

18th January 2023

Dear

ATISN 17003 - Ministerial attendance at COP15

Information Requested

Thank you for your request, which was received on 23rd December 2022. You asked for information regarding the attendance of the Welsh Government Minister for Climate Change, at the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15), during December 2022:

“Please inform me of the following:

- 1. Number of people who went to Canada as part of James’ entourage.*
- 2. Costs of flights for the entourage.*
- 3. Cost of accommodation and any other expenses incurred by the entourage.*
- 4. The carbon footprint of the visit and flights.”*

(the numbering has been added for clarity in the response provided below)

Our Response

The Minister for Climate Change attended COP15 as part of the overall UK delegation seeking agreement of an ambitious global biodiversity framework, also representing Wales as one of the subnational governments at the Seventh Summit.

Regarding questions 1 - 3, I have concluded that the information requested is exempt under Section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act (2000), information intended for future publication. Details of Ministerial visits overseas are published in line with the Ministerial code and this information will be published with the next tranche of information in 2023 at the following link: [Ministerial code | GOV.WALES](#). Section 22 is a publicly tested exemption and I have set out my arguments for non-disclosure at Annex 1 to this letter.

With regard to question 4, the total or individual carbon usage for the trip was not calculated and so the information is not held by Welsh Government. The Freedom of Information Act gives a right to access recorded information but does not require that new information be created where no recorded information exists. There is no corporate process or guidance that addresses this question nor one that lists measures, so this information is not held by Welsh Government.

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 e-mail: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number detailed 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

Telephone: 0303 123 1113

Website: www.ico.org.uk

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

Yours sincerely

Annex 1

Section 22: Information intended for future publication

The Welsh Government believes that Section 22 is applied in relation to the requested information. Section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act is subject to the public interest test. This means that in order to withhold information under its provisions, any personal interest of the requester notwithstanding, it has to be shown that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs that in releasing it.

Public interest arguments in favour of disclosure

The general presumption of openness and transparency, which the Freedom of Information Act aspires to.

Public interest arguments against disclosure

This information is published as a requirement in the Ministerial code. This information will be published along with details of other Ministerial visits overseas according to the usual schedule. The information for the financial year 2022-23 will be published shortly after the end of March 2023.

The Welsh Government acknowledges the public interest in openness and transparency, and it is a long-standing requirement that details of Ministerial visits overseas, including the costs, are published in line with the Ministerial code.

Therefore, we believe the public interest would be better served in the information being published at the appropriate time. To that end, I believe the information should be withheld under s22 of the Act, until it is published in due course at the following link: [Ministerial code | GOV.WALES](#)