

Malachy Clarke
[By Email: request-1093888-905b2a7c@whatdotheyknow.com]

Our ref: 202400401637
26 March 2024

Dear Mr Clarke

REQUEST UNDER THE ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2004 (EIRs)

Thank you for your request of 27 February 2023 under the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (EIRs).

Your request

You asked for:

“Please provide me with any documentation relevant to the following meetings between the Scottish Government and SSE, Equinor, Ian Wood and True North in 2022-2024.

I request copies of attendance, topics discussed and any agreed actions.

[Date / location / company / Minister / Where meeting was identified]

1) 07/10/2022, SNP Party Conference 2022 at The Event Complex Aberdeen (TECA), Meeting between SSE and Richard Lochhead MSP (Minister for Just Transition, Employment and Fair Work), Source: Lobbying Register

2) 10/10/2022, Unknown location, Meeting between SSE and Richard Lochhead MSP (Minister for Just Transition, Employment and Fair Work), Source: Ministerial Diaries

3) 28/10/2022, 112 Church Street, Inverness, Meeting between Equinor and Fergus Ewing MSP, Source: Lobbying Register

- 4) 03/11/2022, COP27, Blue Zone, Sharm El-Sheikh, Meeting between SSE and Liz Lloyd (Special Adviser), Source: Lobbying Register
- 5) 24/11/2022, Japan, South Korea, Meeting between SSE and Michael Matheson MSP (Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport), Source: Ministerial Diaries
- 6) 01/12/2022, Unknown location, Meeting between SSE and Ivan McKee MSP (Minister for Business, Trade, Tourism and Enterprise), Source: Ministerial Diaries
- 7) 16/12/2022, 7 Castle Street, Edinburgh, Meeting between SSE and Angus Robertson MSP (Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture), Source: Lobbying Register
- 8) 02/02/2023, Video conference, Meeting between SSE and Michael Matheson MSP (Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport), Source: Ministerial Diaries
- 9) 09/03/2023, Video conference, Meeting between SSE and Michael Matheson MSP (Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport), Source: Ministerial Diaries
- 10) 05/04/2023, Port of Aberdeen, Meeting between Ian Wood and Humza Yousaf MSP (First Minister), Source: Press story
- 11) 26/04/2023, Japan, Meeting between SSE and Neil Gray MSP (Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing Economy Fair Work and Energy), Source: Ministerial Diaries
- 12) 24/05/2023, Spain, Meeting between SSE and Richard Lochhead MSP (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade), Source: Ministerial Diaries
- 13) 30/05/2023, Video conference, Meeting between SSE and Gillian Martin MSP (Minister for Energy), Source: Ministerial Diaries
- 14) 30/05/2023, Edinburgh, Meeting between SSE and Neil Gray MSP (Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing Economy, Fair Work and Energy), Source: Ministerial Diaries
- 15) 18/07/2023, Peterhead Power Station, Meeting between SSE and Humza Yousaf MSP (First Minister), Source: Press story
- 16) 07/09/2023, Aberdeen, Meeting between True North and Humza Yousaf MSP (First Minister), Source: Press story
- 17) 01/02/2024, Murrayfield, speaking engagement sponsored by Peterhead Carbon Capture Power Station with Neil Gray MSP (Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing Economy, Fair Work and Energy), Source: Press story”

Response to your request

As the information you have requested is ‘environmental information’ for the Purposes of the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (EIRs), we are required to deal with your request under those Regulations. We are applying the exemption at section 39(2) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA), so that we do not also have to deal with your request under FOISA.

This exemption is subject to the ‘public interest test’. Therefore, taking account of all the circumstances of this case, we have considered if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exemption. We have found that, on balance, the public interest lies in favour of upholding the exemption, because there is no public interest in dealing with the same request under two different regimes. This is essentially a technical point and has no material effect on the outcome of your request.

Meetings 5 and 8-14

I have included copies of the information you have requested in [Annex B](#).

On reviewing materials within the scope of your request, exceptions have been applied in line with the EIRs. The exceptions applied can be found in [Annex A](#).

Meetings 1, 3 and 7

While our aim is to provide information whenever possible, in this instance the Scottish Government does not hold the information you have requested as these meetings were not held in the context of Scottish Government business, rather, these were held in both Mr Lochhead’s and Mr Ewing’s respective capacities as Members of the Scottish Parliament.

Therefore, this is a formal notice under Regulation 10(4)(a) of the EIRs confirming that the Scottish Government does not hold this information.

This exception is subject to the ‘public interest test’. It is important to note that although we do not hold the information and have applied Regulation 10(4)(a) – information not held, it is a requirement that we have to apply the public interest test.

Under regulation 5(1) of the EIRs, a Scottish public authority that holds environmental information must make it available when requested to do so. This duty is not absolute. In some cases, information is excepted from disclosure, under regulations 10 and 11 of the EIRs. However, all of the exceptions in regulation 10 (and parts of regulation 11) are subject to a public interest test. To clarify, even though we do not hold the information, because we are using EIRs Exception 10(4)(a) in response to your request, we are required to apply a public interest test.

Guidance can be found in the Key Concepts section under ‘Information Not Held’ and ‘The Public Interest Test’ in the attached [Scottish Information Commissioner Briefings and Guidance document](#).

Further guidance on the public interest test can also be found on page 8 of the [Scottish Information Commissioner guidance](#).

Meetings 2, 4, 6, 15 and 17

While our aim is to provide information whenever possible, in this instance the Scottish Government does not hold the information you have requested as we have been unable to locate records relating to the above noted meetings which would provide the specific information sought in your request, namely the attendees, topics discussed and any agreed actions.

It may help if I explain that as part of the response to your request we have conducted a search of the Scottish Government's main records filing system and have been unable to locate the information requested. I would also note that a search request was submitted to Scottish Government Officials which also resulted in no information being identified that would be in scope of your request.

Therefore, this is a formal notice under Regulation 10(4)(a) of the EIRs confirming that the Scottish Government does not hold this information.

This exception is subject to the 'public interest test'. It is important to note that although we do not hold the information and have applied Regulation 10(4)(a) – information not held, it is a requirement that we have to apply the public interest test.

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Guidance can be found in the Key Concepts section under 'Information Not Held' and 'The Public Interest Test' in the attached [Scottish Information Commissioner Briefings and Guidance document](#).

Further guidance on the public interest test can also be found on page 8 of the [Scottish Information Commissioner guidance](#).

Meeting 16

Under regulation 6(1)(b) of the EIRs, we do not have to give you information which is already publicly available and easily accessible to you in another form or format. If, however, you do not have internet access to obtain this information from the website(s) listed, then please contact me again and I will send you a paper copy.

The Scottish Government has previously published information regarding the meeting of 7 September 2023 between the First Minister, Humza Yousaf and True North which includes information sought in your request, namely the attendees, topics discussed and any agreed actions. A copy of minutes from the meeting can be found [here](#).

Your right to request a review

If you are unhappy with this response to your EIR request, you may ask us to carry out an internal review of the response, by emailing Kersti Berge at Kersti.Berge@gov.scot.

Your review request should explain why you are dissatisfied with this response, and should be made within 40 working days from the date when you received this letter. We will complete the review and tell you the result, within 20 working days from the date when we receive your review request.

If you are not satisfied with the result of the review, you then have the right to appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner. More detailed information on your appeal rights is available on the Commissioner's website [here](#).

Yours sincerely

Kirsteen Macleod
Hub Manager

Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ
www.gov.scot



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A small amount of information has been withheld under regulation 10(5)(f) (third party interests) This exception is subject to the 'public interest test'. Therefore, taking account of all the circumstances of this case, we have considered if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exception. We have found that, on balance, the public interest lies in favour of upholding the exception. We recognise that there is some public interest in releasing the information as part of an open, transparent and accountable government. However, disclosure of this particular information would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the confidentiality of commercial information provided by a third party(s).

Additionally, a small amount of information has been redacted from the documents disclosed under Regulation 11 – Personal Data as it contains personal information and disclosing it would contravene the data protection principles in Article 5(1) of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and in Section 34(1) of the Data Protection Act 2018. This exception is not subject to the 'public interest test'.

Meeting between Cab Sec NZET (Mr Matheson) and SSE on 24 November 2022 (marked as commercial in confidence)

DATE	24/11/2022
TITLE	Meeting with SSE Pacifico
ATTENDEES	Mr Mike Seaton, CEO and Representative Director, SSE Pacifico Mr Dai Karasawa, Executive Vice President and COO, SSE Pacifico Ms Masami Minemura, Head of Corporate Affairs, SSE Pacifico
LOCATION	SSE Pacifico Office, Tokyo
NOTES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MS gave an overview of the huge potential for floating offshore wind in Japanese waters [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)]Cab Sec asked about the opportunities for Scottish businesses in Japan. MS stated that Japan [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)]Japan has a target of 45GW by 2045 with at least half coming from floating. Cab Sec asked about other Asian markets the company may be targeting. DK [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)].
ACTIONS	N/A

Meeting between Cab Sec NZET (Mr Matheson) and SSE on 2 February 2023 (marked as commercial in confidence)

Note of virtual meeting with SSE Renewables – 2 February 2023

Attendees: Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy & Transport

Stephen Wheeler – Managing Director, SSE Renewables
Jamie Maxton – Head of External Relations (Scotland), SSE Renewables
Rob Gray – Head of P&C Services, SSE Renewables

Andy Hogg, SG
[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)], SG
John McFarlane, Spads

- SW [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)]
- Cab Sec asked [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)].
- SW agreed [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)]
- SSE [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)]Cab Sec acknowledge [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)]
- SW agreed to speak with Cab Sec again following further engagement with each of the OEMs and provide further information on the combined project ITT in due course.

