



Access to Information

2008 - 09 Q4 Report



Background

This report is based on the actual information on the Teams Request Trackers, at the end of Quarter 4 2008-09. We only track complex requests, which are defined as:

1. requests which fall outside our normal course of business;
2. requests for information where we might refuse eg sensitive, confidential information or a repeat request;
3. requests for information related to the policy making process;
4. requests on which it may be necessary to consult with others either within Natural England or outside;
5. requests for large amounts of information or information which may be difficult to locate;
6. requests which seem unclear or too general to deal with, and where we will need to seek clarification from the applicant;
7. requests for information where a search is made, but none is found.

Requests and Applicants		
No of requests for information which have been logged on to the Natural England request trackers		37
% of requests identified as falling under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.		89%
% of requests identified as falling under the Freedom of Information Act 2000		11%
% of requests identified as falling under the Data Protection Act 1998		0
% of requests that were from private citizens		50%
% of requests that were from business		25%
% of requests that were from academics, NGOs, media and politicians		14%
% of requests that were from charities, lobby groups or others		11%
Timeliness		
Requests completed within the 20 working day legal deadline		21
Requests completed within the extended deadline of 40 working days.		3
% completed within the deadlines		100%
Requests still ongoing but still within 20 working day legal deadlines		6
Requests still ongoing but still within extended 40 day legal deadlines		7
Requests completed beyond the legal deadline.		0
Requests completed beyond the extended deadline.		0
Requests with an extended deadline due to the complexity of the request or the need to consider the public interest		9
The timeliness for responding to requests:		
	0–5 working days	27%
	6–10 working days	14%
	11–15 working days	23%
	16–20 working days	27%
	>20 working days	9%
Provision of Information		Exemptions used
Requests which were granted in full	18	
Requests where only part of the information was provided	5	• Personal data

		which includes data about third parties. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial interests • Information not held • Information already accessible • Commercial confidentiality
Requests which were refused in full	0	
Requests which have been transferred to The National Archives	0	
Requests which have been transferred to another public body	0	
Requests we've been unable to complete as we do not hold the information	1	
Requests we've been unable to complete due to no further information being provided by the applicant for us to complete the request	0	
Requests outstanding at the end of the quarter, but within deadlines.	13	
Requests where we are waiting for further information before we can proceed	0	
Advice, Referrals and Appeals		
Requests where we have taken external legal advice	0	
Requests we have referred to the Department of Constitutional Affairs, Clearing House as the request could have potential to affect other public bodies.	0	
Requests we have referred to Defra, as the request could have potential to affect the wider Defra family.	0	
Requests where the applicant has requested an internal review	2	
Information Requested		
% of requests related to SSSIs, species or habitat related.	29%	
% of requests related to corporate services	21%	
% of requests related to Agri-environment schemes	21%	
% of requests related to planning	23%	
% other types of requests – NNR management and environmental impact assessment regulations	6%	

Commentary

The number of requests received this quarter was comparable with the amount received on the previous quarter.

We responded to 100% of the requests we received within the legal deadline. Of these 75% were completed within the 20 day limit and 25% needed to be extended due to the complex nature of the requests. There was a significant rise in the amount of requests we extended this quarter. This was due to the rise in both complex and voluminous requests we received. During this quarter 41% of our requests were dealt with inside 2 weeks which is a pleasing rise on the previous quarter.

RTRACK continues to operate successfully with no issues reported.

Complaints at the Information Commissioner's Office

At the start of the quarter we had 4 complaints at the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Once was closed with no action taken in January and another one was opened in February.

Requests refused this quarter

We partially withheld information for 5 requests this quarter. This information was withheld because it contained personal data which included data about third parties, for commercial sensitivity, for information that is reasonably accessible, for commercial confidentiality and for information we do hold.

Appeals decisions this quarter

We received 2 requests for an internal review this quarter

A full list of complex requests received this quarter is available on Natural England's disclosure log <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/foi/disclosure-log.htm>

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