Public Interest Test – EIR

Reference Number – DAERA/26-647

Requested Information

Information concerning environmental due diligence undertaken prior to the February 2026 SBRI Phase 2 funding award to Natural World Products Ltd in respect of its Glenside facility.

Exemption / Exception under consideration

Regulation 12(4)(e) – internal communications.

Reasons why the public interest would favour disclosure:

- Regulation 12(2) requires DAERA to apply a presumption in favour of disclosure and DAERA is committed to conducting its business in a manner that is as open and transparent as possible.
- Disclosure would lead to greater transparency and accountability.
- There is significant public interest in transparency around the expenditure of public money and environmental decision-making

Reasons why the public interest would favour withholding:

- Internal communications or discussions between officials are for internal department use only. The Department requires a safe space to develop ideas, debate live issues and reach decisions away from external interference and distraction.
- Chilling Effect: the disclosure of internal discussions inhibits free and frank discussions, and that the loss of frankness and candour damages the quality of advice, leading to poorer decision-making.
- The Department undertakes environmental checks and engages with regulatory bodies as part of its assessment processes. There is a public interest in ensuring that officials and consultees remain willing to share candid assessments and concerns. Disclosure of internal communications may discourage the same degree of openness in future exercises.

Conclusion

Following consideration of the Public Interest Test the Department has decided that on balance, the public interest in maintaining the exception outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

SULS Project Team
Green Growth and Innovation Division