

Our reference: 20389 EIR

18 October 2022

Dear Mr Parnham,

Thank you for your request of 20 Sept 2022 in which you asked for the following information:

"In fact, I am most interested in the three internal LTN Roads:

- Rymers Lane at Church Cowley Road (Florence Park LTN)
- Cowley Rd north of Newman Road (Church Cowley LTN)
- Long Lane at Newman Road (Church Cowley LTN)

I believe there is a public interest in disclosing the rationale for selecting these three evaluation roads specifically, because two of them (Rymers Lane and Cowley Rd) had LTN barriers installed on them as part of the trial. I would regard it as bad practice to evaluate traffic levels on roads that had barriers physically installed on them, making it impossible for some local traffic to travel along this road - potentially skewing the findings, unfairly. I want to know if concerns were raised about this sampling decision internally too, given that a reduction in traffic inside the LTNs was deemed to be a success metric for evaluating the entire scheme. The evaluation process has to be seen to be fair, and to actually be fair. This is what my enquiry seeks to establish.

Is this reduction in the scope of my enquiry acceptable to you? Three roads rather than 14? Please let me know."

It is the Council's view that to comply with your request would absorb enough of its staff's time to engage regulation 12(4)(b) of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. Regulation 12(4)(b) provides that a public authority is excepted from complying with a request for information if that authority considers that it would place a '*substantial and unreasonable burden on [its] resources*'.

It is the Council's estimate that to provide you with the information that you have requested would absorb approximately 41 hours of staff time. The Council considers that this represents a substantial burden and an unreasonable diversion of its resources from the provision of essential public services. The Council has estimated the time that it would take to deal with your request accordingly:

1. Make enquiries of the technical feasibility of obtaining in-box access to persons who have left Oxfordshire County Council. If technical access is possible, obtaining the necessary HR permission to access these in-boxes = 4 hours
2. Undertake a broadly defined data search of 6 email in boxes over 4 months = 2 hours
3. Read every email from the data search to identify if relevant to the questions = 24 hours
4. Redacting any personal data from the relevant emails (copying/pasting into a word document) = 8 hours
5. Collating selected emails into a formal response = 3 hours

TOTAL TIME= 41 hours

As you can see, to comply with your request would impose a substantial burden on the Council's resources. In reaching its decision, the Council also considered whether disclosure would be in the public interest.

Arguments in favour of disclosure

1. That there is an explicit presumption in favour of disclosure;
2. Disclosure could further the understanding of, and participation in, public debate and
3. Releasing this information may promote transparency and increase public awareness.

Arguments against disclosure

1. Committing a considerable amount of the Council's resources to answering this request would detract from the services that it provides in other areas;
2. Taking staff away from their current duties;
3. That there is a need to ensure that public funds are applied effectively; and
4. The importance of the matter at hand does not constitute an overriding or exceptional reason for disclosure.

On this occasion, the Council finds that the public interest in refusing your request outweighs the public interest in complying with it.

Advice and Assistance

In accordance with the Council's duty to now advise and assist you, might I suggest that you consider amending your request to narrow its scope.

You have suggested reducing the number of roads for which documents and emails are to be searched. Unfortunately, because any relevant information relating to the selection process of sensor locations are not likely only to be referenced against the specific road name, the search activity will not be reduced; a wide search of documents and particularly emails relating to the

LTN will still have to be reviewed and the overall effort will be similar. We would repeat the offer we made in our response to 20271 EIR, of sharing with you the rationale for the selection process without reference to historic documents.

Internal review

If you are dissatisfied with the service or response to your request, you can ask for an internal review as follows:

- Contact the Freedom of Information team in Customers and Organisational Development: foi@oxfordshire.gov.uk
- Write to the Freedom of Information team at the FREEPOST address:

Freedom of Information Team
Oxfordshire County Council
FREEPOST RTLL-ECKS-GLUA
Oxford OX1 1YA

If you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request or complaint, you have a right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at:

The Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire,
SK9 5AF
Telephone: 0303 123 1113
Website: www.ico.gov.uk

Please let me know if you have further enquiries. I would be grateful if you could use the reference number given at the top of this email.

Yours sincerely,

Aron Wisdom
Programme Lead
Transport and Infrastructure
Oxfordshire County Council
Email: aron.wisdom@oxfordshire.gov.uk
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk