

Jerry Waugh
By email

Ref No: 10/1870

13 September 2010

Dear Mr Waugh

Thank you for your email of 13 August where you requested the following information on studies and reports which have examined the points below:

- 1. The impact on the British system from importing large amounts of excess wind power from the Irish system.**
- 2. The ability of the British system to export electricity to the Irish system during periods of low wind.**
- 3. The British system exporting it's excess wind power to the Irish system.**
- 4. A common strategy between both markets for importing and exporting intermittent wind power.**

We have considered your request in accordance with the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs) as the information you have sought disclosure of, does in our view, fall within the definition of 'environmental information' as stated in the EIRs.

There is no single study that specifically addresses the four areas you have highlighted. A joint DECC and Treasury study Energy Market Assessment was published in March highlighting the challenges and options for Government to deliver for the UK clean, secure, affordable electricity supplies and meeting its 2050 climate change objectives. This can be found in the following link:

http://www.direct.gov.uk/prod_consum_dg/groups/dg_digitalassets/@dg/@en/documents/digitalasset/dg_186447.pdf

DECC has also commissioned a study into the potential development of offshore grids and to consider the costs and benefits of combining connections to offshore wind farms in UK waters with interconnection to other European electricity markets, and developing with other countries joint renewables projects with a direct connection to the GB grid. This study has yet to be finalised.

The study is being withheld under regulation 12(4)(d) of the EIRs, as it relates to material which is still in the course of completion or to unfinished documents. In applying this exception we have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosure. The factors we considered in deciding where the public interest lay are considered below. In considering this, we have applied a presumption in favour of disclosure as required by regulation 12(2) of the EIRs.

There is a general public interest in the disclosure of information; greater transparency makes the government more accountable to the electorate; increases trust and also enables the public contribution to policy making to become more effective.

However, the study in question is still in the course of completion and is currently an unfinished document. We believe that it would not be in the public interest to prematurely release the document while it is subject to change.

Having considered the public interest carefully, we have come to the conclusion that the factors in favour of disclosure, at this stage, are outweighed by those factors which favour withholding the information.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be addressed to the Department.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely,

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