nicholson*
- *Sir James Spooner*
- *Lord Turnbull*

I am requesting information on meetings in the period beginning 01/01/2014 and continuing up to the day this request is filed.

For any meeting please provide:

- I. Time*
- II. Place*
- III. Attendee list (including name (where disclose-able under requirements of DPA) and job title of each attendee)*

Please also provide any documentation in relation to any meetings, including:

- I. Any meeting minutes*



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- II. *Correspondence in relation to meetings*
- III. *Meeting readouts*
- IV. *Briefing notes*
- V. *Or other meeting memoranda*

2) *I am also seeking information about correspondence between Baroness Verma, her special advisors, and representatives of the GWPF.*

I am requesting correspondence generated in the period beginning 01/01/2014 and continuing up the date this request is filed.

Please ensure that your search for correspondence includes:

- I. *Email correspondence (including attachments)*
- II. *Memos*
- III. *Reports*
- IV. *Briefing documents or the equivalent*
- V. *Letters*
- VI. *Telephone records and any notes made during and after telephone calls*
- VII. *Correspondence includes any other type of correspondence frequently used by the department, including text messages and private emails*
- VIII. *Correspondence that is stored on cloud services such as Dropbox"*

Your request has been considered under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 on the basis that the information you have sought disclosure of, does in our view, fall within the definition of 'environmental information' as stated in the EIRs.

I can confirm that Baroness Verma met with Lord Donoughue on the 9, January 2014, in the Department, to discuss climate change. David MacKay, DECC's Chief Scientific Adviser was also present at the meeting. The names of other attendees are withheld in accordance with the exception in Regulations 12(3) and 13(1) of the EIRs.

Other information such as the briefing note which was prepared prior to the meeting, the minutes of the meeting, and a related memo and email are all withheld in accordance with the exception in Regulation 12(4)(e) and Regulation 12(3) or Regulation 13(1) of the EIRs.

I can also confirm that Baroness Verma met with Lord Donoughue on the 10, January 2014, at the House of Lords. Other information related to this meeting is withheld in accordance with the exception in Regulation 12(4)(e) and Regulation 12(3) or Regulation 13(1) of the EIRs.

These exceptions are subject to the public interest test. The key public interest considerations we have taken into account are set out below. In considering the public interest we have applied a presumption in favour of disclosure as required by regulation 12(2) of the EIRs.



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Regulation 12(4)(e) provides an exception to the disclosure of internal communications. Briefing documents, minutes of meetings and letters prepared by officials in the Department for ministers and senior officials, which we hold within the scope of this request take the form of internal communications and therefore exception 12(4)(e) applies to them.

We appreciate that there is a public interest in disclosing internal communications, as this enables the public to assess the quality of policy formulation, advice and guidance, and provides transparency in the decision making process making Government more accountable.

However, releasing internal communications would inhibit the ability of officials to provide Ministers and senior officials with free and frank advice and keep free and frank records of discussions between officials if there was a possibility that this advice could be disclosed at a later date. This would have a detrimental effect on the briefing process, leading civil servants to be less candid in their views. It would also affect policy development, as it would prove difficult in taking account of the views expressed by others if records were not kept. Given the live nature of the communications within the scope of the request, such outcomes would be likely to prejudice the conduct of public affairs, as this could result in less well-informed Ministers and senior officials.

Having considered the public interest, the Department has taken the decision to withhold the information requested.

Regulations 12(3) and 13(1) excepts information to the extent that the information requested includes personal data of which the applicant is not the data subject. Regulation 13(1) provides an absolute exception for personal data which then falls to be dealt with under the Data Protection Act 1998. Personal data of third parties can only be disclosed in accordance with the data protection principles. In particular, the first data protection principle requires that disclosure must be fair and lawful and must comply with one of the conditions in Schedule 2 of the Data Protection Act. We do not think that it is fair to release the names of junior members of staff or third parties and do not think that any of the relevant conditions apply.

Following the search of our electronic and paper records I have also established that we do not hold any other information, within scope of your request, such as which you have requested above and again listed as follows:

- *Meetings with Dr Benny Peiser, Lord Lawson, Lord Fellowes, Rt Reverend Peter Fisher, Sir Martin Jacomb, Baroness Nicholson, Sir James Spooner or Lord Turnbull*
- *correspondence between Baroness Verma, her special advisors, and representatives of the GWPF*



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- *telephone records and any notes made during and after telephone calls, correspondence includes any other type of correspondence frequently used by the department, including text messages and private emails*
- *correspondence that is stored on cloud services such as Dropbox.*

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 40 working days 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).

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,

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