

22/11/24

Dear

ATISN 21958

Information requested

Thank you for your request which we received on the 23rd of September. You asked for:

1. What contact has been made between the Welsh Government and UK Government regarding the devolution of the Crown Estate.
2. How many times this matter has been raised.
3. Minutes from meetings where devolution of the Crown Estate has been discussed.

You have asked for this information to cover Mark Drakeford, Vaughan Gething and Eluned Morgan's terms as First Minister.

Our response

From my preliminary assessment I estimate it will cost more than the appropriate limit set out in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 to answer your request. The appropriate limit specified for central government is £600. This represents the estimated cost of it taking over 24 hours of time to determine whether we hold the information and to thereafter locate, retrieve and extract it.

The devolution of the Crown Estate is a subject that has been brought up in a large volume of correspondences and meeting across a number of directorates over the past 6 years.

In order to locate all such contacts, per question 1, to calculate how many times the matter has been raised, per question 2, and to locate all minutes and notes of all identified meetings, per question 3, I would need to search files across all such directorates and, having located files that discuss the subject, these files would need to be reviewed to ascertain if they have information in scope, and sorted into appropriate contact groups for the calculation you have requested. This is a manual process.

In a sampling exercise I found 14601 documents on our electronic filing system that mention "crown estate" and devolution. In order to process your request, I would need to review all of these documents. This would not capture information in email systems, which would need to be searched separately. In a sampling exercise I was able to discard some documents quickly, but others required reading to discover if they held information in scope, and it took me 12 minutes to review 40 documents.

Processing this part of the request would therefore require 73 hours which is well in excess of the 24-hour limit. The information is therefore withheld.

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