



Office of Government Commerce

Avi Silverman

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**By e-mail to:**  
**[avi.silverman@kablenet.com](mailto:avi.silverman@kablenet.com)**

28 February 2005

Dear Mr Silverman

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 98260**

I write in connection with your request for information dated 02 February 2005, which was received by OGC on 02 February 2005 . I note you seek access to the following information:

*Under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act please provide me by email with all details of the eight IT projects receiving two consecutive "red lights" in the OGC gateway review process.*

Following receipt of your request searches were conducted within OGC to locate information relevant to your request. I can confirm that OGC holds the information described in your request.

I am writing to advise you that the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) has decided to disclose some but not all the information you requested.

**Relevant exemptions**

The information that you requested comes under the exemption in section 33(1)(b) and (2) of the Act. OGC is a public authority that has functions in relation to the examination of the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which other public authorities use their resources in discharging their functions. The Gateway process is such a function. The non-disclosed information, if disclosed would, or would be likely to, prejudice the exercise of OGC's function in this regard.

## **Public interest balancing exercise**

In applying this exemption OGC balanced the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosing the information.

In performing this balancing exercise, OGC had regard to the considerations set out below. In this balancing exercise, OGC had regard to three types of public interest consideration: general considerations, considerations in favour of disclosure, and considerations in favour of non-disclosure.

## **Disclosed information**

OGC discloses statistical information on the projects and programmes that have had “double reds” and this statistical information is set out in a table at Annex A. However, the identities of the departments or projects/programmes concerned have not been identified.

OGC decided that this information as to the “double red” RAG statuses could be disclosed as the public interests in transparency and accountability outweighed the public interests in non-disclosure.

It appears that the figure you cite derives from the eight IT projects referred to the NAO Report “Improving IT procurement: The impact of the Office of Government Commerce’s initiatives on departments and suppliers in the delivery of major IT-enabled projects”

(November 2004).

However, there have been two further “double reds” in respect of IT projects/programmes since that report, and the table at Annex A also covers these two.

Please note also that there has been fifteen “double reds” overall, as the Gateway Process extends far wider than just IT projects/programmes. Please let me know if you would like similar statistical information for these non-IT projects/programmes.

## **Non-disclosed information**

For the remainder of the information requested, the public interest in disclosure was in each case significantly outweighed by the public interest in non-disclosure. Accordingly, OGC has decided not to disclose this information.

## **General considerations**

An important general consideration in the balancing exercise was the clear public interest in maintaining the integrity of the Gateway Process as an effective and prompt peer review process producing reports based on candid interviews for the benefit of Senior Responsible Owners and which has led to demonstrable vfm gains. It was noted also that the Gateway Process has become invaluable as a practical means of analysing risks and assessing options in a live programme or project.

### **The Public Interest in disclosure**

In dealing with this request, OGC considered the following public interests that would tend towards disclosure of the information requested:

- (a) there is a public interest in transparency so to allow public scrutiny of whether these government projects/programmes are being managed effectively and responding properly to information contained in Gate reports, including recommendations and issues connected to RAG status; and
- (b) there is a public interest in accountability so that there can be public scrutiny and accountability in respect of these projects as they involve both considerable public expenditure and potential public benefit.

OGC also considered the argument that the public interest in transparency and accountability meant that there should be disclosure so as to allow public scrutiny of whether the Gateway process is effective in these and other highly important projects/programmes.

### **The Public Interest in non-disclosure**

OGC considered a number of public interest considerations that would tend towards non-disclosure of the requested information.

There is a public interest in non-disclosure when disclosure of the information requested would (or would be likely to) inhibit candour amongst future interviewees on those (or other) projects/programmes.

Gate interviewees must be able to be candid about matters which could lead to serious recommendations being made to the Senior Responsible Owner of the projects/programmes. This would particularly be the case with the recommendations and RAG statuses that you have requested.

It is crucially important that on such major projects and programmes all interviewees can be confident that any comments which would lead to certain (perhaps adverse) recommendations and RAG statuses contained in Gate reports are intended for the benefit of the Senior Responsible Owner.

The consequence of any inhibition or lack of candour is that the Gate reports would become (or would be seen to become) less reliable documents for

Senior Responsible Owners in the course of their supervision of the projects/programmes. There is no public interest in this outcome.

Gate reports (including recommendations and RAG statuses) are also completed extremely promptly and are drafted without regard for any public disclosure. They are intended to be speedy and practical documents for the immediate attention of the Senior Responsible Owner.

### **General**

If you are unhappy with the decisions made by OGC in relation to your request you may ask for an internal review. You should contact the OGC Service Desk (details at the bottom of the first page of this letter) if you wish to complain.


If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact the Service Desk who will put you in touch with the case officer.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ruth Fagg". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line under the name.

**Ruth Fagg**  
**Head of Information Management**

## Annex A

### Double Red IT Reviews Referred to in the NAO Report (Published November 5th 2004)

<u>Project</u>	<u>Gate at which the second "Red" was given in an OGC Gateway Review</u>
A	3
B	2
C	2
D	1
E	1
F	4
G	3
H	1

### Additional IT Double Reds (Notified to OGC since the NAO report)

<u>Project</u>	<u>Gate at which the second "Red" was given in an OGC Gateway Review</u>
I	Both at Gate 0
J	4