



Network Rail
Freedom of Information
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11th June 2018

Dear [REDACTED],

Information request

Reference number: FOI2018/00579

Thank you for your email of 12th May 2018. You requested the following information:

'Tree Felling – Bournemouth Station to Pokesdown Station, Dorset – 8th April 2018

Could you please provide me with copies of the Bird, Bat and Wildlife, 'Environmental Impact Assessments' carried out by yourselves and Contractors and/or independent experts from the RSPB and Bat Conservation Trust, regarding Birds Nesting/Nests, Eggs, Chicks present, Bat Roosts and presence of Bats, and all other Hibernating and Resident Wildlife present in the trees and under-story vegetation, before the 8th April 2018, and on the day of 8th April 2018 during the tree felling and shrub foliage removal work carried out by Network Rail/EFL Contractors.

Can you also please provide me with copies of the Tree Surgeons assessments report regarding and including the number of individual trees that were deemed to be in 'poor condition' that required felling, and the Bird and Wildlife Environmental Impact Assessments (same info as mentioned above) carried out between Hinton Admiral Station to Bournemouth Station at any other time in 2017 and 2018 before and on the day the felling work was carried out.'

I have processed your request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR) as the information requested is environmental according to the definition in regulation 2(c) of the EIRs. Section 39 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) exempts environmental information from the FOIA, but requires us to consider it under the EIR).

At Network Rail, we take very seriously our responsibility 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. To be clear, we do not have a national tree felling programme and we certainly do not have any plans to cut down all of the trees on our estate.

We believe we can enhance biodiversity whilst still running the railway safely. But it's much more complex than has recently been portrayed. By proactively managing vegetation we think we can find a win-win solution – protecting the environment and 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. Please find attached:

1. Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for Hinton Admiral Railway Station to Bournemouth Railway Station Vegetation Clearance works.
2. 26 Breeding Bird Survey forms contained in three documents

Please note no follow up assessments were required in response to the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

Tree surgeon assessments were not required for this programme of vegetation removal. All trees removed as part of these works were identified by a qualified arborist; the trees were assessed for health, their position in relation to the track and the consequences if the tree was to fall. No detailed tree assessments were carried out. Therefore we do not hold any tree surgeon reports in relation to these works.

Please note that I also removed the names of individuals from the above listed documents under Regulation 13(1) of the EIR. This exception allows us to withhold information in circumstances where its disclosure would breach the data protection principles set out at s.35 of the Data Protection Act 2018 and Article 5 of the General Data Protection Regulations. In this instance, disclosure would breach the first principle which mandates that data must be processed fairly and lawfully. The

individuals in question would have had no expectation that their personal information would be disseminated to the world at large through the EIR process. It would not be fair processing of their data to disregard these legitimate expectations.

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

