



For information

Title: Information requests and complaints update

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Purpose

This paper provides an update on the number of information requests, and key performance measures in meeting them, under Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act (FOISA)/ Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations (EIR) and data protection arrangements. The paper provides an update for the full financial year 2025/26.

The paper also describes numbers and outcomes of formal complaints to the Park Authority.

Recommendations

The Audit and Risk Committee is asked to:

- a) Note activity in this area and Park Authority performance,
- b) Comment on breadth and depth of reporting for future updates.

Activity

Freedom of Information

1. As a public body, the Park Authority is subject to statutory requirements under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act (FOISA) and also the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations (EIR). This paper provides an update on the number of information requests under these provisions received in the last four financial years. Previous years information is provided for benchmarking purposes. All figures relate to the time period in which the request was first received.
2. In handling information requests, it is for the Park Authority to determine whether a request should be dealt with under the provisions of either FOISA or EIR, or a subject access request falling separately under the provisions of data protection legislation. Handling of information requests under FOISA and EIR varies slightly in terms of potential exemptions for release of information and consideration of the wider public interest in deciding whether to release or withhold information. The classification of



an information request could itself be a point of challenge by a requester and will be tested during any request for internal review of the Park Authority’s handling of an information request, and by the Scottish Information Commissioner should a matter be referred to the Commission.

Total request numbers in 25/26 to date has increased to 57 and is now above one request per week on average.

Table 1: Number of FOISA/ EIR Requests Received, 21/22 to date

Request Type	FY 21/22	FY 22/23	FY 23/24	FY 24/25	FY 25/26
FOISA	25	20	42	28	37
EIR	17	8	4	17	20
FOISA/EIR	-	1	-	-	-
Total	42	29	46	45	57
% FOISA	60%	69%	91%	62%	65%

3. The key performance measure for all requests is the proportion of requests met within statutory timescales (which may vary depending on the nature of the request). Park Authority performance in responding to all requests is generally very good over the last 5 years (Table 2). In the year with an increase in requests of greater complexity, performance has dipped slightly to 93%, although this only involves four requests, and the period of delay beyond the target response date is all within one working week.
4. Benchmarking is possible via the Scottish Information Commissioner statistics portal¹ which compiles and publishes statistics for all bodies subject to the requirements. This reports an overall performance (all bodies subject to FOISA/EIR) of 87% over the last 4 reported quarters. For the “Other” sectoral group in which the Park Authority resides, the comparator figure is 90%
5. The number of internal review requests remains very low, with two each in 23/24, 24/25 and three in 25/26. No referrals to the Scottish Information Commissioner have occurred since FY 20/21. Updated guidance to staff and recent refresher training is aimed at maintaining and improving FOI/EIR performance and the high levels of transparency that the Park Authority exhibits.

¹ [FOI and EIRs statistics | Scottish Information Commissioner](#)

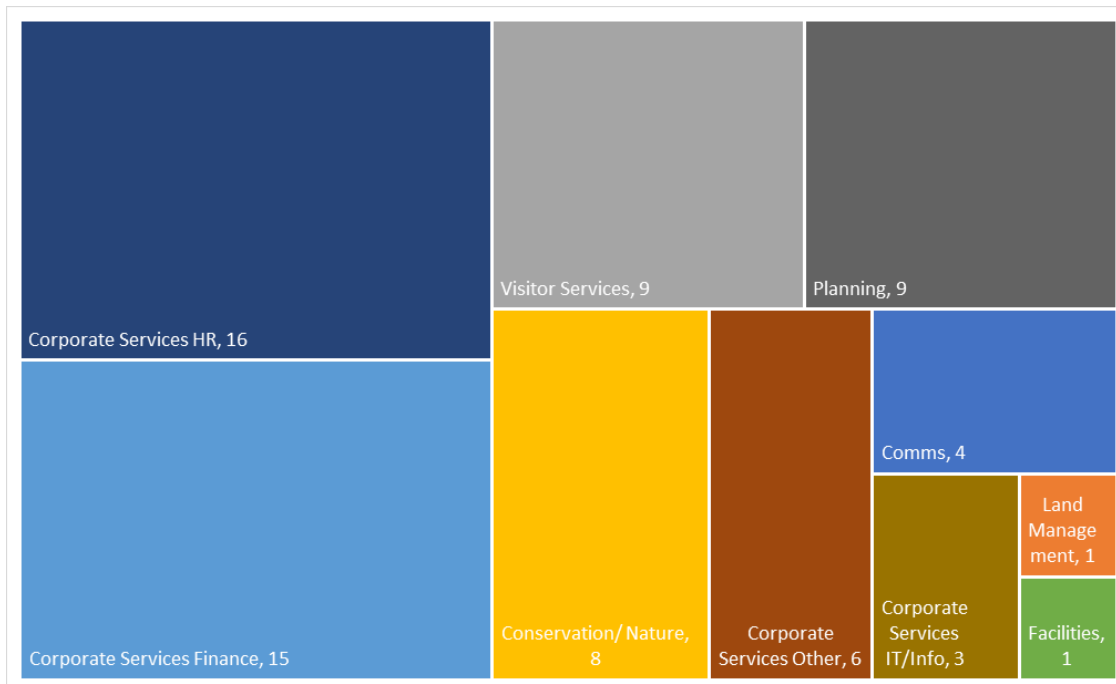


Table 2: Information requests performance overview, 21/22 to date

All FOI/EIR Requests	FY 21/22	FY 22/23	FY 23/24	FY 24/25	FY 25/26
Met within Statutory Timescales	95%	97%	98%	100%	93%
Internal Review Requests	2	1	2	2	3
Referral to Scottish Information Commissioner	0	0	0	0	0

6. The latest distribution of requests across the organisation is shown in Figure 1. Corporate Services continues to encompass the largest number and includes all corporate requests that include areas such as finance, grants, governance, procurement, HR, ICT and information management, amongst others, accounting for many requests processed under FOISA. Requests vary significantly in breadth and complexity. Request topics (and organisation areas providing information) are shown in Appendix 1 for all requests received in 2025/26.

