

### Background

This report is based on the actual information on the Teams Request Trackers, at the end of Quarter 1 2011-12. 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.

<b>Requests and Applicants</b>		
No of requests for information which have been logged on to the Natural England request trackers		<b>91</b>
% of requests identified as falling under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.		<b>93%</b>
% of requests identified as falling under the Freedom of Information Act 2000		<b>7%</b>
% of requests that were from private citizens		<b>52%</b>
% of requests that were from businesses		<b>21%</b>
% of requests that were from charities and lobby groups		<b>12%</b>
% of requests that were from academics		<b>10%</b>
% of requests that were from media, politicians, public bodies and others		<b>5%</b>
<b>Timeliness</b>		
Requests completed within the 20 working day legal deadline		<b>74</b>
Requests completed within the extended deadline of 40 working days.		<b>14</b>
% completed within the deadlines		<b>97%</b>
Requests still ongoing but still within 20 working day legal deadlines		<b>0</b>
Requests still ongoing but still within extended 40 day legal deadlines		<b>0</b>
Requests completed beyond the legal deadline.		<b>0</b>
Requests completed beyond the extended deadline.		<b>0</b>
Requests with an extended deadline due to the complexity of the request or the need to consider the public interest		<b>16</b>
The timeliness for responding to requests:		
	0–5 working days	<b>10%</b>
	6–10 working days	<b>20%</b>
	11–15 working days	<b>18%</b>
	16–20 working days	<b>36%</b>
	>20 working days (includes extended requests)	<b>16%</b>
<b>Provision of Information</b>		<b>Exemptions used</b>
Requests which were granted in full	<b>49</b>	
Requests where all information was provided	<b>43</b>	

Requests where only part of the information was provided	<b>37</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal data which includes data about third parties</li> <li>• Information not held</li> <li>• Public safety</li> <li>• Internal Communications,</li> <li>• Course of Justice,</li> <li>• Reasonably accessible by other means,</li> <li>• Manifestly unreasonable,</li> <li>• Proceedings of a public authority,</li> <li>• Course of completion,</li> <li>• Commercial confidentiality,</li> <li>• Volunteered Information,</li> <li>• Environmental Protection,</li> <li>• Request was too general</li> </ul>
Requests which were refused in full	<b>5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Request was too general,</li> <li>• Volunteered Information,</li> <li>• Manifestly unreasonable (request over appropriate limit),</li> <li>• Personal Information,</li> <li>• Environmental Protection,</li> <li>• Proceedings of a public authority</li> <li>• Information Not Held</li> </ul>
Requests which have been transferred to The National Archives	<b>0</b>	
Requests which have been transferred to another public body	<b>0</b>	
Requests we've been unable to complete as we do not hold the information	<b>9</b>	
Requests we've been unable to complete due to no further information being provided by the applicant for us to complete the request	<b>0</b>	

Requests outstanding at the end of the quarter, but within deadlines.	<b>0</b>	
Requests that were withdrawn by the applicant	<b>3</b>	
Requests where we are waiting for further information before we can proceed	<b>0</b>	
<b>Advice, Referrals and Appeals</b>		
Requests where we have taken external legal advice		<b>0</b>
Requests we have referred to the Department of Constitutional Affairs, Clearing House as the request could have potential to affect other public bodies.		<b>0</b>
Requests we have referred to Defra, as the request could have potential to affect the wider Defra family.		<b>0</b>
Requests where the applicant has requested an internal review		<b>4</b>
<b>Information Requested</b>		
% of requests related to Agri-environment schemes or other grant schemes		<b>27%</b>
% of requests related to SSSIs or NNR management.		<b>18%</b>
% of requests related to species including protected species		<b>18%</b>
% of requests related to planning, coastal access or open access		<b>17%</b>
% of requests related to external communications and corporate services		<b>11%</b>
% of requests related to marine		<b>9%</b>

### Commentary

The number of requests received this quarter decreased slightly with 91 complex requests being recorded. This is a decrease of 13% on the requests received during the previous quarter but identical to the amount received during quarter 1 in 2010-11.

Pleasingly we responded to 97% of requests within the legal deadline in quarter 1.

Of these 74 were completed within the 20 working day limit and 14 within extended deadline of 40 working days.

We responded to 10% of requests inside 5 working days and 20% 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 one complaint at the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

### Requests refused this quarter

We partially withheld information for thirty seven requests this quarter.

This information was withheld for one or more of the following reasons:

- contained personal data about third parties;
- could affect public safety if released;
- was sensitive internal communications;
- could prejudice the course of justice if released,
- was already reasonably accessible by other means,
- would have been manifestly unreasonable to provide;
- were confidential proceedings of a public authority,
- the request was formulated in too general a manner,

- could adversely affect the environment if released,
- was for information that was volunteered to us,
- related to commercially sensitive information,
- was for information we do not hold.

We also refused five requests in full this quarter. These were refused because:

- the request was formulated in too general a manner and the applicants did not respond to our invitations to clarify the requests,
- the request was over the appropriate cost limit and the applicant did not respond to our invitation to narrow down the request,
- the request was for information that related to protected species that could be adversely affected if released,
- was for information that was provided to us voluntarily by private individuals,
- was for information that related solely to personal data about third parties
- was for information that related solely to confidential proceedings of a public authority

We had nine requests this quarter that we were unable to complete due to not holding all or some of the information requested. We also had three requests withdrawn by the applicants. They withdrew their requests after we contacted them to explain what we could provide in relation to their requests. Following this communication the applicants decided not to proceed with their requests.

### **Appeals decisions this quarter**

We have received 4 requests for internal review this quarter. Two have been completed and of those, in one the original decision was upheld and the other the decision was partially withheld. Two internal reviews are still ongoing but are within the legal deadline to respond.

### **Notable Requests**

- Details of our revenue and capital spending plans for 2011-12.
- Several requests regarding Jacks Lane Wind Farm.
- A substantial request regarding Reeves Hill Wind Farm.

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](#).

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