



By email: [REDACTED]

Network Rail
Freedom of Information
The Quadrant
Elder Gate
Milton Keynes
MK9 1EN

T 01908 782405
E FOI@networkrail.co.uk

17th July 2018

Dear [REDACTED]

Information request

Reference number: FOI2018/00787

Thank you for your email of 19th June 2018. You requested the following information:

'Please advise me of any plans which Network Rail may have for tree felling on the line between Chislehurst and Elmstead Woods station.'

I have processed your request under the terms of the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR). Information is exempt under section 39 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 if it meets the definition of environmental information found in Regulation 2 of the EIR. In this case we think the information in question is covered by Regulation 2(a) of the EIR.

At Network Rail, we take our responsibility very seriously to keep the railway and the natural environment around it safe. In recent media reports, there has been a lot of inaccurate coverage of how Network Rail manages trees and other vegetation that grows alongside the railway.

We believe we can enhance biodiversity whilst still running the railway safely but it is much more complex than has recently been portrayed. We proactively manage vegetation by protecting the environment whilst meeting our need, reinforced by the regulator, to remove trees and vegetation as necessary to maintain a safe and reliable railway. I have attached a copy of a briefing note which may be helpful.

Further information about our approach and policies is available on our transparency pages under vegetation management (link below):

<https://www.networkrail.co.uk/who-we-are/transparency-and-ethics/transparency/datasets/>

I can confirm that we hold the information you requested. As you may be aware Network Rail has given an undertaking to cease all tree removal during nesting season unless the work required is safety critical. This undertaking relates to tree felling, where we define trees as any plant with a stem diameter of more than 10cm.

At this particular location we have carried out some low level vegetation and woody scrub clearance but no tree felling. Please see below some before and after pictures of the vegetation clearance we have undertaken. We cleared vegetation around signalling cabinets and gantries to allow clear signal sighting and safe access for staff along the cess.

We currently do not have any further work planned in the area this summer. This position will be readdressed when the summer is over, some vegetation clearance may be required once nesting season is finished, if deemed necessary for the safe running of our network.





I hope you find this information useful. 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

Danielle Stratton
Information Officer

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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