Figure 1: Requests by Service Area, 2025/26





7. The categorised type of requesters are set out in Table 3 for 2025/26. Individual members of the public comprise around half of requesters, with political or commercial organisations comprising the largest proportions of the remainder. Note that there is no requirement for requesters to provide this information which is generated based on the experience of the Information Manager.

Table 3: Proportion of requests received by requester type, FY 25/26 Q1&Q2

Requester type	Proportion
Individual	42%
Commercial	21%
Political (generally parliamentarians)	18%
Lobby/ pressure group	12%
Media	5%
Other organisations	2%

Multiple requests per requester

8. Over the three financial years from 2023/24 to 2025/26 inclusive, analysis by email address shows the frequency of multiple requests from the same source. Whilst a small number made multiple requests within those 3 years, the majority were from single requesters (Table 4).

Table 4: Proportion of requests received by requester type, 2023/24 – 2025/26

Requester frequency	Number
8 requests	1
6 requests	1
5 requests	1
4 requests	1
3 requests	4
2 requests	4
1 request	63

Subject Access Requests

9. Under data protection legislation, individuals have the right to request information held about them by an organisation, a process known as a subject access request



(SAR). The Park Authority generally receives very few SARs compared to other public bodies; it generally holds and processes relatively little personal data other than the minimum it requires to fulfil its statutory duties and other activities effectively.

10. There were no subject access requests in 2025/26.

Complaints

11. The Park Authority has a formal complaint handling process. Where possible staff are encouraged to resolve more straightforward complaints directly within 5 working days (known as Stage 1 – frontline resolution). Where a complainant remains dissatisfied or the issue is more complex, a complaint is logged for a Stage 2 investigation and response, generally by a senior member of staff. The total number of complaints logged is shown in Table 4, as well as a summary of topics. The number of Stage 2 complaints has reduced significantly, with three in the latest full financial year.

Table 4: Complaints overview, 2023/24 to 2025/26

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Number of complaints	10	9	3
Main topic areas of complaints (may be assigned against multiple categories)	Planning		9
	Conservation		4
	Visitor Services/ Access		4
	Corporate Services		3
	Land management		2
	Transport & travel		1



Appendix 1: Topics of FOI and EIR requests received 2025/26

Organisation area(s)	Topic
Visitor Services	Ministerial direction on railway crossings and core paths
Conservation/ Nature, Land Management	Twinflower at Creag Bheithe Bheag
Conservation/ Nature	Beaver complaints and compensation
Visitor Services	Core paths
Corporate Services HR	Recruitment
Visitor Services	Ministerial direction on railway crossings and core paths
Planning, Corporate Services HR	Various staffing and governance
Corporate Services HR, Comms	Citizen Engagement Platforms
Corporate Services Other	Customer service performance levels
Corporate Services HR	LGBT Youth Scotland
Corporate Services HR	Recruitment
Corporate Services Finance	Various expenditure
Corporate Services Finance, Corporate Services Other	Grants
Corporate Services HR, Corporate Services Finance	Budget and Staff
Corporate Services IT/Info	IT Services / Devices
Corporate Services Finance, Corporate Services HR	Senior staff pay
Land Management	Deer management information
Conservation/ Nature	Coire na Ciste - funding and decision-making
Corporate Services Finance	Payments over 25k
Corporate Services Finance	Legal services
Planning	Listed buildings
Corporate Services Finance, Planning	Legal expenses & staff time
Conservation/ Nature, Land Management	Planting of Coire na Ciste
Corporate Services IT/Info	Print and ICT Procurement
Land Management	Muirburn, burning plans and the East Cairngorms Moorland Partnership
Corporate Services Other	Energy Contracts and Billing
Corporate Services HR	Staff networks
Planning	Listed buildings, building dereliction and fire
Corporate Services Finance	Late payments
Conservation/ Nature, Comms, Corporate Services Finance	Beaver project costs and media



Visitor Services	Statistics on missing dogs and canine-related incidents
Planning, Corporate Services IT/Info	Planning back office systems
Planning, Conservation/ Nature	Nature Networks
Planning, Corporate Services HR, Corporate Services Finance	Ecology Capacity - Planning
Land Management, Corporate Services Finance, Corporate Services Other	Publicly funded equipment attending the Dava and Carrbridge fires
Planning	Planning application - An Camas Mor
Corporate Services Facilities	Energy Consumption and Costs
Comms	Filming activities
Corporate Services Finance, Corporate Services Other	Climate Adaptation Fund
Corporate Services HR	Equalities information
Visitor Services	Fire Byelaw decision making
Land Management	Dorback peatland restoration
Visitor Services	Fire Byelaw decision making
Corporate Services Finance	Paid actors
Conservation/ Nature	Raptor Data
Visitor Services	Glenmore parking
Corporate Services HR	Lone workers
Planning, Corporate Services HR	Broomhill quarry
Corporate Services HR	Suspended staff on full pay
Corporate Services HR	Staff based outside of Scotland
Corporate Services Other, Corporate Services Finance	Artificial or plastic plants/flowers/greenery
Corporate Services HR	Roles removed
Conservation/ Nature	Coire na Ciste
Corporate Services HR	Employee probation
Corporate Services Finance, Land Management	Funding to Scottish Land and Estates
Comms, Land Management, Visitor Services	Fire Management Byelaws 2025