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FOI Request - Road numbering

I am writing to confirm that the Department for Transport has now completed its search for the road classification information which you requested on 11 July 2005. Where it has been possible, I have enclosed a copy of the information in the format you requested. I wish to advise you however, that I have not been able to provide all of the information requested for the reasons given below.

I will first give you some background into road numbering and classification and the records held by the Department. In 1919 the Ministry of Transport was established and empowered to classify highways. It introduced a classification system of Class I roads (more important roads connecting large centres of population, and of outstanding importance from the point of view of through traffic), and Class II roads (roads forming important links between Class I roads and smaller centres of population). In 1922-1923, following consultation with local authorities and motoring organisations, a definitive list of proposed road Class I numbers had been drawn up and published by the Ministry of Transport. This was followed in 1926-27 by a revised version which also included Class II roads.

In 1966 the Local Government Act introduced the 'principal roads' classification. All previous road classification legislation was revoked following the introduction of this Act, resulting in the reclassification and renumbering of all roads. A network of principal roads were identified and these were all allocated "A" numbers. The remaining class I and class II roads were given "B" numbers. Thus, no classifications or numbers before 1966 are in force, although many roads will have been allocated the same numbering for signing and navigation purposes.

I am informed that the Department holds all classification and numbering records since 1966, and a good record of classifications before then. We also hold a folder which contains a list of the Ministry of Transport Class I and II road designations based upon the 1926/27 list which has been amended to reflect the position at 1955-63. These historical records are currently held in a central storage facility in London.

You have requested the following information:

1) Provide details of the original 1922 A/B road designations and routings produced by the then Ministry of Transport.

Following a search of the paper records currently held by the Department for Transport, I have been unable to locate the original 1922-23 list of road designations. As mentioned

above, this list has been revoked and the numbering is no longer in force. I would recommend that you make further enquiries with the National Archives in Kew or The Stationary Office with a view to locating a copy of this publication. The contact details are as follows:

The National Archives,
Kew,
Richmond,
Surrey,
TW9 4DU
Tel. 20 8876 3444
www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/contact/form/

The Stationary Office
Tel. 0870 242 2345
Email. esupport@tso.co.uk
Website - <http://www.tsoshop.co.uk/bookstore.asp>

2) a) Provide a current list of A and B roads, listing current routing and any proposed changes to routing.

I am able to enclose at Annex A, a list of current A roads including routing details based upon Ordnance Survey 'OSCAR' data as at 1st April 2005. I have also enclosed at Annex B, a list of B road numbers as extracted from the national numbering record which indicates the start and end point of each route.

b) provide details of routing of the following roads (where a the route no longer exists, provide details of its former route):

A108, A122, A150, A175, A241, A263, A266, A276, A279, A294, A333, A364, A398, A434, A440, A471, A492, A524, A564, A604, A613, A622, A648, A668.

You will see from the list of current A roads that none of these numbers are currently in use, and I have been unable to locate a record of the historic routes that these numbers were allocated to. I have however managed to derive basic location information for most of these numbers using the aforementioned Ministry of Transport list of Class I and II roads and numbers (1926/27) amended to reflect the position at 1955-63. I have enclosed this information at Annex C.

Whilst it is quite possible that information on the routing of these 'out of use' road numbers and of the original 1922 designations might be contained within the substantial historical records that are currently held in storage, we consider that the cost of retrieving this information for the purpose of this FOI request would exceed the 'appropriate limit' as established in the '*Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004*'. This takes account of the costs we would reasonably expect to incur in order to determine whether the information is held and then to locate, retrieve and extract the information.

Although the storage facilities are not presently open to the public, it might be possible to make the records available for viewing temporarily at a Freedom of Information Access Point in a central London Department for Transport office. If you feel this might be helpful

for your purposes please contact me and I will make further enquiries as to what this entails. I cannot guarantee that the records will contain any information that might be of use to you, and as such I would again recommend that you also contact the National Archives in Kew.

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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 by writing to me at the above address. 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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Your right to complain to [DfT/Agency] and the Information Commissioner

You have the right to complain 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