

From: XXXX
Sent: 19 July 2018 12:53
To: XXXX
Cc: XXXX
Subject: Re: Queensbury Tunnel: Risk to the Community

XXXX

The letter is to the SoSfT so I assume the response will need to follow the usual official response route within DfT.

From a Highways England perspective:

- the tunnel has continually ranked highest on risk out of 3200 structures
- our proposal to close the tunnel has been in the public domain since 2014
- our programme date of the summer of 2018 to commence works and why has been in the public domain since the autumn of 2016
- we have co-operated fully, including £150k of funding, to help other parties understand the condition of the tunnel and consider a transfer of ownership - the fact that they have been slow to do so is not a reason for increasing the liabilities of Highways England
- we are a very small team with limited funds responsible for 3200 (so 3199 other than this one) legacy railway structures all of which are over 100 years old
- we are complying fully with the HRE Protocol as we must reduce the SoSfT's liabilities yet the risks and consequences (i.e. reputational, financial, technical and legal) all sit on our shoulders under the Protocol
- our proposal is currently under scrutiny of a planning application

DfT has every right to instruct Highways England to postpone or cancel the works or to take a different approach to them. It is DfT's tunnel not Highways England's. However, should DfT take such a route it clearly then takes ownership of all risks and consequences away from Highways England (i.e. reputational, financial, technical and legal).

If anyone reads the report in detail it is clear that on several occasions they actually accept that there is a risk with potentially severe consequences. The premise that we should spend already limited funds on further monitoring and send contractors regularly into our highest risk tunnel is somehow lost on them.

The matter of the forfeited lease is a simple but unfortunate administrative error. The rent demands were sent to DfT in London, allegedly, but never found their way to my team.

Kind Regards

XXXX
Historical Railways Estate Team
(On Behalf of Department of Transport)
Mobile: XXXX
Sent from Samsung Mobile on O2

----- Original message -----

From: XXXX
Sent: 19 July 2018 12:18
To: XXXX
Subject: FW: Queensbury Tunnel: Risk to the Community