



National Highways
National Traffic Operations
Centre
3 Ridgeway
Quinton Business Park
Birmingham
B32 1AF

Our Reference: FOI2025/00086

Freedom of Information Request: FOI2025/00086

Thank you for your information request dated 16 January regarding Delays to A63 Castle Street upgrade scheme. We have dealt with your request under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Your Request:

Requesting information on ground data around delays to A63 works including dates that show when NH became aware of the issues. Both data for pre start phase and current data requested to compare finding.

Clarification 17/01/2025:

In relation to the scheme National Highways is currently undertaking on the A63 castle street underpass, the FOI request is in relation to the scheme being delayed by 1 year. As I understand by the progress update provided by NH "we have encountered some extremely challenging ground conditions the could not have been anticipated before the scheme began" the information I'm requesting are ground data / radar information, any ground condition surveys NH carried out whilst in planning stages of choosing the location for the underpass and the details that NH now claim to be aware of at its current stage. Also programming schedules and plans for the scheme when it started and the revised version due to the delays.

Our Response:

1. Ground condition information:

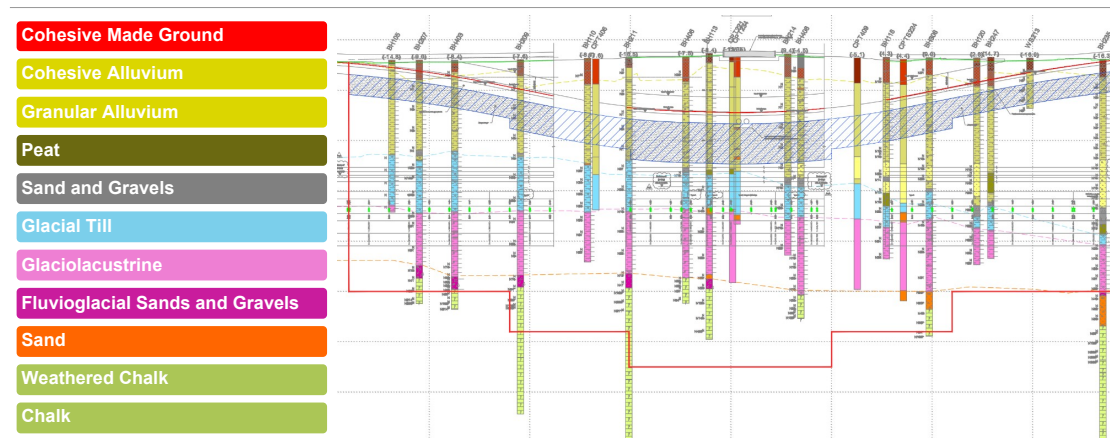
1.1 A key construction challenge is the site's problematic ground (very soft clay, organics, glacial clays, running sand and chalk aquifer with 5m tidal range).

1.2 The underpass was therefore constructed using parallel embedded retaining walls, formed from 320m long and 20m deep diaphragm walls on either side of the road. The diaphragm walls are anchored into the ground by 30 barrette piles. They sit on a 25,000m³ horizontal jet grout base slab formed from 7,000 jet grout columns.

1.3 Extensive investigation and lab trials were conducted with specialists from National Highways, Zublin, Balfour Beatty materials, Balfour Beatty Ground Engineering and Arup to inform the construction.

1.4 The information below highlights the ground condition findings:

Ground Conditions



Ground Conditions

Stratum	Top level (mAOD)	Thickness (m)	
Made Ground	4 to 3.5	1.5 to 3.5	
Cohesive Alluvium	1.5 to 1.0	7 to 9.5	
Granular Alluvium	-8	0 to 5	
Glacial Till	-6 to -12	1 to 6	
Glacial Lacustrine Deposits	-17.5 to -24	6 to 7	
Fluvioglacial Sands and Gravels	-19 to -24	0 to 4	
Weathered Chalk	-24	3 to 6	
Chalk	-27	Not proven	

Water table 2.5m below existing ground level 0.5mAOD

Panel instability due to the presence of very soft alluvium

Excessive overbreak due to a lack of confinement to concrete due to the presence of very soft alluvium (primary risk)

