



Request

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I am writing to request information regarding Discharge of Conditions (DoC) applications within your council jurisdiction.

Please provide a list (in Excel format) of all planning applications submitted from 1st January 2020 to the most recent data available where no decision was made within 12 weeks and no refund of fees has been made to date.

Requested Columns:

1. Application reference
2. Applicant name
3. Site address
4. Application valid/received date
5. Fee paid (£)
6. Decision due date
7. Actual decision date
8. No. of days to decision
9. The decision
10. Extension of time agreed in writing (Yes or No)
11. Refund (Yes or No)
12. Eligible for Refund under 12-week rule
13. Withdrawn (Yes or No)
14. Description of conditions being discharged

Please provide the information in chronological (date) order.

Response

The Council doesn't hold the information in the form requested and a manual search of the Council's records relating to planning condition discharge request applications would be required to respond on this EIR request.

Regulation 12(4)(b) of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 allows a public authority to refuse to disclose information to the extent that the request for information is manifestly unreasonable.

Most condition discharge request applications relate to multiple conditions which will be discharged at different stages or often in part. There is no mechanism for identifying these staged-decision cases within the Council's system, so to provide the information in response to this request would require, for this period and at the time of compiling this response, a manual review of 603 condition discharge request applications and all their associated documentation and correspondence.

This work would include a search of all associated documentation and correspondence for records of an extension of time being recorded as this is not documented in the Council's database system, rather any such agreements would be recorded in our document management system.

This request has therefore engaged the exception available under Regulation 12(4)(b), as it is estimated that this could take over 600 hours* of Officer time.

**An estimate of 60 minutes is given to review each condition discharge application in relation to each criterion of the request. Depending on the extent and scale of the condition discharge request application, this timescale may be lower or exceed this timescale. This factor, however, is considered a reasonable estimate of the time required to compile this response as the scope of the work required is unknown until it is undertaken.*

Public interest in maintaining the exception

The public interest in maintaining this exception lies in protecting public authorities from exposure to disproportionate burden or to an unjustified level of distress, disruption or irritation in handling information requests

Public interest in disclosure

There is a clear public interest in transparency and accountability in the planning system. Disclosure of cases where statutory timescales have not been met, and no refund issued, could contribute to public scrutiny of how planning authorities comply with service standards and handle public funds.

However, given the resource implications, we consider the public interest in maintaining the exception outweighs the interest in disclosure.