

Our ref: CRS 714,943
Your ref:

2nd Floor
Woodlands
Manton Lane
Bedford MK41 7LW

Via Email

Direct Line: 01234

8 January 2015

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST
A12 INGATESTONE - NOISE

Thank you for your email of 17 December, which we have decided to handle under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

You ask for confirmation that road surface repair work now planned to take place in February will include repairs near and adjacent to your property. I confirm this is the case. Whilst we suspect there could be an issue with the drainage at this location that may require more extensive repairs in the future, the work planned for February will repair and reinstate the road surface on the northbound carriageway. Once complete, the quieter surface should also help to alleviate your concerns about traffic noise.

You ask for the reason for the delay to these repairs. As explained in Graham Dalton's letter to you of 28 November, the work at Ingatestone has been rescheduled to fit in with other work along the A12. You may be aware that we have recently started work to resurface the A12 between junctions 11 and 12. It is for this reason that work to repair the A12 near your property has been rescheduled.

You also ask for details of the gradient of the embankments on either side of the A12 and the distance of houses, including your own from the A12. We do not hold this information. However, I again confirm that the embankment adjacent to your property is too steep to construct a noise fence. On the south side of the A12, the noise fence is built on flat ground at the top of the embankment. I also confirm we do not hold information about the distance of your property, or others in the vicinity, to the A12 carriageway.

In conclusion, you ask for the document that resulted in the decision to install noise mitigation measures on the south side of the A12 only. Following a search of our electronic and paper records, I have established that we do not hold any single document that specifically states noise mitigation measures were to be installed on the south side of the A12 only. However, the overarching policy to introduce noise mitigation measures on the Ingatestone Bypass goes back to July 1998 and the then Government's plan to tackle some of the noisiest trunk roads built before 1988.

These policies were announced in A New Deal for Trunk Roads. A copy of this can be viewed online via Norfolk County Council's website at <http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/view/ncc145473>

There then followed an announcement of those sites which passed sift criteria for receiving noise mitigation measures and the Government published what became known as the "Hansard List" in November 1999. The A12 Ingatestone Bypass was on that list as at that time the road comprised surface dressed concrete. Concrete surfaced roads are much noisier than roads surfaced with hot rolled asphalt or low noise surfacing, which is now used as standard.

The A12 Ingatestone Bypass did not benefit from noise mitigation measures from this fund. Noise mitigation for sites funded via the Hansard List ceased circa 2005 when the annual ring-fenced budget was withdrawn. Before then, Government policy had moved on and noise mitigation proposals to resurface all concrete roads were drawn from "Transport 2010: The Ten Year Plan", published in summer 2000. A copy of this document can be found online at <http://iobi.swan.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Road-Strategy-2000-Transport-10-Year-Plan.pdf>

In April 2003, the Government announced a programme to resurface all concrete roads across the strategic road network by March 2011, benefitting thousands of households across the country and prioritising those that were worst affected first. The A12 Ingatestone to Margareting section was programmed for resurfacing between 2004/5 and 2006/7 subject to funding. Unfortunately, this programme was effectively abandoned in late 2005 when ministers agreed that the resurfacing of roads ahead of a maintenance need, for noise alleviation purposes, would no longer be allocated funding.

Running parallel to the above policies, we, the Highways Agency, introduced a programme of major maintenance work on the A12, with the intention of effectively rebuilding it over the course of a number of years. This programme began in 1997/8 with the Mountnessing Bypass. The Ingatestone Bypass underwent an £8.3million major reconstruction during 2005/6 when its concrete road surface was replaced with low noise surfacing. Further major maintenance schemes were carried out annually until 2009 at which time, funding limitations meant we had to withdraw many large-scale schemes.

None of these policies however, state that noise fencing would be introduced on the south side only. You will recall from previous correspondence that measures are currently placed on the south side only because the A12 Ingatestone Bypass bypasses the village to its north and therefore noise fencing placed in the south verge benefits the majority of properties. Also as previously explained, there are far fewer properties on the northern side therefore provision of noise fencing, where possible, is unlikely to prove to be value for money.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. Please remember to quote reference number 714,943 in any future communications.

In keeping with the spirit and effect of Freedom of Information legislation, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless exempt. We may therefore be publishing the information you requested, together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context, via the [Gov.uk website](http://www.gov.uk).

If you are unhappy with the way we have handled your request you may ask for an internal review. Our internal review process is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/highways-agency/about/complaints-procedure>

If you require a print copy, please phone the Highways Agency Information Line on 0300 123 5000; or e-mail ha_info@highways.gsi.gov.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

Yours sincerely

Asset Development Team Leader
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