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3rd August 2011

Dear xxxxxxxxxxx

Freedom of Information Request – P0007932

I am writing to confirm that the Department for Transport has now completed its search for the information which you requested on 18th July 2011.

A copy of the information is enclosed.

Turning to the second part of your request which is more based on our observation and interpretation. In the past 9 months DfT officials have met with Blackpool Borough Council on 3 separate occasions to establish progress and ensure return on investment of public funds. Using the central investment under Elements 2 has allowed Blackpool BC to develop a comprehensive asset management plan. Supported by this evidence, Blackpool has successfully made the business case to prudentially borrow £30m to invest in its road structure over the coming 4 years.

A requirement of Element 2 funding was that the learning from the investment could be applied elsewhere. We are currently in discussions with Blackpool on developing a series of pilot programmes to test their asset management system in other live local authority environments. If these pilots are a success, the toolkit produced through the Elements 2 investment will be made available to all highway authorities.

In isolation, the investment into the Blackpool initiative has proved to be good business. The added value will come if we can succeed in having the principles and processes established by Blackpool extended to other authorities.

You will be able to follow any potential roll out of the Blackpool asset management system via the Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme (HMEP) web site <http://www.dft.gov.uk/hmep/> /

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In keeping with the spirit and effect of the Freedom of Information Act, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless exempt. A copy of this response and the information provided may now be published on our website together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context.

If you are unhappy with the way the Department has handled your request or with the decisions made in relation to your request you may complain within two calendar months of the date of this letter by writing to the Department's Information Rights Unit at:

Zone D/04
Ashdown House
Sedlescombe Road North
Hastings
East Sussex TN37 7GA
E-mail: FOI-Advice-Team-DFT@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Please see attached details of DfT's complaints procedure and your right to complain to the Information Commissioner.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

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