

Our ref: CRS 727,086
Your ref:

Second Floor
Woodlands
Manton Lane
Bedford MK41 7LW

Via email

16 September 2015

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST LOWESTOFT THIRD RIVER CROSSING AND BASCULE BRIDGE

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed our search for information that you requested on 19 August. I have handled your request under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I will reply to your questions in the order you addressed them.

1. *What discussions has Highways England had with Peter Aldous MP, Robert Goodwill MP, Andrew Jones MP, Simon Weston - special adviser within the Department of Transport, Waveney District Council, Suffolk County Council and the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership, in relation to the planned Lowestoft third crossing? What I mean by discussions is E-mails, meetings, recorded conversations, letters, etc. Any written and verbal communication. This is from January 2014 onwards please.*

On 4 July 2014, Simon Amor, Asset Development Manager drove the Minister, Robert Goodwill, from Lowestoft to Peterborough along the A12 and A47 during a regional visit. The A12 in Lowestoft and the Bascule Bridge would have been one of many matters discussed. However, there are no records of those discussions.

On 12 June 2015, Simon Amor attended the inaugural Lowestoft Third River Crossing Steering Group. This meeting was chaired by Peter Aldous MP and discussed the objectives and timescale for the project. I understand from an email you sent on 16 August 2015 to [REDACTED] (which was copied to Simon Amor) that you already have a copy of the minutes of this meeting.

Simon Amor was unable to attend the second Steering Group meeting on 30 July and sent his apologies. We do not hold a copy of the minutes of that meeting.

The Highways Agency received one email from WSP Group on 5 July 2014 in relation to the Third River Crossing. Suffolk County Council was copied into this email, a copy of which is attached.

2. How many times have Highways England, have had to close the Bascule Bridge, for hydraulic and non-hydraulic work since 2007?

Since 2007, the Bascule Bridge has been closed a total of 193 times. This figure includes planned and unplanned closures.

3. How much has it cost to maintain the Bascule Bridge, since the 1st April 2007? (Last seven financial years - 1st April 2007 to 31st March 2015).

The Bascule Bridge costs are approximately £11.6million for both operation and maintenance between 1 April 2007 and 31 March 2015. As per my reply of 13 August, routine maintenance and other costs for the Bascule Bridge are spent from generic budgets and cannot be separately identified.

However, you may be aware that we completed an electrical and mechanical refurbishment of the bridge operating systems in 2009, the costs of which were met from a specific budget head. The total cost of this refurbishment project was £8.2million of which £6,178,795 falls within the specified period and is included in the aforementioned £11.6million.

4. Have there been any concerns raised about the Bascule Bridge, in the last five years, from members of the public? This is in relation to safety of the bridge. This could be letters, e-mails, recorded conversations, agendas and minutes please.

Highways England has received three safety concerns from members of the public about the area which includes the Bascule Bridge. These have been received via our Customer Contact Centre in the last five years and are provided verbatim below:

- Log number 17990508; dated 13 August 2015:
The customer said about 15-20 metres south of Bascule Bridge there were 2 damaged barriers which have recently been replaced with temporary barriers.
- Log number 17835387; dated 23 October 2014:
When you cross over the bridge the lines have faded so bad cars come round on wrong side as there is no markings left and also going into town over bridge there is no line marking when you pull over into the right hand lane and you get a lot of cars coming over your side of road as there is no lane marking
- Log number 13190684; dated 1 August 2011:
Please could you consider a few things in Lowestoft, matters are really becoming worse, so much so that many bus companies will not drive along here because they consider the road DANGEROUS in their words. The first is my own personal opinion but the road surface in Station Square needs resurfacing. The two lanes from Denmark Road going towards the Bascule Bridge on Station Square need to be resurfaced and anti-skid coating reapplied. It is completely unacceptable you are up and down in a car

because there is a coating on some areas and not others. Secondly the bus companies consider the timings on the traffic lights dangerous as you come along Station Square going towards the bridge the traffic lights let 4 cars through, this creates huge tail backs up Denmark Road at peak periods. People get so angry that they over take people cut in front. One bus company has refused to route buses along here causing discomfort to passengers. All it would take would be to increase the period on the green light on the traffic lights at the junction with Station Square and battery green road. Could you make the green light stay for at least 7 seconds for the traffic on Station Square going over the bridge so buses can come along here again so simple when you think about it really to stop the dangerous jams up Denmark Road!!

Our replies to the above three concerns are attached.

5. Has Highways England been involved in discussions with Suffolk County Council and Waveney District Council, regarding closing the Bascule Bridge or limiting the use of Bascule Bridge to sustainable transport? I mean by discussions is through e-mails, letters, recorded conversations, minutes and agendas, meetings, telephone calls. This is from January 2013.

From January 2013, Highways England has had no discussions with either Suffolk County Council or Waveney District Council about closing the Bascule Bridge or limiting the use of Bascule Bridge to sustainable transport.

6. What conversations have Highways England had with Peter Aldous MP, Robert Goodwill MP and Andrew Jones MP, regarding renaming the A12 to A47 from Great Yarmouth to Lowestoft? This could be e-mails, meetings, minutes and agendas, letters, etc. This is from January 2014 onwards please.

From January 2014, Highways England has had no discussions with Peter Aldous MP, Robert Goodwill MP or Andrew Jones MP about renumbering the A12 to A47 from Great Yarmouth to Lowestoft.

7. What discussions has Simon Amor, had with Peter Aldous MP, Suffolk County Council and Waveney District Council since the 8th May 2015? What I mean by discussions - is e-mail discussions, telephone calls, letters, meetings, etc.

Simon Amor has not had any discussions, emails or exchange of correspondence with Waveney DC or Peter Aldous MP about the Lowestoft Third Crossing, other than discussions via the Steering Group meeting on 12 June 2015.

Simon Amor had a brief email exchange with Suffolk County Council in June 2015 about the use of a particular engineering consultant to work on the project, a copy of which is attached.

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 727,086 in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

Business Coordinator
Network Delivery & Development (East)
Email: