

Our ref: CRS 607,809
Your ref:

Network Operations (East)
Woodlands
Manton Lane
Bedford MK41 7LW

Direct Line:
Switchboard:

21 April 2009

Dear

ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION REGULATIONS 2004: M40 LITTER

Thank you for your email of 22 March sent to the Highways Agency Information Line (HAIL) Team and copied to Geoff Hoon, requesting information about litter on the M40.

As your request mainly relates to the clearance of litter, I am treating your request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. This is because the information you 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.

I have answered each of your questions in turn:

Q1) It is not possible to comment on the relative expenditure on litter clearance, as we do not disaggregate the cost for the clearance of litter from the total cost of maintaining the roads for which we are responsible. We pay our service providers a monthly lump sum fee for a range of activities which includes grass cutting, filling pot holes, sign cleaning, salting and litter clearance.

Q2) We do not agree that the M40 is at an unacceptable level of littering and consider that there are sufficient arrangements in place to clear litter on the M40. Our service provider, UK Highways M40 Limited, is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the motorway between Junctions 1 and 15 of the M40. UK Highways sub-contractor, Carillion, undertake litter picking as part of their routine maintenance programme in order to meet the requirements of Environmental Protection Act 1990. Carillion has an annual rolling litter clearance programme; however, as the M40 has recently experienced an increase in the volume of litter dropped on the motorway, Carillion has deployed specific teams to carry out additional litter picking. The most recent additional litter picking activity was carried out within the last 2 weeks.

Q3) Carillion will continue to monitor the situation with regard to litter on the M40 and will carry out additional litter picking should the need arise.

Q4) As mentioned above, we do not disaggregate the cost for litter clearance and are therefore unable to provide the breakdown you requested.

I would like to reassure you that we take the issue of litter on our network very seriously. Not only is it unsightly but it is also a threat to the environment. In addition to our own litter clearance activities, we are also encouraging local authorities to fulfil their obligations for the roads they are responsible and carrying out educational anti litter campaigns. Our 'Bag it and Bin it' campaign was launched in March and encourages drivers to keep a bag for rubbish in their vehicle, and use it to store their litter until it can be thrown away safely in a bin. We will be distributing our recyclable and biodegradable "Bag it! and Bin it!" bags at our exhibition stands at shows across England, and at selected service areas this 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 504030; or e-mail 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

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

[Name removed under the Data Protection Act]