

10 March 2026

Dear

Complaint in respect of ATISN 26577, 26578, 26589, 26595 & 26618 - Community Energy Wales

Thank you for your email of 10 February 2026 requesting an internal review of our decision to refuse your requests to references **ATISN 26577, ATISN 26578, ATISN 26589, ATISN 26595 and ATISN 26618** under Regulation 12(4)(b) of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (“manifestly unreasonable”).

In your correspondence you clarified the grounds for your complaint as follows:

1. Composite refusal – our grouping of five distinct requests as a single composite request and subsequently refusing them collectively, rather than assessing each ATISN referenced request on its own merits.

- 1 Inadequate explanation of searches – our response to you did not specify:
- 2 what searches were undertaken
- 3 which teams, divisions or officials were consulted, nor
- 4 why more targeted or phased searches could not have been carried out.

On this point, you set out your understanding that general references to “iShare” and Outlook are insufficient to justify a refusal under Reg 12(4)(b).

1 Failure to consider proportionate alternatives – you set out your understanding that before relying on Reg 12(4)(b), we should have considered whether reasonable narrowing, sampling, or staged disclosure could have met the requests. You stated that there is no evidence that this was properly explored by us, and through this complaint, you request that:

- 2 each ATISN reference be reconsidered separately
- 3 we set out in detail what searches were undertaken for each request, and
- 4 we reassess whether disclosure (in whole or in part) is possible.

My review of your complaint has involved consideration of the correspondence and recorded documentation relating to your requests, liaison with the relevant team(s) and consideration of the published guidance.

In our response to ATISN 26577, ATISN 26578, ATISN 26589, ATISN 26595 and ATISN 26618 we reasoned that your requests were manifestly unreasonable on the grounds of your request being overly burdensome and/or costly, referencing Reg 12(4)(b). We

provided you with a single response to five individual requests for information dated between 14th and 27th January.

Regrettably, we did not set out in our response the basis on which we had elected to group your requests for information. I apologise for this oversight and can provide you with some clarity on this point.

The published guidance relating to Manifestly Unreasonable Requests - Regulation 12(4)(b) (available at <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/foi/freedom-of-information-and-environmental-information-regulations/regulation-12-4-b-manifestly-unreasonable-requests/#differences>) sets out that there may be occasions where it is permissible to consider a number of EIR requests together when deciding if they are manifestly unreasonable because of cost or burden. This is in line with the approach to requests considered manifestly unreasonable on the grounds that they are vexatious in the wider sense, where the context in which they are made can be taken into account. Our response to you recognised clear similarities in the focus of the requests and considered the context in which the requests were received. Your requests are attached at Annexe A for convenience.

The relevant context here relates to the subject matter, the dates of the requests and our operational handling of the requests. Your requests all pertain to the operations of Community Energy Wales, Ynni Cymru and Ynni Teg Cyf. Five individual requests were received within two weeks of each other. The requests were all received by the same handling team as dictated by the subject matter. An assessment of the burden could not be conducted independently of this context. There is a strong and clear rationale for grouping your requests in this way and the team sought appropriate advice and permission to proceed on that basis. I note that this decision to group your responses is consistent with similar correspondence from you in late 2025, where a combined response was provided to you in relation to ATISN 26325, ATISN 26427, ATISN 26429, ATISN 26430, ATISN 26432, ATISN 26441, ATISN 26448, ATISN 26449, ATISN 26450, ATISN 26451, ATISN 26452, ATISN 25453, ATISN 26454, ATISN 26455, ATISN 26456, ATISN 26481, ATISN 26482, and ATISN 26483, all relating to the subject matter: Community Energy Wales, Welsh Government Energy Service, Ynni Cymru & Ynni Teg Cyf.

I conclude that our decision to group your requests was both reasonable and consistent with the published guidance for handling information requests.

Our response to you provided some insight into why your request was considered burdensome and/or costly to process. You have expressed dissatisfaction that our response provided an inadequate explanation, particularly through the absence of quantitative information and our general references to stored records held in “i-share” and “Outlook”.

Regrettably, we did not provide you with an indicative calculation of the handling time required for your request. I apologise for this oversight. I would routinely expect to see an estimate of time alongside the general explanation that had provided. In our response, we

stated that processing your requests would involve identifying and locating relevant information that is either stored in individual email accounts or else within our records management system. We did not quantify or illustrate the impact of this activity.

I have explored this and have set out my approach at Annexe B. I concluded that this is an extremely time-consuming process due to the volume of potentially relevant records and the volume and variety of information you had requested.

The guidance on applying regulation 12(4)(b) cautions public authorities to consider whether it may be appropriate to consider applying regulation 7(1) – the provision that allows public authorities to extend the time for complying with a request. I have considered this point, and I am content that time is not the pertinent issue in this case. Our response to your requests set out a wider context for applying regulation 12(4)(b), referencing the unreasonable burden on stretched Welsh Government resources and concluding that the public interest would be better served by not deploying our resources in these numerous requests in favour of undertaking core work.

I conclude that while our response did not set out a quantified assessment of the burden associated with processing your requests, our application of regulation 12(4) was consistent with the published guidance for handling information requests and I am content that we did properly consider your requests.

In our response to your requests, we invited you to consider narrowing their scope and being a lot more specific about what information you particularly wish to obtain. You were directed to published information specifying Ministerial engagement and lists of Ministerial meetings. You were also encouraged to consider the information already provided to you in previous responses to requests that you had made, specifically ATISN 25805, ATISN 25184, ATISN 25195 and ATISN 26279 to help narrow the focus of your requests.

I concluded that a reasonable narrowing of your requests was considered and that advice on how you might approach this was provided to you.

I have considered your complaint in accordance with the procedure outlined in the Welsh Government's Practical Guide for Making Requests for Information, which is available by post on request or via the internet at: <https://www.gov.wales/requesting-information-welsh-government-html>

If you remain dissatisfied with this response you 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.

Your sincerely,

Deputy Director - Digital Infrastructure

Annexe A

ATISN 26577, 26578, 26589, 26595 & 26618 - Community Energy Wales

Original requests received:

ATISN 26577 Date: 14 January 2026

I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

This request relates to the Welsh Government's engagement with external organisations involved in community energy policy, delivery, or advisory activity.

Please provide the following recorded information for the period 1 January 2021 to the date of this request:

1. Funding and Financial Support a) Details of any grants, contracts, service-level agreements, or other financial support provided by the Welsh Government to Community Energy Wales, including amounts, dates, programme names, and funding purposes. b) The same information for any associated or delivery bodies, including (but not limited to) Ynni Teg.

Meetings and Engagement Copies of agendas, minutes, briefing notes, attendance lists, or correspondence relating to meetings (including virtual meetings) between Welsh Government Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Special Advisers, or senior officials and:
Community Energy Wales
Representatives or officers of associated bodies listed above

External Advisory or Influence Roles Any recorded information identifying individuals affiliated with Community Energy Wales who have: acted in an advisory capacity to Welsh Government
participated in roundtables, working groups, or stakeholder panels
contributed to policy development, programme design, or funding criteria relating to community energy

Conflict of Interest and Governance Safeguards Copies of any conflict-of-interest declarations, governance assurances, or internal guidance held by the Welsh Government relating to: engagement with Community Energy Wales or associated bodies
separation between political advocacy, lobbying activity, and programme delivery
Correspondence Copies of correspondence (emails, letters, or briefings) between Welsh Government officials and Community Energy Wales relating to: policy influence
programme delivery
public funding decisions
communications strategy or public positioning

If any part of this request is considered exempt, please specify the exemption relied upon and provide the public interest reasoning where applicable. If the request exceeds cost limits, I ask that you provide advice and assistance under Section 16 to refine it.

I would prefer the information to be provided electronically.

