



**Information Commissioner's Office**  
Promoting public access to official information  
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**For immediate release**

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**Gateway Reviews on ID cards should be made public**

The Information Commissioner, Richard Thomas, has upheld two complaints under the Freedom of Information Act following information requests to the Treasury and the Office of Government Commerce for the Gateway Reviews of the identity cards programme and the programme's traffic light status.

In both cases the public authorities refused to disclose the information citing two exemptions in the Act (audit functions and the formulation and development of government policy).

However, the Information Commissioner finds that the audit function exemption has not been applied correctly on this occasion. He is not persuaded that disclosing the traffic light status of these Gateway Reviews, or that the information contained in the Reviews, would discourage future cooperation by those providing information to the Office of Government Commerce. He is not therefore persuaded that disclosure would prejudice the exercise of the Office of Government Commerce's audit functions.

Whilst the Commissioner did accept that in both cases the public authorities had applied the exemption on the formulation of government policy correctly, he finds that, in these cases, the public interest in disclosing the information is greater than the arguments put forward for keeping the information secret. In reaching his decision, the Commissioner was aware of the importance the government attaches to the Gateway Review process and the balance between public accountability and transparency, and maintaining public confidence in the robustness and effectiveness of the Gateway Review process. However in this case he is not persuaded that the

Gateway Review process will be damaged by the disclosure of this information. The Commissioner concluded that disclosure is likely to enhance public debate of issues such as the programme's feasibility and how it is managed.

## **ENDS**

If you need more information, please contact the Information Commissioner's press office on 020 7025 7580 or visit the website at: [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)

### **Notes to Editors**

1. The Information Commissioner promotes public access to official information and protects personal information. The ICO is an independent body with specific responsibilities set out in the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003.
2. Any Notice of Appeal by either public authority should be served on the Tribunal within 28 days of the date on which the Decision Notice is served.
3. The Gateway process examines a government programme or project at critical stages in its lifecycle to provide assurance that it can progress successfully to the next stage. The process is based on well-proven techniques that lead to more effective delivery of benefits together with more predictable costs and outcomes. The traffic light system – red, amber, green - is a measure of the urgency of action required on the Gateway recommendations at the time of the report on a project.
4. For more information about the Information Commissioner's Office subscribe to our e-newsletter at [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)