



Freedom of Information
Internal Review decision

Internal Reviewer	Simon Pickard, Senior Compliance Manager
Reference	IR2010001
Date	22nd February 2010

Requested information

On the 15th December 2009 the BBC received the requesters Freedom of Information Act request for the following information;

I would like all minutes from the board of trustees relating to the BBC policy of being pro or anti climate change.

I would like all papers submitted to the board of trustees on the same matter

I would like all emails on the matter discussing climate change to and from the board of trustees.

Any other communications on the matter.

I am not asking for journalistic information, but details on general policy. The exemption does not apply in this case.

The original reference number for this request was RF120091710

Issues on review

The BBC responded on 8 January 2010 advising that;

'...I can confirm that since its inception in January 2007, the Trust has not held any discussion in its meetings or received any papers (either of the full Trust or of the Committees) relating to "the BBC being pro or anti climate change". Neither has it received or sent any emails nor had any other communications on the matter. Therefore in accordance with section 1 (1) of the Act, I can confirm that the BBC does not hold any information of relevance to your request.'

The requestor has sought an internal review of the BBC's decision that it did not hold information relevant to the original request on the grounds that the BBC Trust issued a press release on the 6 January 2010 announcing that the BBC Trust will carry out a review to assess the accuracy and impartiality of the BBC's coverage of science. The requestor argued that as the date of this press release was 6 January



2010, it is likely that discussions started before this date and therefore the BBC was wrong in its conclusion that it did not hold the information requested.

The objective of this internal review is to ascertain whether the BBC Trust was correct in its findings that they held no relevant information in regard to the original request. It is important to understand that the response is correct as of the date in which the request was received by the BBC. Therefore the question for this internal review to consider is whether the BBC Trust held any relevant information as of the 15 December 2009.

NB - It should also be noted that the requestor was advised by the BBC that if information relevant to the request was held, that it would fall outside the scope of the Act on the grounds that it was held for the purposes of 'journalism, art or literature'. It is important to clarify that this matter is not subject to internal review.

Decision

The BBC's response dated 8 January 2010 stated that the BBC Trust did not hold any information in relation to "the BBC policy of being pro or anti climate change".

Having made further enquiries with the BBC Trust to undertake this internal review it became apparent that the BBC does not have a policy regarding its position on climate change and this therefore explains why the BBC Trust found no relevant information to disclose to the requestor.

I therefore uphold the findings of the BBC's original response.

Appeal Rights

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your internal review, you can appeal to the Information Commissioner. The contact details are: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF; Telephone 01625 545 700 or www.ico.gov.uk