Meeting between Cab Sec NZET (Mr Matheson) and SSE on 9 March 2023

Note of Meeting with SSER & SSEN – 9th March 2023



Location: Microsoft Teams

Attendees:

Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy & Transport

Gregor Alexander, SSE

Niall Murphy, SSE

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)], Scottish Government

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)], Scottish Government

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)], Scottish Government

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)], Scottish Government

Fran Pacitti, Scottish Government

Cab Sec welcomed SSE and thanked them for adding their signature to the letter he issued to the [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)]. He then asked for an update on their engagement with [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)] since then.

Gregor shared that he had met with representatives from [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)] in February and that he had also been to [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)] to visit them.

[REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)].

[REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)]

Cab Sec asked if [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)] offer supply and install contracts. Gregor explained [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)].

When he met with them in February [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)].

Cab Sec then when on to speak about the work Highland and Island Enterprise have carried out with [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)].

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] then gave an update on further work by officials and HIE around the [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)] and business case.

Cab Sec explained that SG will do everything within their gift to avoid missing out on this opportunity and they hoped SSEN/SSER are doing the same.

Gregor [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)].

Cab Sec asked about engagements with [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)].

Gregor explained they have continued to engage but they are currently Evaluating [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)].

Gregor agreed to give Cab Sec an update on SSE latest position on the above opportunities at his visit to SSE Hyrdo Scheme in Pitlochry on the 21st March.

Meeting between the First Minister (Mr Yousaf) and Ian Wood on 4 April 2023 (meeting took place on 4 April rather than 5 April as suggested by sender)

First Minister – Visit to Aberdeen Harbour – Note of Meeting - 4 April 2023

Purpose - The First Minister announced £25 million of Just Transition Fund support for the Scottish National Investment Bank during a visit to the transformative Aberdeen South Harbour expansion.

Attendees:

Scottish Government

First Minister

Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Just Transition

Stakeholders

Bob Sanguinetti, Chief Executive Officer, Port of Aberdeen

Roddy James, Chief Commercial Officer, Port of Aberdeen

Roy Buchan, Port of Aberdeen

Sir Ian Wood, Chair, Opportunity North East and ETZ

Jennifer Crow, Chief Executive, Opportunity North East

Maggie McGinlay, Chief Executive, ETZ

Russell Borthwick, Chief Executive, Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce

Ryan Crighton, Policy & Marketing Director, AGCC

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)], Policy Adviser, AGCC

Discussion Themes

- Energy Transition / Just Transition to net zero
- Green Freeports
- ScotWind
- Investment in Net Zero

Meeting Note:

NB: No formal agenda was provided.

- Thanks and introductions by Harbour Executives.
- First Minister (FM) reiterated commitment to a just transition for the North East, noting that his government is absolutely committed to delivering Scotland's climate obligations and also supporting businesses, workers and communities to seize every opportunity from the energy transition
- Stakeholders commented that it is heartening for business in the North East for government to demonstrate commitment by making the visit to the Port which is an integral part of the economy and the transition, but that challenges lie ahead.
- Stakeholders commented on recent challenges – the failure of the Aberdeen Green Freeport bid and the need for decisive action on the ACORN CCUS cluster – including the previous administration's rhetoric around the "presumption against" new oil and gas exploration
- FM noted Scottish Government's recognition of the challenges inherent in accelerating the transition is why we have committed to a £500 million Just Transition Fund over the next ten years, and other investment

- FM noted that some levers for support remain reserved to UK Government, including decisions licensing in the North Sea, however the Scottish Government continues to press for matching commitments from rUK around support for the just transition
- Stakeholders noted their view that awarding Investment Zone status to the region would be a cornerstone in achieving full potential for Aberdeen to become the “Net Zero Capital of Europe”
- Stakeholders welcomed Scottish Government support for transformative projects such as the Energy Transition Zone and Hydrogen projects noting that investment in Skills will be critical to achieving a just transition
- FM noted that the North East has a strong record of working collaboratively between business, government and the non-profit development agencies, and this partnership approach would be crucial to tackle the challenges of a just transition to a fairer, greener economy

Note – following the meeting correspondence was received from Sir Ian Wood, Chair of Opportunity North East. A response was issued from the First Minister [DATE].

