

Our ref: CRS 758387

Bridge House
1 Walnut Tree Close
Guildford GU1 4LZ

30 January 2018

Dear

M3 Closure

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed our search for the information, which you requested on 5 January 2018. Your request has been dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I will answer each of your requests for information as follows:

- 1) The reason that caused the M3 to be closed west bound between J9 and J11 including entry slip roads between J9 and J10 at 04:59 hours on 23/09/2017. If the closure was caused by an item being thrown or deposited in or near the road then please inform me of the substances in the item that caused the closure.**

As you are aware, the information requested is already in the public domain. Please use the link below to reach the post incident bulletin published on our website regarding the M3 closure on 23 September 2017:

<http://www.highways.gov.uk/traffic-information/traffic-information-services/highways-england-post-incident-bulletin/2016-post-incident-bulletins/september-2017-post-incident-bulletins/m3-closure-both-directions-hampshire-saturday-23rd-september-2017/>

- 2) Please send me the details of the full incident investigation referred to in the National Traffic Centre's Report dated 11:49 23/09/2017.**

This incident is still subject to a police investigation, which has yet to report. Until this investigation is concluded I am not able to comment on any of the factors that may have led to this incident.

3) Please explain why the closure was for some 13 hours thus causing a major disruption of commercial and private traffic.

The M3 in Hampshire was closed in both directions between Junctions 9 and 11 due to a receptacle containing chemicals (we are not aware of what these were) being thrown on to the southbound carriageway.

Our involvement started at 3:52 am, when we were informed that Hampshire Police were attending an incident between Junction 10 and 11 of the M3. At 3:55 am our Traffic Officers were dispatched to the scene and by 4:13 am the police had requested full closure of the motorway.

At 4:37 am our Regional Control Centre (RCC) set "Long delays" messages on Variable Message Signs (VMS) on the M3, M4 and A303. At 4:49 am these were updated to read "M3 closed" and were shown across the M3, A3, M25, M4 and M40. Media updates were also provided from there and continued throughout the duration of the incident.

While the police investigations were carried out, we worked hard to give drivers accurate and up to date information and to keep traffic moving as much as possible. We advised of the closures, implemented diversion routes and set signs and signals across our network to warn drivers on approach about the closure. This activity started in the first minutes following the incident and all the traffic, initially trapped by the incident, was taken off the network in less than 90 minutes.

On this particular morning, this part of our network was especially busy, as a result of a number of events in the area that weekend including a football match at Southampton. There were also three separate sets of roadworks on local roads, which could not be lifted.

This meant that these roads became very congested during the time of the incident. Consequently it was harder to clear the traffic that had built up on the motorway.

What happened on 23.09.2017 on the M3 was a serious incident and it was important that the police were able to conduct a thorough investigation. We believe we did everything we could during these circumstances, but we routinely review our performance and will ensure we act on any opportunities to improve.

If you are unhappy with the way we have handled your request you may ask for an internal review within 2 months of the date of this response for Freedom of Information requests and within 40 days for Environmental Information Regulations requests.

Our internal review process is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/highways-england/about/complaints-procedure>

If you require a print copy, please phone the Information Line on 0300 123 5000; or e-mail info@highwaysengland.co.uk. You should contact me 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 me. Please remember to quote reference number CRS 758387 in any future communications.

Yours sincerely