

Our ref: 101756

Lower Thames Crossing
Woodlands
Manton Lane
Bedford
MK41 7LW

Laura Blake
request-712495-12200376@whatdotheyknow.com

16 February 2020

Dear Ms Blake

Environmental Information Regulations request: Lower Thames Crossing

Thank you for your information request of 12 December 2020 relating to the Lower Thames Crossing scheme. As your request concerns the proposals for a new road scheme I have dealt with it under the terms of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

You have requested: *'a copy of the latest 2020 Lower Thames Crossing Business Case. Whilst I believe this document would have formed part of the LTC Development Consent Order (DCO) application, it was never published publicly.'*

The Lower Thames Crossing Business case does not form part of our Development Consent Order application, however I can confirm that the Outline Business Case is incomplete and hasn't been approved by the Chief Secretary of Treasury. The information is therefore being withheld as it falls under the exception in Regulation 12(4)(d) material in the course of completion, unfinished documents and incomplete data.

In applying this exception, we have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosure. The key public interest factor in favour of disclosure was that it could support openness and transparency relating to the companies preparing to bid for a government project of significant cost to the taxpayer.

The key public interest factor against disclosure was that the Business Case is currently incomplete, and it has not been formally approved by the Chief Secretary of Treasury. Sharing the incomplete Business Case may cause confusion as the information within the documents is subject to change as it goes through the approval process.

It is important note that the Business Case does not form part of the Development Consent Order application isn't a not a public document.

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 email info@highwaysengland.co.uk. You should contact me if you wish to complain.

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

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. Please remember to quote reference number 101756 in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

Shaun Pidcock
Programme Director for Lower Thames Crossing
Lower Thames Crossing Programme