

Our ref: CRS 718,386
Your ref:

2nd Floor
Woodlands
Manton Lane
Bedford MK41 7LW

Via email

Direct Line:

9 April 2015

Dear

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST
A12 JUNCTIONS 11-12: 40MPH SPEED LIMIT RESTRICTION**

Thank you for your email of 18 March requesting information we hold on the reasons for the 40mph speed restriction on the A12 northbound carriageway from junction 11 and for details of the work we are carrying out on each carriageway.

As you may know, we are carrying out full scale resurfacing of both carriageways of the A12 between junctions 11 and 12. We are also taking the opportunity to renew road signs, repair drainage and upgrade the safety barriers. By doing this additional work now, we will minimise the need to carry out further maintenance at this location for several years.

To keep as much traffic as possible on the A12, we are using contraflow traffic management rather than continually divert traffic onto the local road network. This not only benefits our neighbours and local communities, it keeps traffic more suited to moving via the A12 on the A12.

To enable us to do all this safely, we cannot allow traffic to continue to run at the usual derestricted speed therefore a 40mph temporary speed limit restriction has been implemented which operates 24 hours a day.

Firstly, as previously mentioned, we are running traffic overnight under contraflow. This means that all northbound and southbound traffic is moved onto one carriageway. To do this, we have created crossover points in the central reserve barrier. This in turn means the central reserve barrier is incomplete and an errant vehicle travelling at derestricted speed would not be prevented from crossing into the opposing carriageway. The 40mph temporary speed limit minimises this risk.

Additionally, during the day, road users are likely to be travelling on a temporary or planed surface. We are using a new technique where stretches of road surface are planed off overnight and is then resurfaced the following night and another section of old surface planed off. This method has recently proved successful on the A421 Bedford Southern Bypass and, subject to weather conditions, can shorten the overall work period.

Before proceeding with this new method of allowing traffic to run on a planned or temporary surface, we carried out a very detailed risk assessment. A copy of this risk assessment is attached as Annex A. You will note that the assessment has been carried out demonstrating the need for traffic to run at no more than 40mph.

Additionally and because traffic is running on a temporary surface, we have also had to acquire approval to depart from the standards we are usually required to adhere to under Volume 7, Section 5 of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges. These are known as Departures from Standard and copies are attached at Annex B to E. A condition of their approval was the use of a temporary 40mph speed limit restriction.

I appreciate the temporary 24-hour 40mph speed limit restriction will add to journey times but it is essential it remains in place for the safety of those travelling on it. You can keep up to date with our progress and find out about how the work will impact you by visiting our dedicated webpage at <http://www.highways.gov.uk/roads/road-projects/a12-j11-to-j12-northbound-and-southbound-improvement-works/>

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 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 718,386 in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

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