ATISN 26578 Date: 15 January 2026

This request relates to the assessment of applications made by Ynni Teg Cyf under the Smart Local Energy Systems (SLES) / Ynni Cymru / Welsh Government Energy Service funding frameworks.

Please provide the following recorded information for the period 1 January 2022 to the date of this request:

- 1 Application Records Copies of all applications, expressions of interest, and supporting documents submitted by Ynni Teg Cyf to:
 - 2 SLES
 - 3 Ynni Cymru
 - 4 Welsh Government Energy Service including both revenue and capital funding rounds.
- 5 Assessment and Scoring For each Ynni Teg Cyf application:
 - a) Individual assessor scoring sheets or score records
 - b) Comments or qualitative assessment notes made by assessors
 - c) Any calculated scores for:
 - Deliverability
 - Financial risk
 - WIMD score uplift (where applicable)
3. Moderation and Decision-Making
 - a) Panel moderation notes or records
 - b) Records showing any changes between initial assessor scores and final agreed scores
 - c) Final funding decisions and reasons recorded for those decisions
4. Process Compliance Any recorded information showing:
 - a) How the published scoring framework was applied to Ynni Teg Cyf
 - b) Any departures from, variations to, or exceptions from the standard scoring framework in relation to Ynni Teg Cyf
5. Conflicts of Interest
 - a) Declarations of interest relating to any assessor, panel member, or official involved in assessing Ynni Teg Cyf
 - b) Any mitigation actions taken in relation to declared or perceived conflicts

If any part of this request is considered too broad, please provide advice and assistance under section 16 of the Act to help refine it rather than refusing it.

Please provide the information in electronic format.

ATISN 26589 Date: 16 January 2026

Please treat this email as a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and/or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

Timeframe: 1 January 2023 to present.

I request the following recorded information held by the Welsh Government in relation to Community Energy Wales (CEW) and Ynni Teg Cyf, including funding provided via Ynni Cymru, the Welsh Government Energy Service, or related programmes:

1. Copies of any due-diligence, assurance, or value-for-money assessments carried out prior to the award or continuation of funding to CEW or Ynni Teg during the above period.
2. Any governance, risk, or compliance checks undertaken by Welsh Government relating to CEW or Ynni Teg, including consideration of executive remuneration or senior management structures.
3. Any internal guidance, policy, or criteria used by Welsh Government when assessing governance and executive pay arrangements for third-sector bodies receiving grants of £100,000 or more.
4. Copies of any monitoring or review reports produced by Welsh Government assessing compliance with funding conditions for CEW or Ynni Teg.

This request is made in the public interest to understand how Welsh Government assures transparency, governance, and value for money in the allocation of significant public funds.

Please provide the information electronically (PDF or Word). If any part of this request is considered too broad, please advise how it may be refined in accordance with your duty to provide advice and assistance.

ATISN 26595 Date: 20 January 2026

Please treat this as a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I am seeking recorded information relating to the organisation Ynni Teg, which is listed as a successful applicant under the Ynni Cymru Capital Grant Scheme 2025–26 (award value £72,800).

Timeframe: 1 January 2021 to present.

Please provide:

All correspondence (including emails, letters, meeting notes, and call records) between Welsh Government and Ynni Teg relating to: The Ynni Cymru Capital Grant Scheme (any year),

Any other Welsh Government funding or support schemes.

Any applications, bids, expressions of interest, or supporting documents submitted by Ynni Teg to Welsh Government funding programmes during this period.

Any internal Welsh Government assessments, due-diligence checks, risk assessments, or value-for-money reviews relating to Ynni Teg.

Any correspondence or records showing involvement, advice, or support to Ynni Teg from: Community Energy Wales,

Any organisations funded by or contracted to Welsh Government to provide community energy support.

5. Any records of meetings, correspondence, or engagement involving Ynni Teg and: Welsh Ministers,

Special Advisers,

Senior civil servants (Deputy Director level or above).

