

**Our Reference:** 101055  
**Your Reference:** 660011-a46eab18

Mr S Hardwicke- Carruthers  
**By Email:** request-660011-  
a46eab18@whatdotheyknow.com

**Safety Engineering and Standards  
Official Correspondence Team**  
Highways England  
Woodlands  
Manton Lane  
Bedford  
MK41 7LW

05 May 2020

Dear Mr S Hardwicke- Carruthers

### **Environmental Information Regulations Request**

Thank you for your request for information about Felling License 0183661516 dated 21 April 2020. We have dealt with your request under the terms of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. This is because the information 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.

You asked us:

*\*The area of land owned by Highways England Ltd that is the subject of felling licence (018-366-15-16). The felling licence is for about 10,500 ha of land. The plans accompanying the licence were prepared for Highways England by the Forestry Commission.*

*\* The area of land that Highways England Ltd acted as the agent for the landowner in felling licence 018-366-15-16).*

*\* Felling licence 018-366-15-16 enables about 150,000 m3 of timber to be felled what proportion of felling has taken place.*

*\* What amount of money has Highways England received for the management of trees under felling licence 018-366-15-16 from organisations of common good (i.e. Rural Payment Agency, European Commission, etc.)*

On the 22 April, we emailed you and asked:

*Dear Stuart Hardwicke CARRUTHERS*

*Thank you for your request for information, received on 21 April 2020, related to a Felling Licence with the Ref No. 018-366-15-16.*

*Unfortunately, I am unable to proceed with your request without clarification of the information you wish to receive. We have numerous road projects in various stages of*

*development and felling licence information is not held in a central location. Please can you clarify either the name of the road scheme or the approximate whereabouts of the land in question, so I can determine which project team is best placed to deal with your request.*

*If I do not receive appropriate clarification of your information requirements within three months of this email, I will consider your request closed.*

You responded on the 24 April via email

*Felling licence 018-366-15-16 is a national licence awarded to Highways England following an application being made in 2015 by Highways England. The licence includes land for which at least 100 local authorities are identified as being responsible. The licence was applied for centrally and as such the information requested should be readily available.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*Stuart Hardwicke CARRUTHERS*

The felling licence, as you rightly identified, is a national felling licence granted by the Forestry Commission to Highways England only, in line with the Memorandum of Understanding we have with them. This felling licence is for land in our ownership only, to allow felling work to take place lawfully and where deemed necessary by us for specific reasons. The licence is not transferable to other parties but does allow our contractors to undertake this work on our behalf. Applying for a block licence was deemed to be the most efficient way to operate at the time, as well as being cost effective.

Highways England is committed to the wider government transparency and open data agenda and is committed to help people obtain the information they are looking for. Unfortunately, in this case due to the time period involved gathering it together would therefore be likely to involve a significant cost and diversion of resources from the company's other work. Therefore your request has been refused under the exception in Regulation 12(4)b of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 covering requests that are manifestly unreasonable.

Whilst we have refused this request this would not preclude us from providing information in response to a more focused request in the future. The information is not held centrally but by the different areas we operate and manage and by different contractors. Reducing the time to financial year 2019-2020 could reduce the cost and/or time for obtaining it. Please do let us know if you would be interesting in obtaining this information, by submitting a new request to [info@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:info@highwaysengland.co.uk).

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact us by email: [info@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:info@highwaysengland.co.uk). Please kindly quote reference number 101055 in any future communications.

If you are unhappy with the way we have handled your request you may ask for an internal review. Our internal review process is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/highways-england/about/complaints-procedure>

If you require a print copy, please phone the Information Line on 0300 123 5000; or e-mail [info@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:info@highwaysengland.co.uk).

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

**Safety Engineering and Standards  
Official Correspondence Team**