

Department of Energy & Climate Change
3 Whitehall Place,
London SW1A 2AW

www.decc.gov.uk

Our ref: **12/0062**

14 March 2012

Dear

Thank you for your email of 12 January 2012 in which you requested the following information relating to the following meetings at which the Right Hon Chris Huhne MP was present.

Date	Met with (Group)	Subject
April 2011	Centrica	Energy issues
May 2011	SSE	Energy issues
June 2011	Scottish Power	Energy issues

1. For each meeting, please supply information held by the department which includes, but is not limited to:

- i) Place of meeting
- ii) Full lists of those in attendance
- iii) Minutes
- iv) Agenda
- v) Or any other form of notes taken
- vi) Any Correspondence between the 'Group' and Chris Huhne's office in the specified month.

We have considered your request under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIRs) to the extent that the information caught by your request is environmental information and are releasing the following information in the table below:

Date	Organisation	Purpose of Meeting	Details
April 2011	Centrica – <i>Chris Huhne met with Sam Laidlaw (Chief Executive)</i>	Energy issues	Note of meeting withheld, no other records held. Meeting held at the Department.
May 2011	SSE – <i>Chris Huhne met with Ian Marchant (Chief Executive)</i>	Energy issues	Minutes of meeting not located, no other records held. Meeting held at the Department.
June 2011	Scottish Power – <i>Chris Huhne, PM and Oliver Letwin met with Ignacio Galan and Amparo Moraleda of Iberdrola (Scottish Power)</i>	Energy issues	Note of meeting withheld, no other records held.

We have taken the decision to withhold the full list of attendees of both meetings between Chris Huhne and Centrica, and Chris Huhne and Scottish Power under EIRs regulation 12(3).

EIR Regulation 12(3) provides an exemption for personal data which then falls to be dealt with under the Data Protection Act 1998. 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 Data Protection Act. We do not think that it is fair to release the names of members of staff and third parties, and do not think that any of the relevant conditions apply.

We have taken the decision to withhold the notes of the meetings which took place between Chris Huhne and Centrica, and Chris Huhne and Scottish Power under EIRs regulation 12(4)(e).

EIRs regulation 12(4)(e) provides an exception to the disclosure of internal communications. All minutes, notes and briefing documents between staff and Ministers, which we hold within the scope of this request take the form of internal communications and therefore exception 12(4)(e) applies to all of them. This exception is subject to a public interest test. Having considered the public

interest, the Department has taken the decision to withhold the information you requested.

The Department would like to state that releasing internal communications and briefings would inhibit the ability of officials to provide Ministers and senior officials with free and frank advice as well as keep free and frank records of stakeholder meetings. This would have a detrimental effect on the briefing process, leading civil servants to be less candid in their views. It would also affect policy development, as it would prove difficult in taking account of the views expressed by stakeholders if records were not kept. Such outcomes would be likely to prejudice the conduct of public affairs, as this could result in less well informed Ministers and less well informed briefing packs.

Appeals Procedure

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review and should contact me to do so using the e-mail address provided at the end of this letter. Please remember to quote the reference number at the beginning of this letter 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,