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| Our ref: : CRS 726,084 Your ref:  | NDD - Directorate Services Team Manager9th FloorThe Cube199 Wharfside StreetBirmingham B1 1RN 15 September 2015 |

Dear

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request email of 17 August 2015 requesting information on potholes. I am writing to confirm that we have now completed our search for the information.

In your request you asked the following questions:

*1. How much (£) have you spent on resurfacing and fixing potholed roads over the past five years? Please can you provide a figure for each tax year: 2010/11, 2011/12, 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15.*

*2. How many potholes do you currently have on record? Please provide a figure broken down by road.*

*3. How many miles of road in your area currently need maintenance work because of uneven surfaces or potholes?*

*4. How many claims for compensation were lodged by drivers as a result of damage to their car due to the poor state of the roads over the past three years? Please can you provide a figure for each tax year: 2012/13, 2013/14, and 2014/15.*

*5. How much (£) have you paid out to drivers in compensation due to the poor state of the roads over the past three years? Please can you provide a figure for each tax year: 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15.*

*6. What is the name of the road responsible for the worst pothole damage, i.e. it has damaged more cars than any other road in the area? Please can you provide the road name and the number of car damage claims (broken down by road) that have been made in each of the past three years: (i.e. 2012/13, 2013/14, 2014/15).*

*7. How often is the average road in your jurisdiction fully re-surfaced? Please can you provide a figure in years.*

*8. How large is the average pothole in your council area? Please provide the diameter (metres).*

*9. Approximately what proportion of the roads in your area now need maintenance work because of uneven surfaces or potholes? Please give your answer as a %.*

*10. Would you say you temporarily fix potholes rather than relay road surfaces? Please answer ‘Yes, we temporarily fix potholes’, or ‘No, we relay the roads’.*

Taking each question in turn:

***Q1. How much (£) have you spent on resurfacing and fixing potholed roads over the past five years? Please can you provide a figure for each tax year: 2010/11, 2011/12, 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15.***

In our responses to your previous request, dated 15 July 2013 and 04 September 2014, we explained that our maintenance contracts are structured so that service providers are paid a 'lump sum' for a wide range of general maintenance duties, including among other activities: general repairs, sweeping, cleaning duties and repairing potholes.

These activities are performed on both a routine and ad-hoc basis to meet contractual requirements.  We do not disaggregate the budget and spend on these types of activities and so exact maintenance costs cannot be extracted.

The total maintenance expenditure for each financial year ending March 31 is as follows:-

10/11 £772m

11/12 £809m

12/13 £708m

13/14 £792m

14/15 £981m

This maintenance expenditure covers motorway and trunk road repairs and renewals.

***Q2. How many potholes do you currently have on record? Please provide a figure broken down by road:***

Please see accompanying table. This table lists the number of potholes (by road) that required action to fill them. These figures are a snapshot of our service provider records, taken on various dates between August and September 2015. As most potholes are categorized as category 1 defects, they would have been resolved within 24 hours.

***Q3. How many miles of road in your area currently need maintenance work because of uneven surfaces or potholes?***

**Please note**: Highways England is not a council / local authority. We manage and operate England’s motorways and major A roads and are not responsible for smaller roads which are managed by individual councils.

The numbers of potholes fluctuate daily on the network and hence it is not feasible to provide a meaningful reply that is specific to this question.

For background information, as part of the operational duties, our agents also regularly inspect our network to ensure all safety related defects, e.g. significant size potholes, are repaired promptly.

In addition we annually survey the road condition of the nearside lane, lane 1 (most heavily used lane), that survey includes the level of unevenness and other form of defects. The latest data indicated that approximately just less than 360 miles of the network required further investigation - this equates to approximately just below 5% of the total network. Typically we would expect that as a result of the further investigation, around half of this will require some form of maintenance.

***Q4. How many claims for compensation were lodged by drivers as a result of damage to their car due to the poor state of the roads over the past three years? Please can you provide a figure for each tax year: 2012/13, 2013/14, and 2014/15****.*

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***Q5. How much (£) have you paid out to drivers in compensation due to the poor state of the roads over the past three years? Please can you provide a figure for each tax year: 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15.***

Please see table below:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Received** |  | **Paid out** |
| **Tax Year** | **Number** | **Total Value (£)** |  | **Number** | **Total (£)** |
| 2012\_13 | 620 | £226,909 |  | 203 | £55,105 |
| 2013\_14 | 743 | £311,834 |  | 274 | £74,739 |
| 2014\_15 | 588 | £215,076 |  | 217 | £59,784 |

***Q6. What is the name of the road responsible for the worst pothole damage, i.e. it has damaged more cars than any other road in the area? Please can you provide the road name and the number of car damage claims (broken down by road) that have been made in each of the past three years: (i.e. 2012/13, 2013/14, 2014/15).***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Road that generated most claims (by number) over the period :- | **M6** |  |
| 2012\_13 | 111 |  |
| 2013\_14 | 70 |  |
| 2014\_15 | 52 |  |
| **Total** | 233 |  |

***Q7. How often is the average road in your jurisdiction fully re-surfaced? Please can you provide a figure in years.***

**Please note**: Highways England is not a council / local authority – we manage and operate England’s motorways and major A roads and are not responsible for smaller roads which are managed by individual councils.

Resurfacing frequency is dependent on a number of factors, such as the overall wear caused by traffic, the type of surfacing material, the adequacy of the skid resistance provided by the road surface and so forth. We regularly monitor the road surface and the overall structural condition of the road to identify the maintenance programme for the trunk road network. Resurfacing is guided by our design and maintenance

standards plus the monitored road condition. The standards cover road asset investigation and intervention requirements.

***Q8. How large is the average pothole in your council area? Please provide the diameter (metres).***

**Please note**: Highways England is not a council / local authority. We manage and operate England’s motorways and major A roads and are not responsible for smaller roads which are managed by individual councils.

This information is not held. The Asset Maintenance and Operational Requirements detail Highways England requirements for the delivery of routine maintenance (including potholes) by its service providers. There are mandatory requirements that potholes wider than 15 cm (6 inches) diameter, or deeper than 4cm (1.5 inches) or deeper than the road surface thickness, should always be rectified within 24 hours of verification – this is what we refer to as a “category 1 defect”.

***Q9. Approximately what proportion of the roads in your area now need maintenance work because of uneven surfaces or potholes? Please give your answer as a %.***

As explained in the response to Q3, the proportion of the roads in our network that may need maintenance work because of uneven surfaces or potholes is approximately just less than 360 miles, i.e. roads that require further investigation. This equates to approximately just below 5% of the overall of the network. Our aim is to maintain at least 95% of the network in good condition, ensuring the network remains safe and serviceable.

***Q10. Would you say you temporarily fix potholes rather than relay road surfaces? Please answer ‘Yes, we temporarily fix potholes’, or ‘No, we relay the roads’.***

No, we relay the roads (meaning we ask for it to be fixed permanently). It is, however, recognised that this will not always be operationally possible where there is an immediate need to address a safety risk under the terms of the relevant service provision requirements. In such cases it is permissible to carry out a temporary fix to mitigate the immediate hazard and ensure that there is no risk to road users. A repair complying with the Specification for Highway Works (SHW) should be done as soon as possible after the installation of the temporary repair.

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the legislation, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless exempt. We may therefore be publishing the information you requested, together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context, via our website: <http://www.highways.gov.uk/>

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 Highways England Information Line on 0300 123 5000; or e-mail 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 email, please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

Email: ndd\_c\_dst@highwaysengland.co.uk