

EIR Request (received 28 April 2022) - Reference: DFI/2022-0146

I would like to request the following:

1. In relation to (a) local and (b) major planning applications for each District Council, please outline the average time from the receipt of correspondence seeking the views of 1) Road Service and 2) DFI Rivers as a statutory consultee to the issue of your response for the last five years.
2. The staffing complement of the team that responds to statutory consultee requests for each year of the last five years

Response (issued 30 May 2022)

Thank you for your email dated 28 April 2022 requesting information held by this office.

You requested the following:

- 1. In relation to (a) local and (b) major planning applications for each District Council, please outline the average time from the receipt of correspondence seeking the views of 1) Road Service and 2) DFI Rivers as a statutory consultee to the issue of your response for the last five years.*
- 2. The staffing complement of the team that responds to statutory consultee requests for each year of the last five years*

In considering your request on behalf of the Department, I have determined that the information requested falls under the aegis of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR), as opposed to Freedom of Information Act 2000. Your request is for information that relates to activities, policies or plans that affect the environment. Section 39 of the Freedom of Information Act specifically excludes from consideration under that Act requests for what is deemed to be environmental information.

A guide explaining the Environmental Information Regulations can be found at:

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-environmental-information-regulations/what-are-the-eir/>.

In response to your request, I can advise as follows.

1. The Department does not hold average time statistics for our response performance. However, the Department does hold record of the percentage responded to on time, i.e. within 21 days for routine applications for which no extension of time has been sought.

Consultee performance information is published and can be found in the Quarterly & Annual Reports for the Statutory Planning Consultations: <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/statutory-planning-consultations-quarterly-annual-reports>.

2. For DfI Roads & Rivers, the staffing complement involved with statutory consultations in the planning application process is set out below.
 - Within DfI Roads there are 48 full time equivalent (FTE) technical staff for whom the majority of their role is responding to statutory consultee requests.

However, some of these staff will also have other responsibilities, such as private streets developer liaison and determinations, or local development plan duties. In their role in relation to statutory consultations, these staff are also supported, as necessary, for short periods of time by staff in other specialist engineering areas such as traffic, technical approvals, structural reviews, etc.

Whilst the above number is the full current complement of FTE staff, allocated to statutory consultations in planning matters, I must highlight that, for significant periods over the last 5 years, DfI Roads has fulfilled its role as a statutory consultee with reduced numbers due to staff absences and vacant posts.

- Within DfI Rivers the average (FTE) staff complement from April 2017 until January 2022 has been 14.3.

Copyright notice

The supply of information under the Freedom of Information Act or the Environmental Information Regulations does not give the recipient or organisation that receives it the automatic right to reuse it in any way that would infringe copyright. Information supplied continues to be protected by copyright. You are free to use it for your own purposes, including for private study and non-commercial research, and for any other purpose authorised by an exception in current copyright law. Documents (except photographs) can also be used in the UK without requiring permission for the purposes of news reporting. Any other re-use, for example commercial publication, would require the permission of the copyright holder.

Most documents provided by a government department or agency will be protected by Crown Copyright. Most Crown Copyright information can be re-used under the [Open](#)

[Government Licence](#). For information about the OGL and about re-using Crown Copyright information, please see [The National Archives website](#).

Copyright in other documents may rest with a third party. For information about obtaining permission from a third party please see the [Intellectual Property Office's website](#).