



## 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 full financial year 24/25.

The paper also describes numbers and outcomes of formal complaints to the Cairngorms National 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 by the Scottish Information Commissioner should a matter be referred to the Commission.

3. Total request numbers in 24/25 is very similar to two out of three previous years. The proportion of requests processed under EIR arrangements has risen in the latest year. Figures are summarised in Table 1.

**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
FOISA	25	20	42	28
EIR	17	8	4	17
FOISA/EIR	-	1	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>% FOISA</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>62%</b>

4. 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, and 100% in the most recent. (Table 2). 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 88% and 92% 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 94%.
5. The number of internal review requests remains very low, with two each in 23/24 and 24/25. The outcomes of both reviews in 24/25 was a single additional document supplied in each case (which had been mistakenly overlooked originally). No referrals to the Scottish Information Commissioner have occurred since FY 20/21. Figures are summarised in Table 2.

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<sup>1</sup> [FOI and EIRs statistics | Scottish Information Commissioner](#)



**Table 2: Information requests performance overview, 20/21 to date**

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

6. From FY 23/24 and 24/25, the distribution of requests across the organisation is shown in Figure 1. Corporate Services encompasses the largest number and includes all corporate requests that include areas such as governance, finance, procurement, HR, ICT and information management, amongst others. Conservation/ nature comprise the next largest category, followed by Planning & Place and Visitor services (including access). Requests vary significantly in breadth and complexity.

**Figure 1: Requests by Service Area, 2023/24 and 2024/25 combined**



7. The frequency of requesters is set out in table 3 for the years 2023/24 and 2024/25 combined. The majority of requesters make a single request, but 22% of requests are from repeat requesters.



**Table 3: Number of requests by frequency of requests**

<b>Number of requests within 2023/24 and 2024/25 combined</b>	<b>Number of requesters</b>
Persons making 6 requests	1
Persons making 4 requests	2
Persons making 3 requests	1
Persons making 2 requests	11
Persons making 1 request	52

### **Subject Access Requests**

8. 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.
9. In 2023/24 and 2024/25 combined, the Park Authority has processed two formal subject access requests. One of these was revisited as a request covering a longer time period but is not counted as a third request here.

### **Complaints**

10. 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. In all but 2 cases, complaints were investigated and a reply sent within the target period of 20 working days; 1 resulted in ongoing communications and the other required wider input due to complexity and was two days later than target.



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

	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>
Number of complaints	10	9
Main topic areas of complaints  (may be assigned against multiple categories)	Planning Conservation Visitor Services/ Access Corporate Services Transport & travel	8 4 4 2 1

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