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XXXXX
Department for Transport
Zone XXXXX
Great Minster House
76 Marsham Street
LONDON
SW1P 4DR
Direct Line: 020 XXXXX
XXXXX@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Dear XXXXX,

Web Site: www.dft.gov.uk

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION – ROAD SALT

03 March 2011

Thank you for your email dated 26 December 2010 which you sent to the Highways Agency requesting information regarding road treating salt. Your request has been transferred to the Department for Transport as we are responsible for the winter maintenance policy. I apologise for the delay in replying.

Your request, which has been dealt with under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, asked for the following information:

"Please could you provide information as to the allocation and resupply of road treating salt to various regions and bodies from the centralised stockpile from the 20th December 2010 to the present including requests for resupply turned down and the nature and location of "strategic" areas and regions to which extra salt allocations have been made during this period."

As a result of the challenges faced during the 2009/10 winter season, particularly those related to salt supplies, an independent winter resilience review, led by David Quarmby CBE was carried out. The review identified that the UK salt supply chain is fundamentally vulnerable and lacks resilience and UK supply is insufficient to meet the needs of Britain's highway authorities in a severe winter. The review therefore recommended that a strategic stockpile of up to 250,000 tonnes be established by the Highways Agency to provide a strategic reserve of salt for England through the 2010/11 winter season. The DfT subsequently acted on this recommendation and ordered the strategic reserve in advance of the winter.

As a result of the early onset and severity of the weather experienced already this winter season, the Secretary of State for Transport requested the Highways Agency to facilitate the import of a further volume of salt of around 273,000 tonnes. I can confirm that both tranches of the strategic stockpile have been delivered.

For this winter season, the Department arranged for a regular audit of local highway authority salt stock levels in which we are able to see those authorities that may have less resilience than others. This system commenced in December 2010 and we took the decision due to the improved weather situation to stop the audits following the one undertaken on 7th February 2011.

Following each audit, a Winter Network Group meeting was held at official level. The Group brought together the Department for Transport (Chair), the devolved administrations (both Scotland and Wales), the Highways Agency, Transport for London, the Local Government Association (LGA), ADEPT (previously the County Surveyors Society), the Met Office, and the Cabinet Office. The purpose of the meetings was for the Group to

consider whether any authorities required require access to salt from the strategic stockpile. In addition it provided information, not advice or direction, to salt suppliers based upon returns provided by the Highways Agency, devolved administration and local highway authorities on salt stocks, estimates of future usage derived from Met Office weather forecasts, and an assessment of the available market supply. Suppliers could then decide on their weekly salt delivery arrangements.

Following the extreme weather experienced in December 2010 and given that domestic salt suppliers were unable to meet demand for restocking, a proportion of the strategic stockpile was released as a precautionary measure and to bolster supplies from the UK producers to ensure that Highways Authorities had sufficient salt to deal with the adverse weather.

Prioritisation of who was allocated stock from the strategic stockpile was mainly undertaken by analysis showing which authorities required an amount of salt in order to bolster their resilience to a minimum capability threshold. On two occasions it was, however, agreed to invite all local authorities in England to bid for a limited amount of salt stock in light of the then anticipated weather conditions. It was made clear to authorities in those instances that we could not guarantee that they would receive any salt from the strategic stockpile or the exact allocation that they had bid for.

The attached table at **Annex A** provides a list of those authorities, including Highways Agency Service Providers, who have purchased salt from the national strategic salt reserve.

I refer to the complaints you have made in relation to our failure to respond within 20 days. Due to this we have carried out an internal review of our handling of this case. The Department received your initial request on 29th December. Section 5(2) of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 states that "information shall be made available as soon as possible and no later than 20 working days after the date of receipt of the request". The twentieth working day following the date of receipt of your request was 27th January.

Please accept our apologies for failing to respond to your request within the 20 working day deadline. The delay has been caused by significant pressures of work in this policy area concerned. Nevertheless, we acknowledge that the Department has a duty to respond to EIR requests within 20 working days, and that we have failed to do so on this occasion. Please accept our apologies for this.

