

Our ref: CRS 761,807
Your ref:

Highways England
Second Floor
Woodlands
Manton Lane
Bedford MK41 7LW

Email:

Direct Line:

9 May 2018

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST A47 SWAFFHAM TO DEREHAM CLOSURES

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed our search for the information which you requested on 11 April 2018. I have extracted each element of your request and respond as follows:

1) *During the past 3 months how many nights has the A47 been closed for these roadworks: a) In the eastbound direction and b) in the westbound direction?*

During the period 11 January to 11 April 2018, the A47 was closed for 39 nights in both the eastbound and westbound directions.

2) *For each of these nightly closures did the Highways England database make clear the road would be closed?*

We have taken the term “Highways England database” to mean the Traffic England website as this is the database available to public view. This provides information to the public about current road works.

The Traffic England website showed the A47 closures.

Real-time information is provided to the Traffic England website from our Network Occupancy Management System (NOMS).

NOMS manages all road space across the strategic road network. It helps us to make sure that all work on the strategic road network (whether utility companies or our own maintenance and improvements) has a minimal impact on customers, maximises lane availability, thereby delivering a more free flowing network.

3) For each of these nightly closures did the Highways England App make clear the road would be closed?

Yes. The app also draws information from NOMS in a similar manner to the Traffic England website.

4) Please list all actions taken to make the public aware of specific nightly closures including details of all road signage both at the closure and in advance of it, press releases plus notifications to local radio stations, bus companies and the road haulage industry.

All the following actions have been taken to inform the public:

- Advance warning signs were set out on the A47 two weeks prior to the start of works.
- Details of the project have been included in our weekly roadworks bulletin from the week in which work was expected to start and for each week throughout the whole period of the works. This bulletin forms part of a release that is shared with the local media, local authorities, emergency services and other stakeholders.

Whilst we release information to the local media, it is their decision what information they publish more widely in local newspapers or through other media outlets. We received no further contact from the media about the A47 resurfacing scheme.

- 2646 letters were sent to local residents and businesses including haulage companies, bus companies and parish councils two weeks prior to the start of works to inform them about the nature of works and how it would impact them, including details of diversion routes during road closures.

All information provided advised that poor weather can change our programme at short notice.

- Our supply chain visited 22 farms and businesses along the affected route to ensure they were well informed.
- During closures, drivers will have been informed the road was closed by on road signs and diversion signing set out in accordance with Chapter 8 of the Traffic Signs Manual. At the closures the road will have been close coned, and traffic management vehicles will have been present.
- Details of the project were listed on our road projects website at <http://roads.highways.gov.uk/regions/east/?postcode=&keywords=&roads=A47&status=>

The A47 Swaffham to Dereham resurfacing scheme is currently showing ninth in the listed projects.

5) Is it reasonable for road users to expect the Highways England database and App to accurately reflect all details of the total closure of such an important artery as the A47?

The information shown is correct at the time of publication but is subject to change at short notice, especially in periods of poor weather or in the event of an unplanned incident.

The online service is provided 'as is' and while we aim to ensure the information is as accurate as possible we do not guarantee that the content is always accurate and up to date.

6) Please clarify who is responsible for ensuring closure details are added to the Highways England database and App?

As explained earlier, the Traffic England website and the app take data from NOMS. Data entry into NOMS is managed by our contractors and supply chain on our behalf. They are expected to update NOMS at the start and end of each work shift.

Regular audits are carried out to measure the accuracy of the information entered. For the administrative area that includes the A47, average accuracy measures are currently over 90%.

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 761,807 in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

Business Management Team Leader
Operations (East)
Email: