

ANNEX A

Public Interest Test – EIR

Reference Number – DAERA 24 160

Requested Information being withheld.

The draft survey report in relation to Spelga Dam at the start of 2023 looking into the number of pike in the dam?

Exemption / Exception under consideration

Regulation 12(4)(e)—This is a draft report for internal use by the Department to formulate and derive policy and strategy on the issue of pike in Spelga Reservoir.

Reasons why the public interest would favour disclosure:

- Regulation 12(2) requires DAERA to apply a presumption in favour of disclosure.
- DAERA is committed to conducting its business in a manner that is as open and transparent as possible.
- DAERA is dedicated to improving public awareness and comprehension of environmental issues.

Reasons why the public interest would favour withholding:

- This document has only just been received by the Department, and due to other developing issues, Senior Management have not yet had the opportunity to meet and discuss the findings of the report.
- This document is a draft report, and policy development is still being completed; it is in draft format, and management may seek further supplementary reports to substantiate and confirm future policies and strategies on this issue.
- The Department requires safe, private space to develop, enhance and update existing and future policy.
- DAERA's internal deliberation and decision-making processes must be protected. Disclosure of the draft report has the potential to undermine confidence in policy formulation and impact effective communications between DAERA officials and the DAERA Minister.

- The information requested is not in the public domain, and considerable weight must be given to the continued privacy of DAERA's draft reports when formulating policy to ensure it is effective and not adversely influenced.
- The Department will consider releasing the document in the public domain when the policy and strategy for moving forward have been agreed upon.

Conclusion

The Department has decided that, on balance, the information requested should not be disclosed.

