



Access to Information

2009 - 10 Q3 Report



Background

This report is based on the actual information on the Teams Request Trackers, at the end of Quarter 3 2009-10. 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		44
% of requests identified as falling under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.		89%
% of requests identified as falling under the Freedom of Information Act 2000		9%
% of requests identified as falling under the Data Protection Act 1998		2%
% of requests that were from private citizens		57%
% of requests that were from business		21%
% of requests that were from public bodies or others		12%
% of requests that were from media		5%
% of requests that were from politicians		5%
Timeliness		
Requests completed within the 20 working day legal deadline		38
Requests completed within the extended deadline of 40 working days.		3
% completed within the deadlines		98%
Requests still ongoing but still within 20 working day legal deadlines		1
Requests still ongoing but still within extended 40 day legal deadlines		1
Requests completed beyond the legal deadline.		1
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		4
The timeliness for responding to requests:		
	0–5 working days	14%
	6–10 working days	17%
	11–15 working days	36%
	16–20 working days	24%
	>20 working days	9%
Provision of Information		Exemptions used
Requests which were granted in full	31	
Requests where all information was provided	20	

Requests where only part of the information was provided	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal data which includes data about third parties • Information not held • Public safety • Commercial interests
Requests which were refused in full	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request was too general
Requests which have been transferred to The National Archives	0	
Requests which have been transferred to another public body	1	
Requests we've been unable to complete as we do not hold the information	9	
Requests we've been unable to complete due to no further information being provided by the applicant for us to complete the request	1	
Requests outstanding at the end of the quarter, but within deadlines.	2	
Requests where we are waiting for further information before we can proceed		
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	0	
Information Requested		
% of requests related to planning, coastal access or open access	36%	
% of requests related to SSSIs, species or habitat related.	34%	
% of requests related to Agri-environment schemes	16%	
% of requests related to corporate services or external communications	14%	

Commentary

The number of requests received this quarter dropped this quarter with 44 complex requests being recorded. This is a decrease of 30% on the requests received during quarter 2 but an increase of 10% on requests received during quarter 3 in 2008/09.

During the first three quarters in 2009/10 we have received a total of 168 requests. This is a rise of 58% on the 97 requests received at the end of the first three quarters in 2008/09.

Pleasingly we have responded to 98% of these requests within the legal deadline. Of these 89% were completed within the 20 day limit and 9% needed to be extended due to the complex nature of the requests. Regrettably we were late responding to one request (by one day) during this quarter which accounts for 2% of our requests.

We responded to 14% of requests inside 5 working days and 31% within 10 working days.

RTRACK continues to operate successfully with no issues reported.

Complaints at the Information Commissioner's Office

At the start of the quarter we had three complaints at the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and we have not received any new complaints during this quarter. We responded to the ICO in relation to one of the complaints during this quarter and are currently waiting for their response to this and the complaint we responded to during the previous quarter.

Requests refused this quarter

We partially withheld information for nine requests this quarter. This information was withheld for one or more of the following reasons. The information contained personal data which included data about third parties, was for information that could affect public safety or was for information we did not hold.

We also refused one request in full this quarter. This was because the request was formulated in too general a manner and the requester did not respond to our invitation to clarify or narrow down the request.

We had ten requests this quarter that we were unable to complete due to not holding any of the information requested which is a significant rise from the two we received in quarter 2.

Appeals decisions this quarter

We have not received any requests for internal review this quarter.

Notable Requests

During this quarter we received two requests in reaction to media coverage. These requests were relating to the possible reintroduction of White Tailed Sea Eagles and the proposed nuclear power station at Bradwell.

We received two requests regarding applicants of the Energy Crop Scheme following the financial issues of one of the schemes processors.

Also during this quarter we have received several separate requests on the same topic:

- five requests relating to coastal protection and dredging in the North East;
- three requests for information we hold on a planning development in Essex;
- three requests relating to Cormorant licenses;
- two requests for maps on the Coastal Path Gap.

We have also continued to receive requests from the [What Do They Know](#) website.

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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