

FOI Advice

From:
Sent: 04 September 2020 12:42
To:
Cc: FOI Advice; A5036 Port of Liverpool; CCC Closed Calls; Bhambra, Harjit
Subject: Freedom of Information request - Decision Making Models and Methodologies in the A5036 Port of Liverpool Access Scheme - EIR 101351

Categories: Update Tracker

Dear

Thank you for your enquiry of 18 August 2020 concerning the models and methodologies used by Highways England to support decision making and cost estimating for road schemes.

Your request has been handled under normal business practices, rather than in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or Environmental Information Regulations 2004. The reason for approaching your request this way is that it seems to be about the methodologies used, rather than specific documents which is the purpose of FOI/ EIR. In any case, we use a wide range of different tools and models in the course of developing our schemes, and a general request under FOI/EIR for all of the thousands of documents relating to this process – effectively every document in the scheme’s files during the years cited – would be refused as too onerous (many would also be withheld under other exceptions in the legislation). We felt therefore that it would be more helpful to treat your request as business as usual.

In developing and delivering a project like the A5036 Port of Liverpool access scheme, the project team is required to follow our Project Control Framework (PCF), the decision making matrix used by Highways England for all its major schemes. Compliance with PCF means producing a range of key documents covering all aspects of the scheme. The exact number of critical documents varies according to the nature of the scheme, and cover the scheme’s scope; its business case and funding; cost estimating; risk, value and benefits management; change management; procurement; design requirements, standards and specifications; health and safety; technical approvals; environmental assessments and reports; public consultation; Planning Act 2008 requirements; land requirements; traffic modelling and management; and project management. Each of these areas has multiple key documents associated with it.

Some of these documents are quite simple and may only be produced once during the scheme’s development. Many more of them are longer and more complex, and are reviewed and refined, in some cases, at all eight management stages of the project (stages 0 to 7 – this scheme is currently at stage 3, preliminary design). If any of these documents, and the information they contain, fails to meet required standards, the scheme will not be allowed to progress to the next stage. Some of the documents are used to inform the application for planning consent, and will be published at that stage (stage 4).

As for a number of other areas of the scheme’s development, estimating the cost is an iterative process. In the initial stages, cost estimates will cover a wide range, especially while there are multiple options under consideration. As the scheme progresses, an option is selected, the detail of its design is hammered out, and risks are mitigated or expire, so the cost ranges become more precise.

Benefit to cost ratios (BCR) are central to that process, and to the process of option selection. Benefits, and potential disbenefits, such as reduced congestion, improved journey times and

journey time reliability, economic, environmental and social impacts, are weighed against the cost of developing and delivering potential solutions to the issues the scheme is intended to address, including the cost of mitigating or eliminating negative impacts. This is done at every stage up to construction (stage 6), and if the scheme's BCR falls below acceptable levels, the project team's priority will be to address that. In the worst case, if the BCR cannot be improved sufficiently, the scheme may be abandoned. Clearly, as this could potentially represent a significant loss to the public purse, depending on the stage reached in the scheme's development, it is very much in the public interest that this does not happen; which is precisely why scheme proposals are rigorously reviewed at regular intervals.

I hope this summary goes some way towards explaining how we make decisions about schemes. If you feel the information supplied is not sufficient or has not been answered within the 15-day period, you may wish to complain. The complaints procedure is available via our website at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/highways-england/about/complaints-procedure> You should contact me if you wish to complain.

If you require a print copy, please phone the Information Line on 0300 123 5000; or e-mail info@highwaysengland.co.uk.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me, quoting reference number **EIR 101351**.

Yours sincerely

Assistant Project Manager
Regional Investment Programme (RIP) NW
Highways England | 3 Piccadilly Place | Manchester | M1 3BN
Tel:
Web: www.highwaysengland.co.uk

My voluntary
role is: **+ Physical First Aider**
Please contact me if you need help.

From: Nicholas Mullen [mailto:request-685509-7db69d36@whatdotheyknow.com]

Sent: 18 August 2020 11:05

To: info@highwaysengland.co.uk; CCC <info@highwaysengland.co.uk>; Highways England <info@highwaysengland.co.uk>; Main Inbox <info@highwaysengland.co.uk>

Subject: Freedom of Information request - Decision Making Models and Methodologies in the A5036 Port of Liverpool Access Scheme

Dear Highways England Company Limited,

I would like to request records or information pertaining the models used by Highways England in the decision making process to build the A5036 bypass through Rimrose Valley between 2015 and 2017.. Specifically I would like to know the types of methodologies used (Cost Benefit Analysis, Multi-Decision Criteria analysis etc) used in the calculation of the cost of this project.

Yours faithfully,

Nicholas Mullen

Please use this email address for all replies to this request:

request-685509-7db69d36@whatdotheyknow.com

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