6. Any conflict-of-interest declarations, registers of interest, or related assessments made in connection with: Ynni Teg's applications,

Assessment panels, advisers, or decision-makers involved in funding decisions affecting Ynni Teg.

If any part of this request is considered too wide, please provide advice and assistance under section 16 of the Act so that it may be refined.

Please supply the information in electronic form.

ATISN 26618 Date 27 January 2026

I am writing to request recorded information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

This request relates to Community Energy Wales Ltd and Ynni Teg Cyf.

Please provide the following information for the period **1 January 2021 to present:**

Funding and Financial Support Details of any grants, funding awards, contracts, or financial support provided directly or indirectly to: ■ Community Energy Wales Ltd

■ Ynni Teg Cyf This should include award amounts, dates, funding programmes, conditions, and delivery mechanisms.

Grant Agreements and Monitoring Copies of any grant agreements, contracts, funding conditions, monitoring reports, evaluation reports, or assurance documentation relating to the above organisations.

Correspondence Recorded correspondence (including emails, letters, and briefing notes) between Welsh Government and:

- Community Energy Wales Ltd
- Ynni Teg Cyf where this correspondence relates to funding, programme delivery, advisory roles, or policy input.

Policy and Programme Involvement Records showing whether Community Energy Wales Ltd or Ynni Teg Cyf were relied upon for advice, delivery, consultation, or programme support in relation to:

- Community Energy Fund
- Ynni Cymru
- Net Zero or energy-related programmes

Governance and Oversight Any records describing governance, oversight, assurance, or risk management arrangements applied by Welsh Government in respect of funding or engagement with Community Energy Wales Ltd or Ynni Teg Cyf.

If any information is withheld, please specify the statutory exemption relied upon and explain why it applies.

If this request would exceed the appropriate cost limit, please provide advice and assistance under section 16 of the Act to help refine the request.

Annexe B

Calculation of effort required

I undertook a sample interrogation of our records management application, i-share.

I searched for references to “Ynni Cymru”.

The default search parameter is set to return the first 200 most relevant records matching the keywords used.

All 200 records returned featured a broad mix of files and folders containing, in varying quantities, correspondence, ministerial advice, financial records, grant management records, and so forth, in no discernible sequence or order but all matching the keyword search term “Ynni Cymru”.

It was not clear whether the 200-record search parameter was sufficient to capture all relevant records. I therefore repeated the search, extending the parameter to return 500 results. I repeated the process several times, incrementally increasing the search parameters before concluding with a reasonable degree of confidence that I had broadly captured the breadth of records including the keywords “Ynni Cymru” at circa 1500 results.

I repeated the same process using the keywords “Ynni Teg” and “Community Energy Wales”. Each of these keyword searches yielded more than 1500 results. I did not persevere to establish the edge of the “Ynni Teg” and “Community Energy Wales” keyword searches having already invested the best part of an hour conducting these sample searches.

Returning to the “Ynni Cymru” keyword search, having secured a set of 1500 records to interrogate, I then attempted to cross reference the records with the information requested under ATISN 26577, ATISN 26578, ATISN 26589, ATISN 26595 and ATISN 26618, attached at Annexe A.

To assess the likely effort and timescales required, I randomly selected one of the requests, ATISN 26595, where the complainant had requested (amongst other information):

All correspondence (including emails, letters, meeting notes, and call records) between Welsh Government and Ynni Teg relating to: The Ynni Cymru Capital Grant Scheme (any year),

Any other Welsh Government funding or support schemes

Having interrogated the results returned against this one component of a broader request, I estimate that it would take one person a full working day, more likely two, to identify and extract all items matching the request. Furthermore, my degree of

confidence in the results returned would be lower than 75%. I assess that improving this level of confidence would require the input of additional personnel to cross-check the initial pass through.

Repeating this process to encompass the range of all sensible/relevant keywords searches and subsequently cross matching the results of those searches with all the information requested would take several weeks and would represent a full-time commitment throughout that period for circa two officials.