

Environmental Information Regulations Policy

Purpose

The Environmental Information Regulations (2004) provides public access to information held by the Parliamentary Works Sponsor Body and Restoration and Renewal Delivery Authority (hereafter called the Sponsor Body and Delivery Authority). Any individual may request recorded information under the Regulations and the Sponsor Body and Delivery Authority will ensure that these requests are dealt with in accordance with this legislation.

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) oversees the legislation for which the Sponsor Body and Delivery Authority are obliged to:

- make environmental information available proactively, using easily accessible electronic means whenever possible, and
- respond to requests for environmental information.

The Regulations apply only to the environmental information held by the Sponsor Body and the Delivery Authority. The Freedom of Information Act (FOI) gives people access to most other types of information held by public authorities.

Principles

The principle behind the law is that giving the public access to environmental information will encourage greater awareness of issues that affect the environment. Greater awareness helps increase public participation in decision-making, it makes public bodies more accountable and transparent and it builds public confidence and trust in them.

The term "environmental information" is considered as any information in written, visual, aural, electronic or any other material form which relates to:

- the state of the elements of the environment and the interaction among these elements,
- factors affecting or likely to affect those elements,
- measures or activities affecting or likely to affect those factors or elements, or designed to protect those elements,
- reports on the implementation of environmental legislation,
- cost–benefit and other economic analyses and assumptions used within the framework of those measures and activities; and
- the state of human health and safety, conditions of human life, cultural sites and built structures in as much as they are or may be affected by those elements.

The Regulations give people a right of access to information about the activities of the Sponsor Body and Delivery Authority that relate to or affect the environment, unless there is good reason for them not to have the information. This means that:

- everybody has a right to access environmental information,
- disclosure of information should be the default,
- an applicant (requester) does not need to give a reason for wanting the information.
- all requests for information should be treated equally,
- any information released under the Regulations should be treated as if it were being released to the world at large.

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