

Our ref: CRS 587,509  
Your ref:

Colin Beales  
Major Project Directorate

[Name and address removed under  
the Data Protection Act]

28 July 2008

Dear [Name removed under the Data Protection Act]

## **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST**

Thank for your Freedom of Information request sent to us via the Highways Agency Information Line on 1 July 2008.

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed our search for the information which you requested.

You asked two question, which I will deal with each in turn.

***In relation to both the (07/08) financial year please provide the following information.***

- 1. Which single road building project came in the most over budget (i) in actual spend and (ii) in percentage terms of its initial estimate?***

Of the 8 major road schemes which completed construction and opened to traffic in financial year 2007/08, the A66 Greta Bridge to Stephen Bank scheme was delivered most over its Ministerial Approved Budget (MAB) both in absolute and percentage terms. The Ministerial Approved Budget was £9.2m and the cost (up to the end of March 2008 - see note below) is £11.8m.

- 2. For the projects identified in Q.1 please give the start and end date of the work, where it was, what was being built and any information or documentation relating to why it came in over budget?***

The A66 trunk road is a major east-west route across the Pennines. It links the Teesside conurbation and the A1 in the east to Cumbria and the M6 motorway in the west. The scheme is situated in Yorkshire has had a long standing road safety problems on several sections of the single carriageway between Greta Bridge and Stephen Bank. The severity of injuries along this section of the A66 was five times the national average and in addition to the poor safety record, essential maintenance work was hampered by the width of the existing single carriageway.

A66 Greta Bridge to Stephen Bank Improvements has improved approximately 5km of single carriage road by building a new two lane carriageway for westbound traffic and using the existing road to form the two eastbound lanes. The carriageway has been surfaced with the latest materials which have low noise properties, as well as improvements carried out to existing junctions and, where possible, the closure of minor side roads and property and field accesses along the route with a dedicated crossing for cyclists and pedestrians created.

The main objectives of the schemes were:

- To improve road safety
- To improve journey times and reliability
- To provide improved facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians.

Work on this scheme started in March 2006 and opened for traffic in September 07.

The scheme entered the "Targeted Programme of Improvements" in August 2002 and in July 2003 the budgets across the whole programme were revised in line with the Treasury's 'Green Book' rules. This adjusted all cost estimates to a common standard with provision for optimism bias, non-recoverable VAT and inflation at 2.5% per annum to the date of completion. This established the MAB at £9.2m.

The final outturn cost is expected to be around £11.8m, this is the expenditure to the end of the last financial year, the latest audited figures available from the Agency. The final outturn cost will not be confirmed until outstanding compensation events have been assessed and the final account is closed.

The main reasons for the cost increase over the construction period are:

- General construction inflation since the time when the budget was set being higher than assumed.
- Statutory Undertakers delays resulting in critical path delays and changed methods of workings.
- Additional costs incurred as a result of delays caused by 3 months of higher than normal rain fall last summer.

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the Freedom of Information Act, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless exempt. We will, therefore, be simultaneously releasing to the public the information you requested, together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context via our website: <http://www.highways.gov.uk/>

If you are unhappy with the way we have handled your request, you may ask for an internal review. A leaflet detailing our internal review process is available. If you require a copy, please phone the Highways Agency Information Line on 08457 50 40 30; or e-mail [ha\\_info@highways.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ha_info@highways.gsi.gov.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

Yours Sincerely

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