

Reference Number: DAERA/26-698

**Environment, Marine and Fisheries
Group**



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Deapartment o'

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Natural Environment Policy Division (NEPD)
Environment, Marine and Fisheries Group
Clare House
303 Airport Road West
Belfast
BT3 9ED

28 September 2026

Dear [REDACTED],

Environmental Information Regulation 2004

I refer to your request for information received by the Department on 8th September 2026 that sought the following information:

Details of all records and communications (both physical and electronic) concerning a meeting held between Nicholas Ashley-Cooper, the 12th Earl of Shaftesbury, and Minister Muir. This would include, but is not restricted to:

1) Letters, email, electronic messenger and any other communications discussing this meeting, either in advance or following it. This would include any correspondence concerning the Minister's meeting 'request':

<https://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/officialreport/report.aspx?&eveDate=2026/09/07&docID=496564>

2) Minutes and any other records from the relevant meetings and engagements (virtual, hybrid and in-person).

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3) The time, date, venue and attendees of any such relevant meetings and engagements (virtual, hybrid and in-person).

4) Any presentation materials circulated or used at any such meetings and engagements.

5) Any briefing notes or documents shared or used at any such meetings and engagements.

I can advise that the Department has completed its search and can confirm that it holds some of the information you requested.

The Department has decided not to disclose the information you requested as it considers Regulation 12(4)(e) – internal communications to be engaged. In these instances, the Department is legislatively required to consider the public interest in disclosure. An associated Public Interest Test has been conducted and is attached for your information at **Annex A**.

If you require any clarification, believe that any part of your request has been overlooked, misunderstood or misinterpreted, please contact me in the first instance to see if it is a matter that can be resolved.

If you are unhappy with the manner in which your request for information has been handled or the decision to release/withhold information, you have the right to request a formal review by the Department. If you wish to do so, please contact The Review Section either by e-mailing daera.informationmanager@daera-ni.gov.uk or by post at The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Data Protection & Information Management Branch, Floor 2, Jubilee House, 111 Ballykelly Road, Ballykelly, Limavady BT49 9HP, within two months from the date of this letter.

If after such an internal review you are still unhappy with the response, you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, CHESHIRE SK9 5AF, who will undertake an independent review of the Department's decision.

Yours sincerely,



Lough Neagh Delivery & Governance

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