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]
Head of Just Transition Fund
Domestic Climate Change

Meeting between Cab Sec WEFWE (Mr Gray) and SSE on 26 April 2023

Minute of Meeting with SSE Pacifico

Wednesday 26 April 2023 15:00 – 16:00

Roppongi Grand Tower 33F, 3-2-1- Ropongi, Minatoku, Tokyo 106-0032

Attendees

Neil Gray, Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing Economy, Fair Work and Energy

Dai Karasawa, Executive Vice President and COO, SSE Pacifico

Stephen Baker, SDI

Stefan Bengtsson, SDI

Frances Pacitti, Offshore Wind Directorate, Scottish Government

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)], Ministerial Private Office, Scottish Government

Matters Discussed

1. The Cabinet Secretary offered welcoming remarks and introductions.
2. Mr Karasawa offered an introduction to SSE Pacifico, which is presently focussed upon offshore wind in Japan. It has strong recognition in the Japanese labour market and currently employs 40 FTEs. Mr Karasawa also summarised [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)].
3. The Cabinet Secretary invited discussion of [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)] Parties discussed requirements for [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)] specifically the need for a consistent policy position and a better understanding among investors of the specific timing of project delivery.

Actions

- Parties agreed continue to dialogue, including through SDI, to identify future opportunities for mutual support.

Meeting between Minister for SBIT (Mr Lochhead) and SSE on 24 May 2023

TIME	15:30-16:15
ATTENDEES	Angel Hernandez (AH), the Director of Development for South Europe (France, Spain, Italy, Greece) Elia Ferrer (EF), Head of Public Affairs, SSE
NOTES	<p>SSE strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AH noted that SSE was seeking to [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)]. • He felt SSE (and Scotland) retain a strong brand, in part due to their focus on building stakeholder relations, and relations with the communities in which their projects are based. • EF highlighted the three key challenges for the company <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ People (discussed below) ○ Regulation – EF [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)] ○ Alignment of policy goals – EF felt here that Scotland had much to contribute, and considered that our cross-government approach would be worth exporting <p>Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSE is actively seeking projects, and has the investment to support • They recently made their first two investments in France, which has supported their capacity to understand how to do business abroad. • Critical to their investment decisions [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)] • On Scotland, while the market functions well for energy production and consumption, [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)] <p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As with [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)], SSE were increasingly concerned about the availability of skilled workers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)] • [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)] [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)] [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)] AH [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)]

	<p>REGULATION 10(5)(f)]</p> <p>○ In particular, he highlighted Scottish expertise in direct current</p> <p>Most problems with connection in continental Europe are not new to Scotland, so there is an [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)]</p>
ACTIONS	10. SDI to support engagement on the 'internationalisation' piece and can make introductions to Skills Development Scotland on the people aspect of discussions

Meeting between Cab Sec for EFWE (Mr Gray), Minister for Energy (Ms Martin) and SSE on 30 May 2023

Minute of Meeting – Alistair Phillips-Davies, CEO of SSE
Tuesday 30 May 2023, 16:00 – 16:45
Microsoft Teams

Attendees

Neil Gray, Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Fair Work and Energy
 Gillian Martin, Minister for Energy
 Alistair Phillips -Davies, SSE
 Stephen Wheeler, SSE
 [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)], Energy Strategy and Markets, Onshore Electricity Division

Discussion

1. SSE provided an overview of their business and investment in Scotland in support of a net zero energy system and congratulated Ministers on their appointment. Minister thanked SSE and set out that they were keen to work together collaboratively on reaching a net zero energy system in Scotland.
2. SSE welcomed SG recent letter to the UK government to call for a suitable market mechanism for pumped storage hydro.
3. SSE discussed the opportunity for Ministers to come and visit their sites over the summer including Coire Glas.
4. Mr Gray and Ms Martin discussed community benefits from the transition and the views of communities who feel that they are not seeing the benefit of increasing levels of

renewable infrastructure. Mr Gray mentioned that the current electricity market does not allow for low prices of renewables to be translated directly to consumers.

5. SSE confirmed their commitment to community benefits including supporting community benefits for network infrastructure. SSE discussed technical requirements for undergrounding network infrastructure including the proposed [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)]. Ms Martin enquired [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)]SSE offered to follow up in a separate session on the breadth of community benefits worth they are undertaking. Ministers agreed that they would welcome this.
6. SSE highlighted the breadth of work that they are undertaking via community benefits funding. Mr Gray referenced the Historic Environment Scotland work at the Engine Shed to retrofit harder to treat houses and the opportunity to link up.

Actions

1. Officials to organise a joint discussion between SSE and Ministers on community benefit. SSE lead this session to provide an update to Ministers on breadth of their community benefit work including support for retrofitting households with energy efficiency and decarbonised heat solutions. SSE could also share key learning from approaches taken internationally in this session (ref Japan).
 2. Officials to link up SSE community benefits team with the Historic Environment Scotland team to share lessons and best practice on retrofitting hard to treat houses.
 3. SSE to send through more information on [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(5)(f)] considerations to Ministers.
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