

Our ref: CRS 719,166
Your ref:

2nd Floor
Woodlands
Manton Lane
Bedford MK41 7LW

Direct Line:

Via Email

1 May 2015

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST A12 JUNCTIONS 31 - 33

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed our search for the information, which you requested on 8 April.

You ask for information about our work to improve the A12 between junctions 31 and 33 under four bullet points, which I set out below with our reply beneath each.

A figure for the overall project costs (including labour and materials), including a figure relating to the original project estimate, which (according to a previous post on your website) was scheduled for completion by 9 March 2015 and a separate figure indicating what the additional cost will be as a consequence of extending the project deadline to 31 May 2015. If some reason you are not in a position to provide the above figures, could you please provide an explanation as to why you do not have budget information to hand or if you do have them to hand why you are unable to release them?

The statement that work was due for completion on 9 March has been misunderstood. 9 March was the date we were due to finish a particular phase of work before moving the contraflow onto the southbound carriageway. We had intended to complete all work by the end of March but at the beginning of March, we issued a press release advising that the works could not be completed until the end of May.

The figure for the overall project costs, including labour and material is not yet available as the improvement scheme has not yet been completed and the final account agreed. We have instead set out the estimated costs for various elements of the improvement scheme between junctions 31 and 33 in the table below.

Item	Estimated Cost
Preliminaries, Traffic Management, Safety Barrier, Signs and Road Markings	£ 4,450,000
Site Clearance, Surfacing and Planing	£ 5,230,000
Bridge Joints, Parapets and Special Structures	£ 70,000
Kerbs, Footways, Paved Areas, Drainage, Lighting and Electrical	£ 500,000
Estimated total	£10,250,000

We do not currently hold information relating to additional costs incurred as a consequence of the extended completion. We use a target sum payment mechanism whereby costs incurred due to increase in programme duration, unless it is due to unforeseen circumstances, is shared with the principal contractor and the reconciliation is carried out after the scheme is completed.

A detailed explanation of the specific adverse weather conditions referred to on your web page above and how these adverse conditions have contributed to the extension of the completion deadline from March 2015 to May 2015.

Annex A, attached, is a diary outlining the scheme's progress from its start on 6 December to 31 March. Included in this are those days affected adversely by weather. The diaries includes some specific weather related reasons but have not been specified on all occasions. However, road surfacing materials cannot be laid in low temperatures or during periods of excessive wet weather.

A detailed explanation of the specific “additional work requirements” that have arisen, when these requirements were identified and assessed, why they were unforeseeable at the original time of project scoping and how these requirements have contributed to the extension of the completion deadline from March 2015 to May 2015.

During construction of the central reserve crossovers before Christmas, we took the opportunity to take additional core samples of the carriageway. These are tubular samples which show each layer of the carriageway and are used to help ratify the design.

While many of the cores taken confirmed our design proposals, there were areas that identified the need for deeper treatment than planned and these areas are shown in red in the testing and treatment overview appended at Appendix B.

At the time, we believed that if we made good progress resurfacing the areas which were at a lesser depth then these additional treatment depths would not adversely affect the overall delivery of our programme. However, weather delays and plant breakdown slowed our progress.

Additionally, we are using a new and different technique to deliver this work whereby the existing surface is removed or planed over several nights prior to the new surface being laid. During the day traffic runs on the planed surface. This enables each work activity to be maximised within the overnight working shift. However, when the traffic runs on the planed surface, it may accelerate deterioration of that surface which then requires additional repair to keep it safe for road users until the new surface is laid.

We are learning lessons as the scheme progresses and we have modified our strategy to ensure the planed surface is not exposed to traffic in any one location for too long and we have been able to reduce the likelihood of the planed surface deteriorating.

The occurrences of delays are captured in Appendix A. Where it states “TM only” this covers the times where the traffic management (TM) is maintained but we are not using contraflow or closures and no other work is taking place. An example of this is the Christmas/New Year close down period when we removed as much traffic management as possible and stopped all work.

A detailed description of the criteria used to determine why this specific stretch of the A12 was chosen for improvement works at this precise time (December 2014 – March 2015), over and above other areas of the A12 further south towards Colchester, Chelmsford and London.

As part of our Gearing for Growth Business Strategy, we want to take the opportunity of increased investment over the next 5 years to make a transformational change in the condition of the network. Key drivers include minimising the impact of roadworks on our neighbours and a reduction in the need to return to the same site within five years to carry out further maintenance.

To achieve this, we are including as many other asset renewals as can be reasonably justified, such as road signs, drainage and safety barriers, whilst we carry out planned resurfacing work.

The main driver for improvement work is the age of the road surface. We have identified locations where the road surface has, or will imminently meet, the agreed age criteria, defined by the surface type. Hot rolled asphalt has a life expectancy of about twenty years and the new thin surface wearing courses, more commonly known as low noise surfacing, of about ten years.

The approach is to deliver schemes with an evidence based business case involving the resurfacing of entire lengths of carriageway between junctions where the road surface has reached the end of its serviceable life and including additional assets wherever practicable.

A secondary driver is our prioritisation of strategic routes in need of repair across the region. These are currently prioritised as A12, A47, A14, M11 and M1.

Within this, the A12 junctions 31 to 33 are a priority for delivery based on the road surface age trigger.

Within the limits of junctions 31 and 33 there were other assets which were also at an age where they required renewal or maintenance to address defects or aspects affecting condition or performance. Other sections on the A12 do not currently meet these criteria.

If you would like any more information about this project, you are welcome to contact our project sponsor, . can be contacted at the above address, by email at or by telephone on .

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the 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.

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 719,166 in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

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