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. The Department will, therefore, be simultaneously releasing to the public the information you requested, 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 the attached details of DfT's complaints procedure and your right to complain to the Information Commissioner – **at Annex B** to this letter.

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

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

XXXXX

Department for Transport

SALT STRATEGIC STOCKPILE ALLOCATION LIST
(Tranches 1- 6) – As of 14 February 2011

Table reflecting amount of strategic salt offered to highway authorities, including Highway Agency Service Providers, against amount of salt accepted by those invited:

Tranche number	Amount Offered (tonnes)	Date	Amount Accepted (tonnes)	Date
1	9,855	17/12/2010	9,855	17/12/2010
2	18,775	22/12/2010	18,775	22/12/2010
3	20,000	30/12/2010	13,325	04/01/2011
4	29,950	06/01/2011	5,525	06/01/2011
5	45,000	14/01/2011	41,175	14/01/2011
6	9,200	19/01/2011	8,200	19/01/2011
	Total amount offered (tonnes):		Total amount accepted (tonnes):	
	132,780		96,855	

Allocations to LHAs (Tranches 1 – 6 inclusive)

Name of Authority	Total Stock Accepted
Highways Agency Area 2	4900
Highways Agency Area 3	2000
Highways Agency Area 7	2000
Highways Agency Area 12	1750
Highways Agency Area 13	1675
Highways Agency Area 14	1750
Highways Agency Area 27 - M1 - A1 Link DBFO	250
Highways Agency Area 29 - A1(M) Alconbury to Peterborough DBFO	200
Highways Agency Area 31 - A417/A419DBFO	200
London Borough of Greenwich	1000
London Borough of Haringey	175
London Borough of Havering	500
London Borough of Lambeth	275
London Borough of Redbridge	400
London Borough of Sutton	350
Bath and North East Somerset Council	500
Bristol City Council	125
Somerset County Council	2575
Bournemouth Borough Council	50
Plymouth City Council	500
Gloucestershire County Council	2000
Hampshire County Council	1475
Portsmouth City Council	200
Isle of Wight Council	300
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	100
Oxfordshire County Council	1550
Brighton & Hove City Council	100

East Sussex County Council	950
Surrey County Council	2000
Kent County Council	3900
Medway Council	1325
Central Bedfordshire Council (Bedfordshire Highways)	950
Cambridgeshire County Council	2500
Peterborough City Council	723
Essex County Council (CP)	1350
Thurrock Council	1150
Southend on Sea	200
Suffolk County Council	4483
Worcestershire County Council	1600
Telford & Wrekin Council	1025
Herefordshire Council	1400
Warwickshire County Council	750
Birmingham City Council	3650
Wolverhampton City Council	350
Warrington BC	300
The City of Liverpool	650
Wirral MBC	700
St Helens MBC	625
Manchester CC	475
Salford CC	375
Stockport MBC	200
Trafford Borough Council	1000
Lancashire County Council	2000
Blackpool BC	200
Cumbria County Council	11625
Derby City	1925
Derbyshire	1125
Nottinghamshire including Nottingham City	4650
North Yorkshire County Council	3957
Scarborough	250
East Riding of Yorkshire	1517
Hull City Council	1000
North Lincolnshire Council	1675
Rotherham MBC	300
Sheffield City Council	4700
Durham County	2125
Sunderland	275

Annex B

Your right to complain to DfT and the Information Commissioner

You have the right to complain within two calendar months of the date of this letter about the way in which your request for information was handled and/or about the decision not to disclose all or part of the information requested. In addition a complaint can be made that DfT has not complied with its FOI publication scheme.

Your complaint will be acknowledged and you will be advised of a target date by which to expect a response. Initially your complaint will be re-considered by the official who dealt with your request for information. If, after careful consideration, that official decides that his/her decision was correct, your complaint will automatically be referred to a senior independent official who will conduct a further review. You will be advised of the outcome of your complaint and if a decision is taken to disclose information originally withheld this will be done as soon as possible.

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