

Our ref: 734,740

Your ref:

Second floor
Woodlands
Manton Lane
Bedford MK41 7LW

Via email

Direct Line:

14 March 2016

Dear

ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION REQUEST M11 EMBANKMENT REPAIRS

Thank you for your email of 15 February requesting information about work we are carrying out on the M11 near Fiddlers Hamlet. I can now confirm that we have completed our search.

Since receiving your email, I understand you have met with [REDACTED] and the concerns and issues raised at the beginning of your email have been discussed. I note that Jennie also wrote to you on 2 March confirming those discussions.

I also understand that there are proposals to hold a full residents meeting, which will be held once our planting proposals are finalised.

I will therefore confine this reply to your requests for information, which we have handled under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 because the information requested concerns measures and activities affecting or likely to affect elements of the environment or affect factors such as noise, pollution discharges and other releases into the environment.

I will take each request in turn as follows:

Any documentation relating to why you are undertaking these works? We are told by the contractor Amey, that this is due to land slippage – where was the land slippage. Surely if this was the case why have you removed the trees and shrubbery of some 40 years or so? We have been informed by specialist that this should be left in place to protect the soil and further slippage.

At Annex A, I attach a copy of our Geotechnical Design Report, at Annex B, our Environmental Alert Form and two documents from Annex C, our Environmental Scoping Assessments, all of which identify why it was necessary to carry out the work.

Please note that these documents have been redacted in reliance of Section 13 of the Environmental Information Regulations, removal of personal information.

Please note that the scoping assessment for site B, dated December 2014, supersedes the report dated October 2014 that covers sites A, B and C. I also attach at Annex D, a photograph of the M11 carriageway, taken near Fiddlers Hamlet, which provides you with some visual evidence as to why the work is necessary. The photograph shows a crack in the carriageway, which was caused by the embankment slippage.

What cost have been involved so far for this work the hire of the farmers field to use as a works site – this also backs onto our land and is very noisy. From very early in the day till gone 17.00 at night.

We awarded a contract to Interserve for a value of £4.7million and this includes the repairs to the embankment. As our work on the M11 is not yet complete, final accounts are yet to be submitted. You ask specifically for costs relating to the use of adjacent land as a site compound. We have decided to withhold this information under the exception in regulation 12(5)(e) of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 as this is commercially sensitive information. Annex E sets out the exception in full and details why the public interest test favours withholding the information.

It is also my understanding that you have recently had a name change for branding purposes, can you please send me full details of costs incurred in this rebranding, including promotion, artworks, consultant cost etc, during this whole process.

We have not had a name change for branding purposes. Our name changed following the enactment, on 1 April 2015, of the Infrastructure Act 2014. Before that date, the Highways Agency (as we were known) was an executive agency of the Department for Transport. On 1 April, the Infrastructure Act created a new public sector company to manage, maintain and improve the strategic road network and the Highways Agency became Highways England. The name was changed so that we no longer appear affiliated to, or an agency of, any other organisation or government department.

A phased approach has been applied in renaming our assets. Assets are renamed as part of natural renewals and maintenance, which means there are no additional costs as assets are replaced at the end of their natural lifecycle. This approach was agreed with senior executives and the Secretary of State for Transport given that he is now the sole company shareholder. As a result all costs have been minimised. Also, all visual identity, creative development of concepts and design associated with our renaming were conducted in-house by Highways England's Media Services Team to ensure costs have been kept to a minimum.

Could I please request what pre environmental experts you consulted with, prior to this work being undertaken to protect the likes of myself and my neighbour's from the noise and pollution levels. Please under this Act provide me with any reports given.

Our service provider, Amey, use in house environmental specialists who produced the attached reports.

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Copyright in other documents may rest with a third party. For information about obtaining permission from a third party see the Intellectual Property Office's website.

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-england/about/complaints-procedure>

If you require a print copy, please phone the Information Line on 0300 123 5000; or email 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 734.740 in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

Business Management Team Leader
Network Delivery and Development (East)
Email: