ANNEX A

EIR DOF/2026-0092

Request

I am making these requests under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (as they apply in Northern Ireland).

I request environmental information relating to the Northern Ireland Civil Service hybrid working / 40% office attendance policy, covering the period 1 January 2023 to the present.

1. Environmental and Climate Impact Assessments

For the period 1 January 2023 to the present, please provide any and all:

- Environmental, climate, or sustainability assessments relating to the policy; and
- Supporting calculations, modelling, or assumptions regarding energy use, emissions, or environmental impacts.

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2. Carbon Footprint and Emissions

For the period 1 January 2023 to the present, please provide any and all:

- Analysis of how the policy affects the overall carbon footprint of Northern Ireland Civil Service operations; and
- Estimates of emissions associated with increased office attendance or commuting.

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3. Transport and Commuting Impacts

For the period 1 January 2023 to the present, please provide any and all:

- Estimates or modelling regarding impacts of the policy on traffic levels, congestion, public transport usage, or active travel by staff; and
- Documents considering emissions associated with changes in commuting behaviour.

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4. Mitigation Measures and Incentives

For the period 1 January 2023 to the present, please provide any and all:

- Policies, schemes, or incentives considered or introduced as part of the policy to encourage public transport, car-sharing, or low-carbon travel; and
- Guidance or correspondence discussing mitigation of increased commuting emissions.

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5. Alignment with Climate and Net Zero Commitments

For the period 1 January 2023 to the present, please provide any and all:

- Papers or correspondence assessing whether the policy aligns with climate targets or net-zero commitments; and
- Internal correspondence referring to the A5 road scheme decision in relation to commuting or emissions impacts.

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6. Rural and Regional Environmental Impacts

For the period 1 January 2023 to the present, please provide any and all:

- Consideration of rural travel impacts or environmental consequences of increased travel distances; and
- Any consultation or coordination with other departments regarding environmental consequences of increased commuting.

Administrative Matters

Please provide information electronically where possible. If any information is withheld, please specify the exception relied upon and provide the public interest reasoning.

If it is administratively efficient to combine responses to these requests, you are welcome to do so. However, if doing so risks exceeding cost or time thresholds, I ask that requests continue to be handled separately.

If any of the requests exceed the cost/time limit, please advise how they may be refined.

Thank you for your assistance. I look forward to your responses within the statutory timeframe.

DoF response

I can confirm that the department holds the following documents in response to the questions in 1 - 6 (above) which you have raised in relation to environmental issues as relating to the NICS Hybrid Working policy. They are as follows:-

- Climate Sustainability Plan (see Annex A ref 1)
- Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) (**Annex C** attached previously published in response to FOI 2025-0465)
- Hybrid Working policy Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) (**Annex D** attached)
- Financial, Social and Economic Impact Assessment (FSEIA) completed in December 2024 (**Annex E** attached)
- Financial, Social and Economic Impact Assessment (FSEIA) (updated) following the review of the Hybrid Working Policy February 2026 (**Annex F** attached)

Please note some personal information has been withheld because it is exempt under EIR regulation 12(3) & 13 of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. Section 12(3) & 13 exempts personal information from disclosure if that information relates to someone other than the applicant, and if disclosure of that information would contravene one of the data protection principles in schedule 1 of the Data Protection Act.

Having considered all the information contained within the Legitimate Interest Test – also known as a Lawful, Fairness and Transparency Test - (attached as a separate document – **Annex G**), the department has established that, on balance, there is no lawful basis for the disclosure of third-party personal data falling within the scope of the request of which the requester is not the data subject. Making an unrestricted disclosure of personal data for private interests could constitute a disproportionate and unwarranted level of interference with the individuals' rights and freedoms – particularly their right to privacy and family life under the Human Rights Act 1998.

ANNEX B - Internal Reviews

An Internal Review request examines the response based on applied exemptions, search adequacy, or response timeliness.

It is not the following, which will be treated as specified:

- Questions asking for clarification on information provided: Will be treated as part of the original EIR request.
- Additional questions about the information in the response: Will be treated as a new EIR request.
- Questions about the subject not related to the original request: Will be treated as new EIR request.
- Questions regarding how a service operates or why a decision was made: Will be treated as normal business and responded to accordingly.
- Complaints or concerns raised in response to information provided: Will be treated in line with relevant complaints procedure.

To make an Internal Review request:

- **Clearly state**: That you want an internal review of a previous EIR response and provide the necessary details.
- **Follow the timeline:** Be sure to submit your request within 40 working days of receiving the original response. If the Department has not responded at all, you have 40 working days after the original 20-day response period has passed.
- **Wait for a response:** The review is typically completed within 20 working days but can take up to 40 working days in exceptional circumstances. The Department should inform you of any delays.

What the review includes

- A fresh decision based on a reconsideration of all relevant factors.
- An assessment of whether the request was handled correctly and if exemptions were applied appropriately.
- The review will be conducted by someone who was not involved in the original decision.

If you wish to request an internal review, please email foi@finance-ni.gov.uk or write to FOI/EIR Team, Department of Finance, 2nd Floor, Craigantlet Buildings, Stoney Road, Belfast, BT4 3SX.