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Freedom of Information Request

Ref: 06/0126

Dear Mr Cookson

I am writing to advise you that the Department has decided not to disclose the information you requested on 28 February 2006.

The information you requested relating to meetings, during 2005 concerning nuclear power in the UK, between Geoffrey Norris, Tony Blair's special adviser on industry and business, and DTI ministers and/or Joan MacNaughton, including minutes, attendance lists and terms of reference is being withheld as it falls under the exemption in section 35(1)(a), (Formulation of Government Policy), of the Freedom of Information Act. In applying this exemption we have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosing the information.

The factors the Department considered when deciding where the public interest lay include: advice should be broad based and there may be a deterrent effect on officials and external experts or stakeholders who may be reluctant to provide advice because it might be disclosed; there needs to be a free space in which it is possible to deliberate freely and use imagination, without the fear that these discussions and policy proposals will be made public.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me quoting the reference number above.

Yours sincerely

Aileen Boughen
Head of News