

Public Interest Test – EIR

Reference Number – DAERA/26-697

Requested Information

Communications relating to the AERA Committee visit to Blakiston Houston Estates on 26 June 2025, and planning application LA05/2025/0400/F.

Exemption / Exception under consideration

Regulation 12(4)(a) – Parts 2, 3, 4, and 5 – the information sought is not held.

Regulation 12(4)(b) – Parts 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 – the request for information is manifestly unreasonable.

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 interest among the public in matters concerning the environment.

Reasons why the public interest would favour withholding:

- In relation to parts 2, 3, 4, and 5, the Department does not hold the requested information.
- In relation to parts 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10, the information sought would require a department-wide trawl and spans a period of approximately 16 months. It would require extensive searches across multiple business areas, record systems and email accounts to identify potentially relevant information. Any records identified would then need to be reviewed individually to establish whether they fall within the scope of the request and whether any exceptions apply.
- There is a strong public interest in ensuring that public authorities are able to carry out their statutory functions effectively and make efficient use of public resources.
- Complying with these parts of the request would require a significant commitment of staff time and resources, diverting officials from their core duties and impacting on the Department's ability to carry out its day-to-day functions.

Conclusion

Following consideration of the Public Interest Test the Department has decided that the exceptions should be maintained.

SULS Project Team
Green Growth and Innovation Division