

Mr B Rix
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aa82aefd@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:request-326845-aa82aefd@whatdotheyknow.com)

Our ref: FOI0022 2016-17JM
Date: 4 May 2016

Dear Mr Rix

Freedom of Information Request

Further to your request received on 6 April 2016, please see Central Bedfordshire Council's response to your questions below:

Please provide details of any specific contingency plans which existed (whether prepared by CBC or agreed with CBC contractor) prior to the closure of the so-called "Stratton Street" bridge in Biggleswade. In particular, please provide details of any plans which existed to minimise or reduce delays likely to be caused by adverse weather conditions (wind, rain, temperature), whether typical or extreme for the time of year.

As with all major projects, risks are assessed and placed in a risk register at conception stage one of which is adverse weather. The Stratton Street Bridge project team identified weather as a potential risk to the project more than two years out at which point discussions take place to book railway possessions at Christmas. Once the risk has been assessed, options to mitigate the impact of such risks are considered and entered into the risk register. The Stratton Street project must be planned over the Christmas period because this is the longest possession time available to carry out works under an all line blockage, this dictates the critical path and therefore means that weather must be assessed throughout the project and cannot be rescheduled at an alternative time. The consideration of options in the event of experiencing high winds included the following scenarios:

- a) Book all available Network Rail possessions following a weather event at Christmas to complete the work in the least time possible. This increases cost but minimises disruption on the local area.
- b) Abandon works and reschedule for the following Christmas (2016) when time can be used productively with a significantly reduced impact on cost.

Central Bedfordshire Council

Please reply to:

Access to Information Team
Central Bedfordshire Council
Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands,
Shefford, Bedfordshire SG17 5TQ

Telephone 0300 300 8301

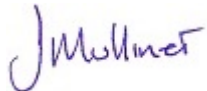
Email accesstoinfo@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

In order to prepare for the Christmas possession, proprietary works took place to prepare the bridge, this ensured that the Christmas possession works could take place without overrunning. This work included cutting the bridge deck into sections so they could be lifted out, once this had taken place the bridge's strength is significantly compromised and could not be reopened, it is at this point that the project is committed and the bridge could not be reopened without incurring significant rebuild costs. Weather cannot be reduced or eliminated as a risk when using a crane for the demolition therefore if the risk materialises during the works, the contingencies identified above need to be considered.

The project team decided to reduce the programme wherever possible and take advantage of additional possessions of the railway, this reduced the impact on the local area, particularly as option (b) would mean the bridge would be closed until March/April 2017.

Please treat this as a formal response under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (please see below for our review procedures if required).

Yours sincerely,



Joanne Mulliner

Freedom of Information Officer

Tel: 0300 300 4179

accesstoinfo@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

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Access to Information Team
Improvement & Corporate Services
Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, SG17 5TQ

If you are not content with the outcome of the review, you may apply direct to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted the Council's internal review procedure. You should contact him within two months of the outcome of the internal review at the following address:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF
Tel: 01625 545 700

Further information on the Freedom of Information Act 2000 is available through the Information Commissioner's Office website at: www.ico.org.uk/