Sudden loss of support fluid into open fissures in the upper chalk

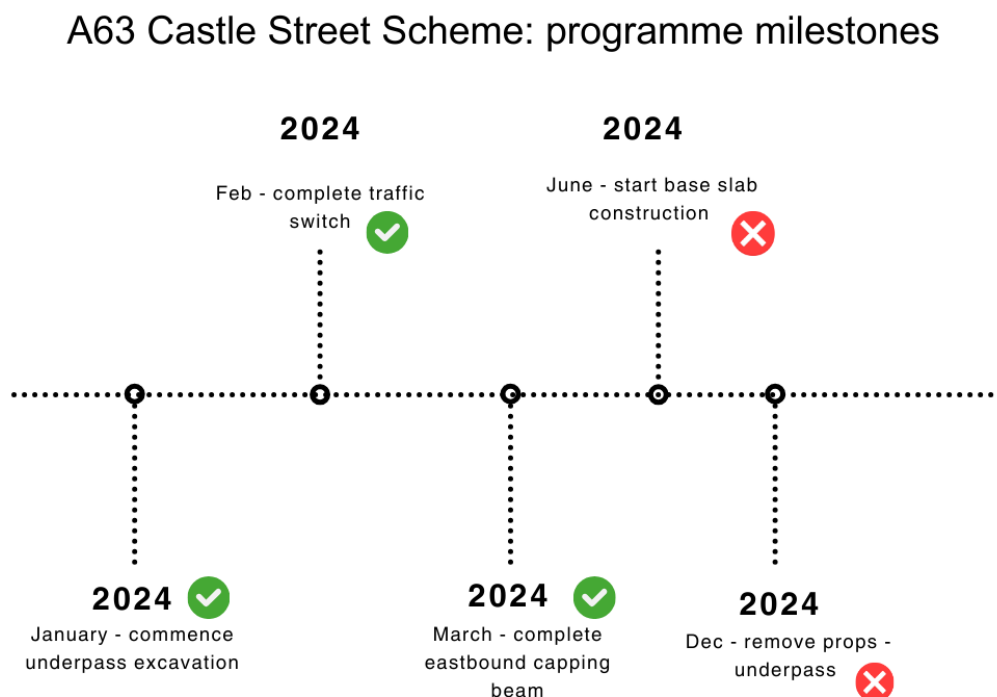
Outwash of fines in freshly cast concrete due to tidal fluctuations in groundwater level

2. Scheme delay:

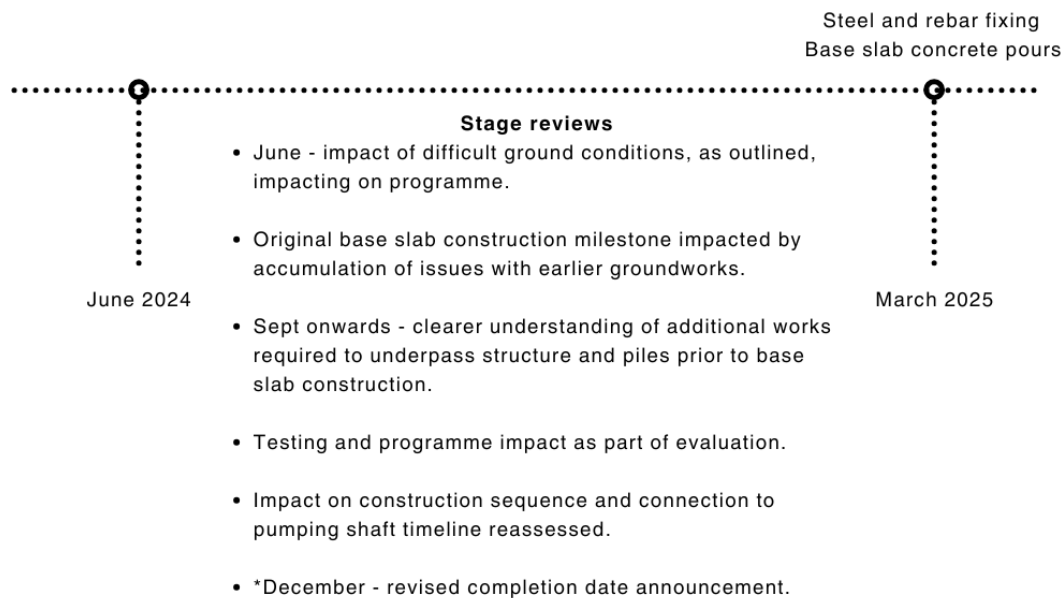
- 2.1. Additional time was taken to achieve underpass construction phase and completion of works *shown in figure 1.2.- which has extended the programme of work.
- 2.2. Testing and preparation for the underpass excavation established everything was as expected and the preparation was sound, allowing us to complete the complex removal of earth.
- 2.3. Overcoming the overall challenging ground conditions as identified (1.4), has contributed to the delay due to the complex and linear nature of the construction sequence for the works and a revised completion date from spring 2025 to spring 2026 has been communicated.
- 2.4. Ground Conditions have not presented a significant change in the make-up as shown (1.4) Time taken from construction methods identified in figure 1.2 have taken additional time in ensuring the structure is sound prior to and following excavation - impacting the programme with a 12-month delay on the target completion date.

We have updated stakeholders on the following revised high-level programme, which has extended the programme by an anticipated 12-months.

- Original timeline to December 2024:



June 2024 programme review and identification of other issues:



3. Location for underpass

3.1 The location for the underpass was necessary to replace the existing Mytongate roundabout better connecting Ferensway and Commercial Road and providing free-flow traffic east-west/west-east.

Consultation and options appraisals were carried out in 2009, 2013, 2017. All information is shared online at <https://nationalhighways.co.uk/our-roads/yorkshire-and-north-east/a63-castle-street/> - consultations.

If you are not satisfied with our response you may ask for an internal review within 40 working days of receiving the response, by replying to this email. You can learn more about the internal review process [here](#).

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 [here](#) or via the address below –

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Please remember to quote reference number **FOI2025/00086** in any future communications about this response.

Kind regards

Major Projects

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