

05 May 2026



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Andrew Gilruth

[agilruth@moorlandassociation.org](mailto:agilruth@moorlandassociation.org)

Dear Andrew Gilruth

**Access to Information Request – Request no EIR2026/02139**

Thank you for your request for information, which we received on 20 February 2026 and for which an extension was applied on 19 March 2026.

Your request has been considered under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (**the EIRs**). We apologise for providing this response past the deadline.

You asked for the following information (text in bold below). Please find below our response to each of your questions below.

**I am seeking a small, clearly bounded set of process / governance / QA "audit trail" records for the production and publication of: *Natural England Research Report RP2967 - "Definition of Favourable Conservation Status for Blanket bog" (and/or the internal project/publication record that corresponds to this published report).***

**To keep this request within the appropriate cost limit, I am not asking for all emails, all drafts, or underlying datasets at this stage. I am requesting only the specific records listed below (or their nearest equivalents).**

**1) Publication approval / workflow record (single record extract)**

**Please provide the publication approval and sign-off record for RP2967 from the system used to manage technical publications (often described as a "*technical publications database*" or equivalent internal publication workflow), showing the following fields (or equivalent):**

- \* publication/report identifier (eg. RP2967) and title.**
- \* dates for: submission, review, approval, and publication/release.**
- \* approving officer(s) role/title (names acceptable if already recorded; if not, role/title is sufficient).**
- \* any recorded QA category / QA level / evidence assurance level or similar classification assigned to the publication.**
- \* any recorded notes indicating required review steps (eg. peer review, specialist sign-off).**

**If the publication/workflow record does not itself contain QA/evidence assurance fields, please also provide the document or record referenced by the workflow as evidence of QA completion (eg. a linked checklist, gateway note, sign-off memo, or**

attached review record), limited to the minimum needed to evidence completion.

## **2) QA / peer review completion record**

Please provide the completed QA / peer review checklist or form (or equivalent record) used to confirm that RP2967 met Natural England's internal evidence/quality standards prior to publication.

If there is no single checklist/form, please provide the closest equivalent QA completion record (e.g., internal approval memo, QA sign-off note, or governance gateway document) that confirms QA/review was completed.

In addition, please provide any response-to-reviewer table (or equivalent close-out document) used to address review comments for the final pre-publication review round only (i.e., the last round before publication). If none exists, please confirm it is not held.

## **3) Governance / oversight record**

Please provide one recorded item (minute extract, decision log entry, approval note, or email) that shows the governance route used for RP2967, specifically:

- \* whether a Technical Steering Group (TSG) or other governance group oversaw/endorsed the DFCS definition for blanket bog; and
- \* the date of that oversight/endorsement (or, if none occurred, a record stating that no TSG/governance review was required or was undertaken).

If the relevant governance body is not called "TSG", please provide the equivalent record for the body that fulfilled that function.

## **4) Version list**

Please provide a list of document versions held by Natural England for RP2967 (metadata only), limited to:

- \* filename (or document title).
- \* date created and/or last modified.
- \* document status (draft/final) if recorded.
- \* author/owner job title/team if recorded (names not required).

### **Scope and practicalities**

- \* **Time period:** from the start of drafting/commissioning of RP2967 up to the publication date.
- \* **Search locations:** limited to the publication/workflow record and the RP2967 project folder / record set (or equivalent).
- \* If you consider that any part of this request would exceed the appropriate limit,

**This is requested as a list only; I am not requesting copies of drafts at this stage.**

Our response:

Natural England holds information relating to the development, assurance, governance, and publication of RP2967 (*Definition of Favourable Conservation Status for Blanket Bog*). The information relevant to Questions 1, 2, 3 and 4 is not held within a single system or document.

## **Question 1 & 2**

### **Q1 Publication approval/workflow record for RP2967**

Please refer to the tables below, which set out the publication identifier and title, key workflow dates, approving roles, recorded assurance requirements, and details of how publication approval was obtained.

### **Q2 QA/peer review completion record for RP2967**

Please refer to the tables below. There is no single completed QA or peer-review checklist covering all assurance stages for RP2967. Evidence of QA and review completion is provided as set out in the tables.

