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Your ref: CH/BK32090

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15 June 2020

Dear Barbara Keeley

M60 motorway litter and associated issues

Thank you for your letter of 2 June 2020 sent on behalf of your constituent, Mr Terry Dean of 2 Gatemere Close, Ellenbrook, Worsley, M28 7UY, highlighting locations along the M60 where he has observed litter 'hotspots'.

I am grateful to Mr Dean for taking the time to report his observations in relation to junctions 12, 13 and 14 of the M60.

As you're aware, our responsibilities include removing litter from motorways in England. In doing so, we are required to comply with the Environmental Protection Act and a Code of Practice published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

The Code of Practice measures the concentration of litter and grades it into four categories:

- Grade A – No litter or refuse
- Grade B – Predominantly free of litter and litter refuse apart from small items
- Grade C – Widespread distribution of litter and refuse with minor accumulations
- Grade D – Heavily littered with significant accumulations

To comply with our obligations, we undertake safety inspections on the motorway network in the North West on a weekly basis. During these inspections, we identify litter and then record a grading in relation to its concentration. From this, we arrange to clear the litter within the timescales required by the Code of Practice. Grade C must be brought back to a Grade A or B standard within twenty-eight days, and Grade D within seven days.

We inspected these locations earlier this month with each location being assessed as Grade A or B. These gradings mean that litter removal work is not yet required, however we will continue to monitor each location during our routine inspections.

Mr Dean is right to suggest that if litter and detritus on motorways is not removed in a timely manner, the performance of the drainage can be affected. Since 1 April this year, we have stepped up our routine maintenance regime for motorways in the North West. This includes more frequent sweeping of the drainage channels to ensure detritus does not build up and cause blockages.

There is one recorded flooding event in the last five years on the M602 link to the clockwise M60 at junction 12, which occurred in 2016 during extreme conditions. Ensuring trunk roads and motorways in England operate as safely as possible is our prime objective, and warning motorists of hazards such as flooding is standard practice.

Mr Dean suggests that during construction of the M60 smart motorway, litter was buried in the verge under new topsoil by contractors working on our behalf. The smart motorway was completed two years ago, with construction undertaken in accordance with stringent national standards. I can assure you that during construction, we had a supervisory team on-site to ensure that all associated activities were observed and verified to meet our quality requirements. We have no evidence to suggest that litter was knowingly buried under topsoil during construction.

We have a comprehensive programme aimed at preserving safe sightlines for motorists, preventing hazards and ensuring that road signs remain visible. We keep our grassed areas and vegetation under constant review during the growing season and carry out cuts to vegetation where necessary.

If your office would like any further information, our Divisional Director in Manchester, Alan Shepherd, would be happy to help. He can be contacted by email at alan.shepherd@highwaysengland.co.uk or by telephone on 0300 470 6011. His correspondence address is Highways England, 8th Floor, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD. Alternatively, please contact me or Jim directly.

Yours sincerely



Nick Harris
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