

Our ref: CRS 739,639  
Your ref:

Second Floor  
Woodlands  
Manton Lane  
Bedford MK41 7LW

Via Email

Direct Line:

8 July 2016

Dear

**ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION REGULATIONS 2004  
REQUEST FOR INFORMATION – A12 ROUNDABOUTS, GREAT YARMOUTH**

Thank you for email of 15 June to Austin Adkins, requesting information about maintenance of roundabouts on the A12 and our auditing and inspection of our service providers' delivery of those services.

I confirm we have handled your request under the terms of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. This is 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 have extracted your information requests from your email and respond as follows:

***1. What is the current instruction (schedule) that Amey are working to?***

Amey manage the strategic road network across the east of England, including the A12 near Great Yarmouth, on our behalf. As part of this they are required to carry out routine maintenance activities, including grass cutting.

Our overriding priority is to ensure the strategic road network is maintained in a safe and serviceable condition. Grass and vegetation cutting is done primarily to ensure that sight lines at junctions and bends are maintained and road signs, street lighting and traffic signals are not obscured

From the photographs attached to your request, we do not believe that sight lines are obscured as road users are able to see vehicles approaching from the right. The height of vegetation on a roundabout island may actually help improve safety as it encourages drivers to slow down on approach to ensure the roundabout's circulatory carriageway can be entered safely.

I acknowledge your interest in roundabout maintenance is a positive one and comes from your genuine concerns about safety. However, I must discourage you from taking any personal action to maintain the roundabout island without entering into a formal agreement with us.

Those who maintain the network on our behalf are required carry public liability insurance to protect the Secretary of State for Transport. The A12 is also a very busy trunk road and moving equipment across to the roundabout island must be done in a safe way that minimises risks to both road workers and drivers on the A12 using appropriate traffic management.

All routine maintenance work is carried out on a risk-based approach using the Asset Maintenance and Operational Requirements (AMOR).

A copy of our Area 6 version (the administrative area in which the A12 lies) is available online at:

[http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140603112028/http://assets.highways.gov.uk/about-us/procurement-asset-support-contract/Area\\_6\\_-\\_AMOR\\_v1\\_9\\_For\\_Information\\_Only.pdf](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140603112028/http://assets.highways.gov.uk/about-us/procurement-asset-support-contract/Area_6_-_AMOR_v1_9_For_Information_Only.pdf)

The section of interest is Part 13 – Soft Estate Maintenance Requirements on pages 94 and 95.

Based on AMOR, Amey produce an outline routine maintenance programme annually but grass and vegetation cutting is assessed weekly as part of their route inspections, at which time the programme is adjusted according to the perceived risks.

As I indicated in my reply to you of 25 April, we do not plant and maintain ornate borders. We are aware that the local authority does maintain roundabouts that they are responsible for to a higher specification in terms of planting and we are amenable to their approaches if they wish to maintain roundabouts for which we are responsible.

## ***2. How often do you inspect and audit their delivery of services?***

Highways England staff do not inspect routine maintenance work carried out by Amey. We simply do not have the resource to do that. However, our staff are routinely on the strategic road network, whether that be to travel to meetings or for other work purposes. All staff are generally expected to perform a “Watchman” role and if they spot a defect or other network issue, there are appropriate channels for it to be raised, managed and resolved.

Amey’s delivery of contracted services is routinely monitored by us and we employ a range of audit and monitoring processes.

There is no requirement to audit a specific part of Amey’s contractual responsibility so an audit covering grass cutting would be included under the general heading “routine maintenance” and may cover a number of maintenance operations.

We have a service quality review (SQR) programme which requires us to conduct a minimum of twelve SQRs per annum against Amey's Quality Plan. These SQRs are allocated on a business priority basis and are supplemented by Amey's internal audit processes.

Our Audit and Assurance team, who are independent from the operational directorate, which manages the day to day aspects of Amey's contract, also conduct Contract Assurance Reviews. These reviews can cover any aspect of the contracted service and they review and audit both Highways England and Amey processes.

Additionally, our staff accompany Amey personnel on site safety tours, which allow us to visit working sites to ensure safety and best practice in the supply chain are observed.

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](mailto: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 739,639 in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

Business Management Team Leader  
Operations (East)  
Email: