

Major Transport Infrastructure Projects

Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow G4 0HF
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nick.groom@transport.gov.scot



John Andrews

By email to: -

request-487703-0bc18852@whatdotheyknow.com

Our ref:

Fol/18/01493

Date:

13 June 2018

Dear Mr Andrews,

A9 Dualling – Request for Information Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA)/Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (EIRs)

Thank you for your request dated 28 May 2018 under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (as amended) (FOISA), and/or the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (as amended) (EIRs).

Your request

In your request you asked for the following information:

“A few years ago you initiated an investigation via a firm of consultants into the issues relating to a potential upgrading of the already ‘dualled’ part of the A9 road between the northern end of the M9 motorway near Bridge of Allan and the single carriageway section commencing at Luncarty.

Please supply me with a copy of the consultants' report and provide information on your intentions in respect of this improvement scheme.”

As the information you have requested is ‘environmental information’ for the purposes of the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (EIRs), we are required to deal with your request under those Regulations. We are applying the exemption at section 39(2) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA), so that we do not also have to deal with your request under FOISA.

This exemption is subject to the ‘public interest test’. Therefore, taking account of all the circumstances of this case, we have considered if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exemption. We have found that, on balance, the public interest lies in favour of upholding the exemption, because there is no public interest in dealing with the same request under two different regimes. This is essentially a technical point and has no material effect on the outcome of your request.

Response to your request

Following the recommendations included in the Scottish Government's Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR) published in 2008, a copy of which is available from <https://www.transport.gov.scot/our-approach/strategy/strategic-transport-projects-review/#>), a high level study in line with a Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Stage 1 Assessment was undertaken by Jacobs UK in 2015 – "A9 Keir Roundabout to West of Broxden Roundabout Corridor Study". A copy of this report is included with this letter along with the draft report prepared by AECOM referred to within the Jacob's report – "A9 Keir Roundabout to West of Broxden Corridor Study – DMRB Stage 1 Route Study Assessment Report – March 2013".

Transport Scotland is currently undertaking a review of Scotland's National Transport Strategy (NTS) which will set out the compelling vision for transport for the next 20 years and will inform policy across transport including an update to the Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2). STPR2 is the opportunity to consider at a national level the important contribution that transport infrastructure projects will play in delivering and sustaining the economic growth aspirations set-out in Scottish Government's Economic Strategy and support the priorities laid out in the Climate Change Plan and the National Planning Framework. Since the publication of STPR1 in 2008, a number of the recommendations made have not yet been progressed. It is important that Scottish Ministers make the correct decisions and both the reviews of the NTS and the STPR will allow Ministers to reassess the recommendations which have not yet progressed to see if they are still relevant to the new priorities. At the same time, they will ensure that we continue to have a strategic vision for transport infrastructure projects in Scotland.

Work on planning for the STPR review is currently underway and will allow the Scottish Government to consider how to better connect all areas of Scotland through a variety of road and rail interventions, including options for the A9, as such the conclusions of the attached reports are subject to review and change. This will ensure that we continue to strike the right balance of transport investments across the country whilst remaining focussed on the delivering the vision and strategic outcomes of the NTS.

A transport appraisal study was also commissioned to inform consideration of the A9 from West of Broxden to Luncarty but was never finalised, approved or published. Further consideration of this section of the A9 will also be taken forward through STPR2. An exception under regulation 10(4)(d) of the EIRs (unfinished or incomplete information) applies to the draft appraisal information because it is an unfinished document with incomplete data which will be reconsidered in the context of updated development planning information, on-going changes to the transport network around the area and changes to the policy context.

This exception is subject to the 'public interest test'. Therefore, taking account of all the circumstances of this case, we have considered if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exception. We have found that, on balance, the public interest lies in favour of upholding the exception. We recognise that there is some public interest in release as part of open, transparent and accountable government. However, this is outweighed by the public interest in ensuring that unfinished or incomplete information which is still being worked on or is under active consideration is not disclosed when it might misinform the public or give a misleading impression of the Government's view or position on the matter to which the information relates.

Your right to request a review

If you are unhappy with this response to your FOI/EIRs request, you may ask us to carry out an internal review of the response, by writing to:

Roy Brannen, Chief Executive Transport Scotland, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow G4 0HF or by emailing chiefexecutive@transport.gov.scot

Your review request should explain why you are dissatisfied with this response, and should be made within 40 working days from the date when you received this letter. We will complete the review and tell you the result, within 20 working days from the date when we receive your review request.

If you are not satisfied with the result of the review, you then have the right to appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner. More detailed information on your rights is available on the Commissioner's website at: www.itspublicknowledge.info.

Yours sincerely,



A9 Dualling Project Administrator