

# **AIR QUALITY EXPERT GROUP (AQEG) FREEDON OF INFORMATION ACT 2000**

## **PUBLICATION SCHEME**

**Approval for this Publication Scheme has been granted by the Information Commissioner for the period from 29 February 2004 to 29 February 2008.**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

The Air Quality Expert Group (AQEG) is a scientific, advisory Non-Departmental Public Body. The Group was set up in 2001 to provide independent advice to government on air quality issues, in particular the air pollutants contained in the Air Quality Strategy (AQS) for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and those covered by the EU Directive on ambient air quality assessment and management (the Air Quality Framework Directive).

AQEG values openness and transparency. We are committed to proactively disseminating information, both to inform policy and to increase public knowledge and understanding of air quality issues.

AQEG is required or advised to comply with a number of key Regulations and procedures. These include the Environmental Information Regulations, The Office of Science and Technology's Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees, the Open Government Code of Practice and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the FOI Act).

In accordance with the FOI Act, this publication scheme has been designed to summarise the material published by AQEG and how it may be obtained.

### **2 THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000**

The FOI Act became law on 30 November 2000. The act creates a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities and requires these public authorities to disclose information, subject to a range of exemptions. The general right of access will be introduced in 2005

From February 2004, AQEG, as a Non Departmental Public Body, not within the jurisdiction of the Parliamentary Ombudsman, has a legal requirement under Section 19 of the FOI Act to:

- adopt and maintain a scheme, which relates to the publication of information by the authority [AQEG] and to have that scheme approved of by the Information Commissioner;
- publish information in accordance with that scheme; and
- review the Publication Scheme from time to time.

### **3 AQEG' PUBLICATION SCHEME**

Publication schemes are intended to encourage public organisations to be proactive in making information they hold more readily available to the public and to develop a culture of greater openness.

Section 19 of the FOI Act requires the preparation of a publication scheme; which sets out:

- The classes of information which AQEG publishes or intends to publish;
- The manner in which they will be published,;
- Whether the information is available free of charge or on payment.

AQEG' Publication Scheme is set out below. Please note:

- this scheme will be a living document, which will be modified and developed in light of AQEG's work, public comment and feedback

- this scheme is not retrospective, and we do not undertake to publish information held by AQEG which was generated before February 2004, the date this scheme came into force

#### **Responsibility for the AQEG Publication Scheme**

The Head of Air and Environment Quality Division has overall responsibility for the AQEG Publication Scheme. The AQEG Secretariat has responsibility for maintaining the scheme on a daily basis (see address below)

A copy of the scheme is available on the AQEG website <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/aqeg/index.htm>, and hard copies can be obtained by contacting:

AQEG Secretariat  
Air and Environment Quality Division  
Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs  
4/E14 Ashdown House  
123 Victoria Street  
London, SW1E 6DE  
Tel: ++44 (0)20 7082 8425  
Fax: ++44 (0)20 7082 8385  
E-mail: [air.quality@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:air.quality@defra.gsi.gov.uk)

A large print version of the scheme will be available on request.

### **4 CLASSES OF INFORMATION IN THE PUBLICATION SCHEME**

The classes of information in this scheme are specified in section 11 of the scheme. The classes are based on the types of information we publish, with related information placed together for ease of reference.

### **5 HOW TO OBTAIN INFORMATION**

Information can be accessed in electronic form from the AQEG website: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/aqeg/index.htm>,

Hard copies of this material can be requested from:

AQEG Secretariat  
Air and Environment Quality Division  
Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs  
4/E14 Ashdown House  
123 Victoria Street  
London, SW1E 6DE  
Tel: ++44 (0)20 7082 8425  
Fax: ++44 (0)20 7082 8385  
E-mail: [air.quality@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:air.quality@defra.gsi.gov.uk)

From time to time, some publications will be revised or fall out of use and in this case it will not always be possible to provide out-of-date or out-of-print material. Records considered worthy of permanent preservation are transferred to the Defra Information Resource Centre, which provides a public enquiry service.

## **6 EXEMPT INFORMATION**

Some material within classes of the Publication Scheme may contain information that we consider exempt, due to reasons such as confidentiality and privacy. When considering whether or not to withhold information, we will take into account the grounds listed in the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information, the Environmental Information Regulations and the Freedom of Information Act as well as considering the public interest in disclosing the information. Where exemptions are applied, published material will clearly show where information has been withheld and explain why.

## **7 CHARGING POLICY**

As far as possible we aim to make information available free of charge. The exceptions are:

- Where a cover charge is indicated for a printed document
- Where substantial resources are required to respond to a request

Documents on the AQEG website can be downloaded free of charge. Users will, of course, have to meet any charge made by their internet service provider and personal printing costs. For those without internet access, a single printout will be provided free of charge on request to the Secretariat (see section 6). Requests for multiple printouts or from outside the UK may, however, attract a charge payable in advance. This will be made known at the time the request is made.

## **8 COPYRIGHT STATEMENT**

Unless otherwise stated, the material listed in this publication scheme is Crown copyright, which is administered by Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Brief extracts of Crown copyright material may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium, provided it is reproduced accurately and not used in a misleading manner. Where any of the

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St.Clements House  
2-16 Colegate  
Norwich  
NR3 1BQ  
Telephone: 01603 621000  
Fax: 01603 723000

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## 9 CLASSES OF INFORMATION

CLASS DESCRIPTION OF INFORMATION	AVAILABILITY	COST
<p><b>General Information</b></p> <p>Background information on the role and work of AQEG. Typically this will include the Terms of Reference of the Panel, a current work plan and periodic review reports</p>	<p>Online at:  <a href="http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/ageg/index.htm">http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/ageg/index.htm</a>            or hard copy by contacting the AQEG Secretariat (for details see Section 6)</p>	Free
<p><b>Meetings</b></p> <p>Copies of agendas, minutes and supporting papers from AQEG meetings for the most recent three years. Some material in this class may be considered exempt from publication. Typically this will include; material regarded as containing confidential deliberations, internal communications or unfinished documents. Where exemptions have been applied this will be indicated.</p>	<p>Online at:  <a href="http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/ageg/meetings.htm">http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/ageg/meetings.htm</a>            or hard copy by contacting the AQEG Secretariat (for details see Section 6)</p>	Free

<b>Members</b> Details of the membership of the Panel including brief biographical details and the current Register of Interests	Online at: <a href="http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/aqeg/index.htm">http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/aqeg/index.htm</a> or hard copy by contacting the AQEG Secretariat (for details see Section 6)	Free
<b>Reports</b> Scientific reports produced by the Panel and some data supporting data	Online at: <a href="http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/aqeg/index.htm">http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/aqeg/index.htm</a> Hard copies are available by contacting the AQEG Secretariat (for details see Section 6)	Free