

**Department of Energy & Climate Change**

Atholl House  
86-88 Guild Street  
Aberdeen AB11 6AR

[www.decc.gov.uk](http://www.decc.gov.uk)

**23 August 2012**

**Ref: 12/0599**

Dear

Thank you for your email dated 28 June 2012 where you requested the following information:

Copies of all correspondence, submissions, agendas, notes, briefings, meeting minutes relating to the Walney Offshore wind farm extension and 26<sup>th</sup> oil and gas licensing round, in which there are a number of overlaps with offshore wind (planned and operational) sites.

Copies of correspondence between DONG energy and DECC's 'Energy Development' Directorate, that cover the issue of Walney Offshore wind farm extension and the 26<sup>th</sup> oil and gas licensing round.

Copies of correspondence and submissions between:

- Centrica and DECC on this issue
- Oil and Gas UK and DECC on this issue
- Crown Estate and DECC on this issue

Also copies of all agendas, notes, briefings, minutes, from meetings that include Oil and Gas UK and DECC that cover the issue of the 26<sup>th</sup> oil and gas licensing round and overlaps with offshore wind (planned and operational) sites, particularly Walney Offshore wind farm extension.

All of this information between the following dates – **May 2011 to May 2012.**

We consider that the information that you have requested constitutes environmental information for the purposes of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs). Accordingly, your request has been dealt with under the terms of the EIRs.

Under these regulations, you have the right to:

- Know whether we hold the information you have requested and;
- Be provided with that information (subject to any exceptions which may apply).

A response to your questions, are set out below:

*(1) Please provide me with copies of all correspondence, submissions, agendas, notes, briefings, meeting minutes relating to the Walney Offshore wind farm extension and 26<sup>th</sup> oil and*

*gas licensing round, in which there are a number of overlaps with offshore wind (planned and operational) sites.*

We have interpreted this request as referring to the overlap in licensing acreage of the Walney Offshore wind farm extension and oil and gas licences granted in the 26<sup>th</sup> licensing round.

The oil and gas licensing blocks that specifically relate to the Walney Offshore wind farm extension are 113/27b, 113/27d and 113/28. The awards from the 26th licensing round are in the public domain and can be viewed at the following link:

[http://og.decc.gov.uk/en/olgs/cms/licences/lic\\_rounds/26th\\_round/26th\\_round.aspx](http://og.decc.gov.uk/en/olgs/cms/licences/lic_rounds/26th_round/26th_round.aspx)

Following a search of our paper and electronic records, it has been established that we have no record in the Department of any correspondence, submissions, agendas, notes, briefings, meeting minutes relating to the awarded blocks within the time-frame requested.

*(2) I request copies of correspondence between DONG energy and DECC's 'Energy Development' Directorate, that cover the issue of Walney Offshore wind farm extension and the 26<sup>th</sup> oil and gas licensing round.*

*I also request copies of correspondence and submissions between:*

- Centrica and DECC on this issue*
- Oil and Gas UK and DECC on this issue*
- Crown Estate and DECC on this issue*

We have interpreted this request as referring to correspondence and submissions relating to the Rhyl Development and East Irish Sea Drilling Operations proposed by Centrica Energy (Hydrocarbon Resources Ltd) in which licences for Blocks 113/27 and 28 were granted in the 26th Licensing Round. The only submissions that are available can be found in the public domain at the following link:

<http://www.centrica.com/index.asp?pageid=922>

With respect to correspondence between Centrica and DECC, Crown Estate and DECC, and DONG Energy and DECC, copies of the correspondence that fall within the scope of this part of the request are being copied and are being issued by email. Some information has been redacted from these documents (under exception 12(3)) details are provided below.

Following a search of our paper and electronic records, it has been established that we have no record in the Department of any correspondence between Oil and Gas UK and DECC on this issue.

*(3) I also request copies of all agendas, notes, briefings, minutes, from meetings that include Oil and Gas UK and DECC that cover the issue of the 26<sup>th</sup> oil and gas licensing round and overlaps with offshore wind (planned and operational) sites, particularly Walney Offshore wind farm extension.*

Following a search of our paper and electronic records, it has been established that we have no record in the Department of any correspondence between Oil and Gas UK and DECC on this issue.

Regulation 12(3) of the EIRs provides an absolute exemption for personal data, which then falls to be dealt with under the Data Protection Act (DPA). Personal data of third parties can only be disclosed in accordance with the data protection principles. In particular, the first data protection principle requires that disclosure must be fair and lawful and must comply with one of the conditions in Schedule 2 of the DPA. We do not think that it is fair to release the names and contact details of DECC staff, oil company personnel or staff in other organisations and do not

think that any of the relevant conditions in Schedule 2 of the DPA apply. As a result, the names and contact details of staff in DECC, oil companies and other organisations have been redacted from these documents.

### **Appeals Procedure**

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