

Our ref: 768 189

[REDACTED]
Highways England
Bridge House
Walnut Tree Close
Guildford
GU1 4LZ

www.highwaysengland.co.uk

30 January 2019

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request for information about a bridge strike in August 2016 on the M20, dated 2 January.

I am dealing with 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.

Please see below your questions and our answers:

- 1. It was reported in 2017 that Highways England were intending to consider launching an investigation once the Kent Police probe was completed. Did Highways England decide to do so, and if so what is the status (ongoing, completed etc)?**

At present I am unable to respond to questions 1 and 2. Once I have received the information requested, I will send you a further letter.

- 2. If such an investigation has been concluded, I would like to see a copy of the resulting report. If not, I would like to see copies of any preliminary reports.**

Please see above.

- 3. How many bridge strikes are Highways England aware of in the five years preceding the accident involving this bridge and when were they?**

We have no record of any bridge strikes being reported in the five years preceding the incident involving this bridge. However, an inspection on 24 June 2011 reported a minor scrape to the bridge soffit (underlayer) above lane 1 of the London bound carriageway. This was not reported in the previous inspection which was carried out on 15 September 2009.

- 4. Has Highways England made any changes to its operations in response to this accident?**

Our robust procedures for identifying and managing incidents remain the same.

5. Did Highways England liaise with the Health and Safety Executive in regards to this accident?

We did not liaise with the Health and Safety Executive in relation to this accident as it was not necessary in this instance.

6. What assets (vehicles, personnel, equipment) did Highways England and/or your contractor(s) dispatch to the scene and how long after the accident were the first units on-site?

We no longer hold any information regarding the attendance of Highways England personnel, vehicles or equipment at this incident due to a system upgrade in September 2016 which resulted in the loss of previous data.

We do however, know that the first person to arrive on site from our service provider, was the Incident Manager in an incident truck, one hour after the incident was reported. Please note that they were denied access to the site as it was still under the police's control.

The structures manager from our service provider arrived on site two hours later in a marked vehicle. There was no specialist equipment on board either vehicles.

7. What was the cost (if difficult to quantify, an approximate or estimated cost will suffice) of the accident to Highways England?

The information you requested is being withheld in reliance on the exception in regulation Section 12.5 (B): The Course of Justice (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2004/3391/regulation/12/made>) of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 because of current legal proceedings.

In applying this exception we have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosure. The key public interest factors for and against disclosure are attached.

8. Which company or companies originally completed the bridge and what, if known, was the cost at that time?

Our records indicate that the client was the Ministry of Transport. The contractor is believed to be Costain. The cost is unknown.

9. Was any fuel spilled?

There was no fuel spilled.

10. I understand there were two other bridges in close proximity to the accident bridge. How many collisions were there with these bridges in the preceding five years?

There is no recorded evidence of bridge strikes to the School Lane Bridge and Roughetts Road Bridge, within the five years preceding the incident.

If you are unhappy with the way we have handled your request you may ask for an internal review within 2 months of the date of this response for Freedom of Information requests and within 40 days for Environmental Information Regulations requests. 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 768 189 in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted name]

Team Executive - OD SE Business Management Team
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