

EIR Request (received 15 February 2024) - Reference: DFI/2024-0067

Under EIR Regulations 2004, can you provide me with any direction / advice / guidance / information issued by the Department to councils on the water and sewerage capacity constraint issue referred to in para.2.1 of the Strategic Planning Group minutes dated 15 June 2023.

Could you tell me when the minutes from any SPG meetings after 15 June 2023 will be uploaded to the Department's website and why there has been this delay.

Response (issued 22 February 2024)

Thank you for your email of 15 February requesting, under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, any direction/advice/guidance/information issued by the Department to councils on the water and sewerage capacity constraint issue referred to in para.2.1 of the Strategic Planning Group (SPG) minutes dated 15 June 2023.

You also ask when the minutes from any SPG meetings after 15 June 2023 will be uploaded to the Department's website and why there has been this delay.

In considering your request on behalf of the Department, I have determined that the information requested falls under the aegis of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR), as opposed to Freedom of Information Act 2000. Your request is for information that relates to activities, policies or plans that affect the environment. Section 39 of the Freedom of Information Act specifically excludes from consideration under that Act requests for what is deemed to be environmental information.

A guide explaining the Environmental Information Regulations can be found at:

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/foi-eir-and-access-to-information/guide-to-the-environmental-information-regulations/>.

In response to your first request, I can confirm that the Department for Infrastructure has not to date issued any direction/advice/guidance/information to councils on the water and sewerage capacity constraint issue referred to in para.2.1 of the SPG minutes dated 15 June 2023.

With regards to your second query - following the 15 June 2023 meeting, the next SPG was held on 5 October 2023. The minutes of each meeting are cleared by members at the subsequent meeting. In this case, the next meeting was not held until 31 January this year. The minutes were cleared at that meeting, and they can be viewed on the website at:

<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/strategic-planning-group-spg-minutes>

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