



## 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, providing an update for the first half of 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, CNPA 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, and if the trend continues is predicted to be around 60 total for the year, higher than previous years.

**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 Q1 & Q2
FOISA	25	20	42	28	21
EIR	17	8	4	17	9
FOISA/EIR	-	1	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>% FOISA</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>70%</b>

3. The most relevant 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 and has been at or above 95% over the last 4 years. In the latest half-year with an increase in requests of greater complexity, performance has dipped slightly to 89%, although this only involves three requests, and lateness is generally a few days only.
4. Benchmarking is possible via the Scottish Information Commissioner statistics portal<sup>1</sup> which compiles and publishes statistics for all bodies subject to the requirements. This reports an overall performance (all bodies) of 87% and 91% over the last 4 reported quarters for FOI and EIR responses respectively. For the “Other” sectoral group in which the Park Authority resides, those figures are 95% and 96%.
5. The number of internal review requests remains very low, with two each in 23/24, 24/25 and this year to date. No referrals to the Scottish Information Commissioner have occurred since FY 20/21. Figures are summarised in Table 2.
6. 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.

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<sup>1</sup> [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 Q1&Q2
Met within Statutory Timescales	95%	97%	98%	100%	89%
Internal Review Requests	2	1	2	2	2
Referral to Scottish Information Commissioner	0	0	0	0	0

7. 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. Other parts of the organisation received a similar number of requests. Requests vary significantly in breadth and complexity. Request topics (and organisation areas providing information) are shown in Annex 1 for all requests received to date in 2025/26.

**Figure 1: Requests by Service Area, 2025/26 Q1 & Q2**



8. The categorised type of requesters are set out in Table 3 for the first time, for 2025/26 Q1 & Q2. Individual members of the public comprise around half of requesters, with lobbying groups/ individuals and political or commercial organisations comprising most 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**

<b>Requester type</b>	<b>Proportion</b>
Individual	48%
Lobby/ pressure group	19%
Political	16%
Commercial	10%
Other organisations	3%
Media	3%

### **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 have been no subject access requests to date 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 only one so far this financial year.



**Table 4: Complaints overview, 2023/24 and 2024/25**

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26 Q1 & Q2
Number of complaints	10	9	1
Main topic areas of complaints (may be assigned against multiple categories)	Planning Conservation Visitor Services/ Access Corporate Services Transport & travel Land management		8 4 4 2 1 1



**Annex 1: Topics of FOI and EIR requests received 2025/26 Q1 and Q2.**

<b>Organisation area(s)</b>	<b>Topic</b>
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