

10th January 2023

Dear

ATISN 16961 - Ministerial attendance at COP15

Information Requested

Thank you for your request, which was received on 13th 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:

- 1. Is the Minister for Climate Change attending by invite as a Participant National Delegate and listed to speak on the main platform - or just as a fringe Observer?*
- 2. Has she gone alone or have other WG / Senedd Members and / or staff accompanied her?*
- 3. If others have gone from the WG / Senedd, who are they, and what are their particular roles in attending at COP15 in Canada?*
- 4. Can you release the total costs of this entire visit broken down for each individual in terms of Travel from Cardiff to Canada's Conference Venue and Accommodation costs and General Claimable Expenses and Conference Registration Fees etc.?*
- 5. Were these total costs listed in the most recent WG / Senedd budget and if so under what budget heading?*

Our Response

A copy of the information I have decided to release is below. For clarity, I have addressed the questions in the order raised:

Question 1

The Minister for Climate Change attended COP15 as part of the overall UK delegation, representing Wales as one of the subnational governments at the Seventh Summit. As part of the Summit, the Minister spoke at a number of events, including on the main stage.

Questions 2 - 5

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.

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](#)