<b>Publication/report identifier and title</b>	
<b>Information held – Title of Report</b>	<b>Date</b>
RP2967 – <i>Definition of Favourable Conservation Status for Blanket Bog</i>	31 March 2025

<b>Publication workflow dates (as recorded)</b>			
<b>Stage</b>	<b>Summary of information held</b>	<b>Record source (reference only)</b>	<b>Date</b>
Submission	Definition submitted by Favourable Conservation Status (FCS) team to Publications for processing.	Publication Submission Form (email record).	19 February 2025
Review	Publications review undertaken; minor amendments requested.	Publications review record (email record).	20 February 2025
Review (final amendments)	Final wording amendments incorporated.	Publications workflow record.	27 March 2025
Approval	Agreement to publish confirmed following completion of assurance steps.	Senior Approval confirmations (email records).	21 March 2025
Publication/Report release	Document uploaded to Access to Evidence and published.	Publications system record.	31 March 2025

<b>Approving officers (roles as recorded)</b>	
<b>Approval</b>	<b>Job Title/Role</b>
Technical	Principal Specialist (Technical Steering Group (TSG))
Publications	Director of Evidence
Project Level	Principal Officer and Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) (Strategic Risk & Communications)
Portfolio Level	Director for Strategy and RLS Portfolio Board
NExCo Level	Natural England Executive Committee (CEO and relevant Directors)

<b>QA/Evidence Assurance Clarification</b>
<b>Summary of information held</b>
Project Level Technical Assurance applied. Two QA Review forms completed. Additional specialist comments provided directly on the draft definition record.

Recorded review and sign off		
Review/sign off	Summary of information held	Date
Specialist QA	QA Review Form – Upland Habitats Senior Specialist	
Specialist QA	QA Review Form – Principal Adviser for Biodiversity Delivery	
Specialist Comments	Comments with draft definition – Senior Specialist (Wetlands).	
TSG sign off (Round 1)	TSG meeting notes.	13 December 2017

### **Question 3**

#### **Governance/oversight record for RP2967**

Please refer to the tables below. This information shows a recorded item evidencing the governance route used for RP2967 (*Definition of Favourable Conservation Status for Blanket Bog*).

	Summary of information held	Record source	Date
Technical Steering Group (TSG) Chair sign off (round 2)	Record confirming TSG Chair approval following completion of required amendments representing formal technical governance endorsement of the Definition of Favourable Conservation Status definition.	TSG Chair sign off confirmation.	05 July 2022
Publications sign off	Director for Evidence confirmation		20 May 2023
Executive sign off	CEO confirmation		20 March 2025
Executive Committee confirmation	NExCo approval confirmation		27 March 2025

### **Question 4**

#### **Version List**

The table below sets out the document versions held by Natural England for RP2967.

Document Titles	Date
RP2967 Definition of Favourable Conservation Status for Blanket bog final.docx	08 April 2025
RP2967 Definition of Favourable Conservation Status for Blanket bog.pdf	08 April 2025
RP2967 Definition of Favourable Conservation Status for Blanket bog.pdf	26 March 2025
RP2967 Definition of Favourable Conservation Status for Blanket bog V4.0.docx	27 February 2025
RP2967 Definition of Favourable Conservation Status for Blanket bog V3.0 AUDIT TRAIL ONLY.docx	31 January 2025
RP2967 Definition of Favourable Conservation Status for Blanket bog V3.0 DO NOT USE.docx	30 January 2025
RP2967 Definition of Favourable Conservation Status for Blanket bog For Final sign off OUT OF DATE JAN 2023.docx	13 December 2024
Draft England FCS statement blanket bog v0.10.DOCX	05 June 2023
Blanket bog England FCS definition v2.0.DOCX (shows version control up to	05 July 2022

when deemed complete)	
Draft England FCS definition blanket bog v0.11 clean.DOCX	05 August 2020
Draft England FCS statement blanket bog v0.11.DOCX	09 July 2018
Draft England FCS statement blanket bog v0.9.DOCX	08 December 2017
Blanket bog England FCS statement v0.8.DOCX	07 February 2017
Blanket bog England FCS statement v0.7 RJP.DOCX	31 January 2017
Draft England FCS statement blanket bog V0.5.DOCX	25 February 2016
Draft England FCS statement blanket bog V0.5 1.DOCX	25 February 2016
Draft England FCS statement blanket bog V4.DOCX	09 February 2016
Draft England FCS statement blanket bog V3.DOCX	08 February 2016
Draft England FCS statement blanket bog V2.DOCX	16 December 2015
Initial draft statement.DOCX	03 December 2015

We have provided four internal emails evidencing the sign off required for *RP2967* within Natural England's National Teams. We consider these to be in the scope of your request and are provided in the attached zip file.

Some of the information contained within the documents has been withheld as it engages Regulation 12(3) – Personal Information – of the EIRs. The names, signatures, and contact details of private individuals and past/current staff members in certain circumstances are considered by Natural England to be personal information as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Please note that some information within the documents does not relate to the subject matter of your request and is therefore out of scope. These sections have been marked as 'Out of Scope'.

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If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. As you may be aware, under the legislation should you have any concerns with the service you have received in relation to your requests and wish to make a complaint or request a review of our decision under regulation 11 of the EIRs, please contact me within 40 working days of the date of this letter and I'll arrange for a colleague to conduct an internal review.

If you are not content with the outcome of that complaint or the internal review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the Commissioner cannot decide unless you have exhausted the internal review procedure provided by Natural England.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/> or call on 0303 123 1113 (local rate), [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk).

Yours sincerely

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