

Our ref: FOI 18330247

Highways England
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol BS1 6HA

13 February 2017

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request dated 20 January 2017.

In your request you make reference to the noise and air quality assessments undertaken for the A303 Stonehenge improvement proposals put forward for public consultation. You suggest there is too little detail of the assessments in the accompanying Technical Appraisal Report (TAR) for the findings to be critically viewed, and make six specific requests for the following to be made available:

1. The methodologies used for the analyses

The methodologies used for the noise and air quality assessments are set out in Chapter 18, Section 18.2 of the main body of the TAR. Full working details of the methodologies can be found readily on-line by searching the various references given in the TAR and will be wholly familiar to experts in these subject matters.

2. Evidence for the verification and validation of the methodology by independent subject matter experts

The methodologies used are prescribed government methodologies that are used by Highways England for all such major road improvement schemes. They have been developed over many years by subject matter experts and are kept under central review. They are not verified/validated every time they are used on individual projects. The approach we take as Highways England on each major project is to employ expert leading consultants to carry out the work, in this case a joint venture of Atkins and Arup. The work is controlled and quality assured both by our consultants and by checks within Highways England.

3. The underpinning assumptions used in the analyses and their derivation

The underpinning assumptions are also set out in Chapter 18, Section 18.2 of the TAR, with their derivation being consistent with the prescribed methodologies.

4. All raw data sets and evidence of their date and place of origin

The raw data sets amount to the traffic data inputs and the route proposals north or south of Winterbourne Stoke. The traffic data are forecast flows derived from current flows on the A303 through Winterbourne Stoke, with the current flows (for 2015) and future year forecast flows (along with the methodologies for deriving the future year forecasts) being set out in Chapter 10 in the TAR - Section 10.5 in particular contains

details of traffic flows along the A303 with and without the scheme in place. The route proposals north or south of Winterbourne Stoke are shown on plans included in Appendix F of the TAR, with accompanying descriptions in Chapter 8, Section 8.2 of the main body of the TAR.

5. Details of any modelling studies undertaken to estimate the likely noise and environmental pollution arising from each of the bypass options

There are no modelling studies as such; instead the noise and air quality assessments have been undertaken in accordance with the prescribed methodologies set out in the TAR. The results of the assessments are presented in Chapter 18, Section 18.3 of the TAR.

6. Details of the verification and validation of these models

As explained above, there are no noise and air quality models as such; instead the assessments have been undertaken by expert consultants following the prescribed methodologies set out in the TAR, with the work being quality assured throughout.

If you are unhappy with the way we have handed your request you may ask for an internal review. Our internal review process is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/highways-england/about/complaints-procedure>

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 FOI 18316446 in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted name]

Project Manager for A303 Amesbury – Berwick Down
Major Projects Complex Infrastructure Programme
Highways England