



National Audit Office

The UK's independent public spending
watchdog

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Reference EIR-1800
Date 18 March 2025

NAO ENQUIRIES RELATING TO WHITBURN CSO

Thank you for your request to the National Audit Office (NAO) dated 18 February 2025. You requested "correspondence relating to and answering" enquiries the NAO made in 2020 regarding sewage discharges at Whitburn. Your request has been handled under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR).

We have checked our records and can confirm that we hold the information you requested. Please find the relevant correspondence and documents attached with this response. We have checked whether we hold any further information relating to the final queries we made to the Environment Agency in the email dated 3 November 2020, but do not have any further correspondence or notes of any further meetings on our files relating to these queries.

A small amount of personal information has been withheld in accordance with Regulation 13 of the EIR (Personal information). Details of this exception can be found in **Annex A**.

Reasons why we have applied Regulation 13:

Under Regulation 13(2)(A) of the EIR we are not required to disclose personal information if releasing it would contravene the data protection principles. In this instance we believe releasing the contact details and names of individual officers would contravene the first data protection principle which requires the processing of personal data to be lawful, fair and transparent. We do not consider it necessary or fair to the individuals concerned to disclose this personal information.

I hope this information is helpful and you are happy with the way we have handled your request. If you are not happy with this response, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days by writing to the NAO FOI Team at FOI@nao.org.uk. If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The primary way of escalating your concerns to the Information Commissioner is at: <https://ico.org.uk/foicomplaints>.

Yours sincerely,

NAO FOI Team



Annex A

Regulation 13, Environmental Information Regulations – Personal data

13. (1) *To the extent that the information requested includes personal data of which the applicant is not the data subject, a public authority must not disclose the personal data if—*

(a) the first condition is satisfied, or

(b) the second or third condition is satisfied and, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in not disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

(2A) *The first condition is that the disclosure of the information to a member of the public otherwise than under these Regulations—*

(a) would contravene any of the data protection principles, or

(b) would do so if the exemptions in section 24(1) of the Data Protection Act 2018 (manual unstructured data held by public authorities) were disregarded.