

[REDACTED]

Network Rail
Freedom of Information
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1st February 2017

Dear [REDACTED]

Information request

Reference number: FOI2017/00015

Thank you for your email of 4th January 2017. You requested the following information:

“Please provide detailed information about the signal aspect controls for each signal controlled by Cambridge PSB, including automatic signals within the PSB area.

More specifically:

(1) For each signal, specify the requirements for the signal to clear to an aspect other than stop (one red light, small red and white lights, or two small red lights). If the only requirement is that the line is clear to the end of the overlap of the next signal, this need not be specified in detail, but if there are other requirements (e.g. double blocking or approach release), please specify the exact requirement. Control tables in the standard form would suffice to meet this request.

(2) For each running signal, specify the requirements for the signal to clear to double yellow (if applicable) and to green. If the only requirement is that the next signal in advance shows the appropriate aspect for the normal three and four aspect sequences, this need not be specified in detail; however, where the sequence is non-standard (for example a four aspect signal showing green when the next signal in advance is three aspect and shows single yellow, or consecutive double yellows), please specify the exact requirement. This information can be provided in the form of aspect sequence charts with any additional annotation needed.

I have processed your request under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

I can confirm that we hold the information you have requested. However, this letter constitutes a refusal letter as we believe that the signalling aspect control diagrams and charts you have requested are exempt from disclosure under section 31(1)(a) and section 38(1) of the FOIA; these exemptions are engaged when disclosure of the requested information would, or would be likely to prejudice the prevention or detection of crime and would endanger the health and safety of any individual. In this instance our view is disclosure would be likely to have these effects

I would like to explain in more detail why we are refusing your request on this occasion and why we believe that disclosure of the requested information would be harmful at this time. Due to the detailed operational information contained in the signalling aspect control diagrams and charts, we consider that disclosure in this instance would release significant information about signal 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 Freedom of Information Act and the Environmental Information Regulations are disclosures to the 'world at large'; any information disclosed is released into the public domain rather than being provided to one individual in a private transaction. Because of this, we cannot take into account the motives of an applicant, even when they are well-intentioned – we have to consider the wider impact of the disclosure of a piece of information to the world, and whether this would cause harm.

The section 31(1) and 38(1) exemptions 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 and public knowledge about the operation and workings of the rail infrastructure. However, due to the technical and operational nature of the information contained in the signalling aspect control diagram and charts, it is important to note that there is little public interest in the disclosure of this type of information in terms of demonstrating accountability, as the information sheds no light on any factors such as public spending or management of the infrastructure. However, there are strong arguments in favour of maintaining the exemptions for such detailed operational information; these concern the likelihood and severity of potential harm to the security of the rail network and wider public safety. We consider that these factors outweigh all others, and after consideration of all the relevant factors in the circumstances 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.

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 signalling aspect control diagrams and charts by virtue of the exemptions set out in section 31(1)(a) (law enforcement) and section 38(1) (health and safety) of the FOIA.

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,

Joanne West
Information Officer

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 FOI Compliance and Appeals Manager 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