Ref: **ATISN 15680**

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Via e-mail:

24th November 2021.

Dear

Thank you for your request which I received on the 12th November 2021. You asked for:

> *A copy of all correspondence, documents and reports in relation to any as yet unpublished documents linked with the Soil Policy Evidence Programme being undertaken in collaboration between the Welsh Government and ADAS; including any third party correspondence with relevant parties not stated specifically within this request and any correspondence, documents and reports produced in relation to any studies and advice referencing the potential impact of solar development upon agricultural land quality.*

In my letter of 16th November, we noted that we would not be able to process your request any further without clarification of your request. As we have not received clarification of the request, please see our response below.

Our response

The Soil Policy Evidence Programme (SPEP) has been on-going for a number of years and has published a number of reports to underpin evidence based policy making, but also contains a large number of documents that were never intended for publication, and are thus unpublished. Your request, as formulated, does not distinguish what documents you are hoping to find, and appears to capture all the documents created for the SPEP since its inception on any subject and for any reason.

ICO guidance states that, to be valid under Section 8 of the FOIA a request must:
- be in writing;
- include the requester's name and an address for correspondence; and,
- describe the information being requested.

We believe that this request does not provide an adequate description of the information you are interested in, and it is unlikely that you intended to request all documents and associated

supporting information for the entire programme. For this reason we asked if the information you are interested in relates to a specific research project that is intended for publication in 2022. We asked:

> *In particular, it would be useful to know if this request is specific to research project SPEP 2021-22/03 - The impact of solar photovoltaic (PV) sites on soil and agricultural land quality". This project has been recently commissioned and consists of 4 work packages – to date we have a received a draft for work package 1 and aim to complete the project by the end of December 2021. The final report will published on the Soil Policy Evidence Programme web page once completed and translated – this is likely to be early 2022.*

As we have not had a response on this point, I am refusing this request under Section 8 of the FOIA. Any reformulated request will be treated as a new request. To assist you in making a refined request, we have published a practical guide on making requests for information, available on our website here:

https://gov.wales/requesting-information-welsh-government-html

Next steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,
Welsh Government,
Cathays Park,
Cardiff,
CF10 3NQ

or Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire,
SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely