

Reference Number: DAERA/26-697
Request Details:
Communications relating to the AERA
Committee visit to Blakiston Houston
Estates on 26 June 2025, and planning
application LA05/2025/0400/F.



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

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department o'

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

**Climate Change, Science and
Innovation**
Green Growth and Innovation Division

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Green Growth Initiatives and Innovation
Clare House
303 Airport Road West
Belfast
BT3 9ED

E-mail: greengrowthdelivery@daera-ni.gov.uk

6 October 2026

Dear [REDACTED]

Environmental Information Regulation 2004

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

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

As explained in the information sheet enclosed with the acknowledgement letter, under certain conditions, the Department has the right to refuse a request for information.

In relation to part 1, the Department has identified a small amount of information within the scope of this part of your request, which is attached to the response email in PDF format.

Some of the information held constitutes personal data of which you are not the data subject. In these instances, the Department is required to consider if disclosure would breach the first Data Protection Principle, which states that processing must be lawful, fair and transparent. The Department has considered this element within the test attached at **Annex B** and has determined that no lawful basis for disclosure

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under EIR exists. Please bear in mind that any disclosure must be considered in terms of disclosure to the “world at large” and not just to you, the requester. Consequently, third party personal data falling within the scope of this request has been withheld.

In relation to parts 2, 3, 4, and 5, the Department has undertaken reasonable searches and does not hold any recorded information falling within the scope of this part of the request. Under Regulation 12(4)(a) the Department is therefore excepted from the duty to disclose the information on the grounds that the information sought is not held. It should be noted that the Department does not hold information regarding the AERA Committee or individual elected representatives.

In relation to Parts 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 of your request, the Department has concluded that Regulation 12(4)(b) of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 applies. This exception allows a request to be refused where it is manifestly unreasonable.

These parts of the request seek a large volume of information relating to BH Estates, planning application LA05/2025/0400/F, the proposed digestate management facility, the SULS Phase 2/Farm2Export project, political representatives and the AERA Committee over a period of approximately 16 months.

To establish what information is held, the Department would need to ask a number of business areas to search records held in the electronic filing system and relevant email accounts. This would include searching for correspondence, meeting records, briefing papers, project documentation and other records relating to the matters identified in the request.

Part 7 would also require the Department to review a wide range of project, contract and governance records to determine whether there was any discussion of the relationship between the SULS Phase 2/Farm2Export project and planning application LA05/2025/0400/F.

Any information identified would then need to be reviewed individually to determine whether it falls within the scope of the request and whether any exceptions apply. Given the breadth of the request and the volume of records likely to be captured, compliance would place a significant and unreasonable burden on the Department's resources and would divert staff from their core duties.

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 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

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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,

SULS Project Team
Green Growth and Innovation Division

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