

Our ref: CRS 757,699
Your ref:

Highways England
Second Floor
Woodlands
Manton Lane
Bedford MK41 7LW

via email

Direct Line:

16 January 2018

Dear

ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION REGULATIONS A11 - SIGN MAINTENANCE AND GRASS CUTTING

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed our search for the information that you requested on 15 December 2017. We have dealt with it 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.

You asked what maintenance was carried out to signs and what central reserve grass cutting was carried out on the A11 for 1000 metres either side of the Fiveways Roundabout between June and December 2017.

The A11 between the Fiveways Roundabout and Thetford was dualled and opened to traffic in December 2014. As part of post-construction contractual obligations, the contractor, Balfour Beatty continues to be responsible for grass cutting. Therefore the portion of your request relating to grass cutting has been split between the section north of the Fiveways Roundabout and the section south of the Fiveways Roundabout.

For the length south of the Fiveways Roundabout, maintenance is carried out on our behalf by Kier Highways Ltd.

Grass Cutting - north of the Fiveways Roundabout

Balfour Beatty carried out grass cutting activities, including the central reserve, in July and August.

Grass Cutting – south of the Fiveways Roundabout,

All grass cutting and other vegetation management is carried out on a risk based approach rather than a programmed basis, in accordance with our Maintenance Requirements Plan (MRP) which states:

Management of the vegetation must allow for the safety of road users and maintenance personnel and the ability to maintain all built elements of the highway. This is managed so as to promote nature conservation and biodiversity and to integrate the highway into the surrounding landscape.

The Environmental Management Plan is designed to achieve the following objectives:-

- *Maintain and preserve access for vehicle users*
- *Maintain and preserve road users’:*
 - *sight lines and stopping distances at junctions, access points and bends.*
 - *visibility of road traffic signs and signals*
- *Ensure illumination from lighting is not obscured.*
- *Preserve CCTV camera visibility splays.*
- *Maintain soft estate to minimise risk of fire hazards.*
- *Maintain soft estate to facilitate safe access to technology equipment.*
- *Maintain soft estate to facilitate safe access to footways, cycle tracks, bridle ways and paved pedestrian areas.*
- *Minimise the risk of trees falling on trafficked or pedestrian areas.*
- *Manage the soft estate to minimise the spread or increase of instances of injurious and invasive weeds.*
- *Manage and maintain soft estate to minimise the risk of adversely affecting the stability, integrity or operation of other highway assets.*
- *Manage soft estate to meet existing landscape, amenity, screening functions and/or other commitments in accordance with the contract and EnvIS*
- *Maintain and update knowledge of Protected Habitats / Species present or likely to be present within the soft estate.*

In accordance with the MRP, all seasonal grass cuts assessed as required on the northbound approach to the Fiveways Roundabout were completed by 26 September. Similarly required seasonal grass cuts on the southbound side were completed by 10 October. Central reserve cutting was completed during the same period.

By 6 November, we had also completed herbicide treatment of the central reserve to kill off existing weed growth and inhibit further growth. Northbound and southbound nearside verges had similar treatment applied and this was completed by 4 November.

Sign Maintenance

No sign maintenance work was required between June and December. However, all sign faces were cleaned just before the specified period, during May.

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 757,699 in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

Business Management Team Leader
Operations (East)
Email: