

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

17 Smith Square,
London,
SW1P 3JR

Telephone 08459 33 55 77

Website www.defra.gov.uk



Our ref: RFI4789

13th June 2012

Dear Mr Birkett

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: Air Quality Forecasting and Smog Alerts

Thank you for your request for information about the routine and non-routine services Defra has in place or plans for London and elsewhere relating to forecasting air quality and/or issuing smog alerts which we received on 13th May 2012. This request has been handled under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs).

You asked for information held by Defra since January 2011 relating to forecasting air quality and issuing smog alerts in particular during smog episodes and/or the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

You also asked for information with respect to what if any criteria or processes Defra has used in 2012 or plans to use in 2012 before issuing smog or other air pollution alerts or advising others to do so or restrict them from doing so.

I enclose copies of the information that falls within this request. I also attach a briefing note on air quality forecasting and the Department's policy on smog alerts for your information.

We have decided that the names of junior officials and person from outside Defra should be withheld under regulations 12(3) and 13(1) (third party personal data) of the EIRs, as the information constitutes personal data relating to third parties. Regulations 12(3) and 13(1) of the EIRs provide that personal data relating to third parties is exempt information if disclosure would breach the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA). These names have therefore been redacted from the attached documents.

We consider that disclosure of this information is likely to breach the first data protection principle in Schedule 1 to the DPA, which relates to the fair and lawful processing of personal data, in three ways. First, disclosure would not constitute 'fair' processing of the personal data, second, disclosure would not satisfy any of the conditions for data processing set out in Schedule 2 to the DPA and, third, the disclosure of the information consisting of sensitive personal data would not satisfy any of the conditions for data processing set out in Schedule 3 to the DPA. Consequently, we have concluded that this information is exempt from disclosure under regulation 12(3) and 13(1) of the EIRs.



In keeping with the spirit and effect of the EIRs, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless exempt. Therefore, the information released to you may now be published on our website together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context.

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,

A small, dark, irregular redacted area, likely covering a signature or name.A larger, dark, irregular redacted area, likely covering a signature or name.

Annex A

Copyright

The information supplied to you continues to be protected by copyright. You are free to use it for your own purposes, including for private study and non-commercial research, and for any other purpose authorised by an exception in current copyright law. Documents (except photographs or logos) can be also used in the UK without requiring permission for the purposes of news reporting. Any other re-use, for example commercial publication, would require the permission of the copyright holder.

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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 within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to Brendan Walsh, Head of Defra's Information Rights Team at Area1B, Ergon House, Horseferry Road, London, SW1P 2AL, (email: informationrights@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, you have 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