**Interview Schedule**

Introductory Questions

Thank you for meeting with us to be interviewed for our project on how Scottish public authorities disclose information on the environment. My name is [ ] and I will be the person interviewing you today.

This interview is part of the “Uncovering the Environment: The Use of Public Access to Environmental Information” project that is being conducted by the University of Dundee. I am going to be asking you about your experience with accessing information on the environment from Scottish public authorities. Your answers to these questions will be anonymised and not attributable to you.

If you want to take a break or stop the interview, please just tell me and we will stop the interview immediately. Additionally, if you do not want to answer any questions just say so and we can skip over it.

* What information on the environment did you want to access?
  + When was this?
* Why did you want this information?
  + A particular news story or event/ links to a particular campaign or organisation/professional reasons?
* Could you tell me about your expectations when you tried to get access to this information.
  + Was this the first time you tried to access environmental information from a public authority?
  + How many requests have you sent?

Information that is freely available from public authorities

I am now going to ask you a few questions on information that is freely available from public authorities without having to submit a request for it. Examples of such information include planning applications made available online and signs at the beach indicating how clean the water is. These examples are only a small range of the environmental information which is freely available, and you may have seen and used other types of such information.

* Have you ever looked for environmental information that may have been made available by public authorities?
  + Can you think of any examples of environmental information that is made available by public authorities?
* (If Yes) Tell me about your experience in looking for environmental information made available by public authorities.
  + How did you try and find this information? (Internet, in Person?)
    - What are your thoughts on the role of technology here?
  + Did you ask for any assistance?
* (If No) Why not?
* Were you able to find the information you were looking for?
* What did you do with the information?
  + Participate in how public authorities make decisions?

Submitting Requests for Environmental Information

In this section I will be asking you about how you submitted your request for environmental information.

* Have you submitted a request for environmental information?
* What environmental information did you ask for?
  + Do you think that the information you requested was environmental information?
* Tell me about your experience in submitting a request for information to the public authority.
  + Did you ask for the information in a particular format, such as a spreadsheet?
  + How did you submit the request (e.g. email, WhatDoTheyKnow, letter, in person...)?
* Was submitting your request easier or harder than you expected?
  + Did you need any assistance from the public authority?
    - (IF Yes) How did they assist you? Was their assistance useful?

The Public Authority’s Response

In this section I will be asking you about how the public authority responded to your request for environmental information. I will be asking about how long the public authority took to respond to your request, as well as whether you were charged and whether they disclosed the information you requested?

* How long did the public authority take to respond to your request?
  + Do you think that this length of time was too long?
* Did the public authority give you the information you requested?
  + Did they give you all of the information, some of it or none of it?
  + (If Some or None) Why did they refuse to give you some/all of the information?
* Did the public authority charge you for the information you requested?
  + How much? Did you pay it?
  + What is your opinion about the charge?
* (If All/Some) Was the information useful to you?
  + Why/Why not?
  + How did you use the information that was given to you?
* Were you happy with the authority’s response?

Reviews and Appeals Questions

In this section I will be asking you about whether you have complained to the public authority or other bodies about how the authority responded (or did not respond to) your request.

* Did you complain to the public authority about how they treated your request for environmental information?
  + Why/Why not?
* Tell me about what happened when you complained to the public authority
  + How long did the public authority take to respond to your complaint?
  + How long did they take to review their original decision?
  + Did the authority change their mind from what they had originally decided?
* Do you know about any other procedures to challenge the decision of the public authority?
* Do you feel that these review procedures were effective at enabling you to participate in them and challenge the decision of the public authority?
* Is there anything else that we have missed?

Participating in how Public Authorities Reach Decisions

In this section I will be asking you about any times you have attempted to contribute to a decision-making process of any public authority. Examples of such participation include submitting your views on a proposed decision (such as the granting of planning permission) or a proposed action (such as cleaning up a polluted pond).

* Have you tried to influence a decision that was being taken by a public authority?
  + (IF Yes) Tell me about how you took part in this decision
  + (IF No) Why not?
* Did having access to environmental information have any impact on how you attempted to influence a decision made by a public authority?
* Would you like to become more involved with how Scottish public authorities make decisions on the environment now that you have accessed/tried to access environmental information?

Conclusion

This is the final section of the interview, where I will ask a final set of questions relating to your overall opinion on Scottish public authorities and about you.

* Overall, what is your opinion on how Scottish public authorities provide access to environmental information?
  + Are Scottish public authorities successfully or unsuccessfully providing access to environmental information?
* What do you think could be done to improve how public authorities receive requests for information?
* Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. Before we finish up is there anything that I have missed that you want to discuss?