

9 August 2023

Case Reference: IC-249529-M6C3

Review of response to information request

I write further to your email of 7 August in which you requested a review of the handling of your request dealt with under the reference number IC-249529-M6C3.

Section 45 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) requires the publication of a code of practice, designed to assist public authorities to handle requests under the FOIA.

This guide recommends that public authorities put in place an internal review process for FOIA responses, which our guide suggests should be triggered whenever a requester expresses dissatisfaction with the outcome of a request they have made.

As a result, we have conducted an internal review of our response to your information request which was handled under the reference number IC-249529-M6C3. I am a manager in the Information Access Team, and I can confirm that I have had no prior involvement in the handling of this request.

Request and response

On 6 August we received a request from you which sought the following information:

"I wish to request a list, ideally as a spreadsheet in MS Excel format, of the names of all the UK parish councils that have received 20 or more ICO Decision Notices (for FOIA cases only) since 1st January 2014, together with the actual number of Decision Notices received by each of these parish councils."

On 7 August we responded and provided a link to our webpage. We explained that because the information was reasonably accessible on our website it was technically withheld pursuant to S.21 FOIA.

Review

I consider the requested information to be readily available on our website and that S.21 was appropriately applied to your request.

I can see from your email that you appeared to have a problem accessing the link contained within our response. I can also see that a further email has been sent to you containing the URL and weblink within the body of the email itself rather than in PDF format. Hopefully this link will now take you to the relevant webpage.

Our website result shows there are 415 decision notices that fall within the scope of your request. It is possible to place the names of the parish councils into an Excel sheet and then establish quickly how many decision notices relate to individual parish councils.

I did a timed dip sample for the first 25 entries, and it took me just under three minutes to type the names into Excel. To do all 415 would therefore take just under one hour which I consider reasonable.

It may help to explain that due to our retention schedule most of these cases will have been deleted from our systems. Neither do we hold any document or have any computer system that allows us to generate a report as you have suggested. Typically, this is not something we need for our day to day business purposes.

Having carefully considered this request I believe S.21 was appropriately applied on this occasion and your review is therefore not upheld.

Complaint procedure

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of this review, you can make a formal complaint with the ICO in its capacity as the regulator of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This can be done by visiting:

<https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>

Yours sincerely

Information Access Team Manager,

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Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF