

## **Public Interest Test – DAERA/26-303**

### **Relevant Requested Information**

*Copies of the methodology, protocol or guidance applied by NIEA officers when conducting (a) compliance inspections and (b) odour assessments at the site, including the criteria by reference to which “frequency or intensity” is judged to constitute or not to constitute a “significant breach” of licence conditions.*

### **Exception / Exception under consideration**

Regulation 12(4)(e) - internal communications

### **Reasons why the public interest would favour disclosure:**

- Regulation 12(2) establishes a presumption in favour of disclosure and the Department is committed to openness and transparency.
- There is a general public interest in understanding how the Department carries out its regulatory functions, including the development of internal approaches and processes.
- Disclosure can promote accountability by demonstrating that decisions are informed and subject to appropriate internal consideration.

### **Reasons why the public interest would favour maintaining the exception:**

- The information comprises internal communications, including training and procedural material for waste licensing officers.
- Officials require private space to discuss and develop internal processes.
- Disclosure could inhibit the free and frank exchange of views, affecting the quality of decision-making.
- Internal material may be misinterpreted if released, as it is not intended for external use.

### **Conclusion**

Having taken account of the presumption in favour of disclosure (Regulation 12(2)), on balance the public interest in maintaining the exception outweighs the public interest in disclosure in this instance, as the information relates to internal communications concerning training and procedures.



## **Waste Regulation**