



Adam Sayers
By email: request-647397-2dd1c6ab@whatdotheyknow.com

Network Rail
Freedom of Information
The Quadrant
Elder Gate
Milton Keynes
MK9 1EN

T 01908 782405
E FOI@networkrail.co.uk

16 March 2020

Dear Mr Sayers

Information request
Reference number: FOI2020/00293

Thank you for your email of 17 February 2020, in which you requested the following information:

'Recently on the Kent, Sussex and Wessex twitter, they have released several diagrams such as the one linked below:

<https://twitter.com/NetworkRailSE/status/1226790591469703168/photo/1>

Could I request more of these diagrams for the LOR codes SO 130 (Tonbridge to Ashford), SO 170, SO 250, SW 105 (Only Eastleigh to Southampton Central), SW 135, SW 140 and SO 500 to SO 700.

I believe that Putting these diagrams on Twitter is disclosure at large so I believe that these should be fine to be released because some of them are already out in the public domain.'

I have processed your request under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and I can confirm that we hold the information you requested. However, I believe this information is exempt from disclosure by virtue of section 31(1)(a) and section 38(1) of the FOIA¹.

Section 31(1)(a) of FOIA provides that information is exempt from disclosure if its disclosure under the Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice the prevention or detection

¹ For more information on Section 31(1)(a) - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/31>
For more information on Section 38(1) - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/38>

of crime. Section 38(1)(b) is engaged when the disclosure of requested information would or would be likely to endanger the safety of any individual.

Whilst it is the case that we have published similar diagrams on twitter recently, it is important to note that these published documents were sections of the full diagrams, rather than the whole line of route. These were published on twitter to assist passengers with understanding certain areas where there is disruption to services and/or indicate a part of the network where there has been an asset related problem. As you have requested the full line of route diagrams, we believe there is a security concern with this information being disclosed.

To explain in more detail, due to the level of operational information contained within line diagrams, we consider that disclosure in this instance would release significant information about signalling operations into the public domain, where it could be used by those who may wish to disrupt, interfere with or attack the workings of our infrastructure. The consequences of such activity would be likely to adversely affect public safety and endanger individuals.

It is particularly important to remember that disclosures made under the FOIA are disclosures to the 'world at large' and any information disclosed is released into the public domain rather than being provided to one individual privately, so we have to consider the wider impact of disclosure.

The exemptions in section 31(1)(a) and 38(1) are subject to a public interest test. This means that we are required to consider whether the public interest in disclosure, outweighs the public interest in maintaining the exemptions.

In this case, disclosure would contribute to increasing transparency, openness, public knowledge and understanding about the operation and workings of the rail infrastructure. This is particularly helpful for those who have any level of interest in operational elements that form part of the network.

There are strong arguments around withholding the information. Most importantly, there is a significant public interest in safeguarding the safety of those travelling on, working on and using the rail network. As explained, the level of detail included in full line of route diagrams, could easily be used by those who would like to carry out illegal activity.

We consider that these factors outweigh all others and after deliberation of all the relevant factors of this case, we consider that the balance of the public interest lies in preventing harm to the security of the infrastructure and in ensuring the safety of those individuals who work and travel on the network.

Given the context of your request, I think it is particularly important to draw your attention to the fact that this decision has been taken largely on the specific advice of

senior technical experts who have considered the impact of disclosing the particular information you have requested.

On this basis, our decision is that the public interest favours withholding the information on this occasion and we are therefore refusing to provide the requested line of route diagrams.

I understand that this may be disappointing for you but I hope this response is helpful in understanding the reasons for this.

If you have any enquiries about this response, please contact me in the first instance at FOI@networkrail.co.uk or on 01908 782405. Details of your appeal rights are below.

Please remember to quote the reference number at the top of this letter in all future communications.

Yours sincerely,

Najea Begum
Information Officer

The information supplied to you continues to be protected by copyright. You are free to use it for your own purposes, including for private study and non-commercial research and for any other purpose authorised by an exception in current copyright law. Documents (except photographs) can also be used in the UK without requiring permission for the purposes of news reporting. Any other re-use, for example commercial publication, would require the permission of the copyright holder. Please contact me if you wish to re-use the information and need to seek the permission of the copyright holder.

Appeal rights

If you are unhappy with the way your request has been handled and wish to make a complaint or request a review of our decision, please write to the Head of Freedom of Information at Network Rail, Freedom of Information, The Quadrant, Elder Gate, Milton Keynes, MK9 1EN, or by email at FOI@networkrail.co.uk. Your request must be submitted within 40 working days of receipt of this letter.

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