

6 September 2022

Dear

### **Request for Information – ATISN 16562**

Thank you for your request for information dated 8 August.

### **Information requested**

You asked for the following information relating to road closures for the World Triathlon Para Series and Ironman 70.3 hosted on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> August respectively in Swansea and surrounding areas:

1. Swansea Council (SC) has publicly said that the IRONMAN 70.3 benefits businesses in Swansea by £2.5m. Please provide a breakdown of how this is achieved.
2. Please provide the information on the cost to businesses who have had to close because of the events?
3. How much has been paid, and by whom(SC or WG), to the organisers to attract the events?
4. What is the additional cost to WG and SC to prepare for and provide facilities for the event?
5. What studies were taken to understand the effects of the events on the people and businesses of Swansea? In particular the closing of the Maritime Quarter/Marina for two days and the closure of the majority of roads on Mumbles and Gower for a day preventing the free movement of people including tourists and farmers.
6. What compensation is available to businesses for loss of business
7. What consultations were carried out with the relevant organisations – e.g. Community councils, business trade associations, local councillors, AMs and MPs
8. Why are these events not being run in the shoulder season rather than in the peak tourist season when accommodation providers are full and people from Swansea and the surrounding areas are wishing to enjoy the Gower countryside and beaches.
9. What in-house and independent reports are being prepared to learn from the mistakes in the organisation, consultation and running of the events? When will these be published to enable the organisers and the people affected by the events to plan for better events in future.

### **Our response**

1. The economic impact of the Ironman event on Swansea and Wales is being measured but will not be known for 6-8 weeks. It will form part of Ironman's post event report on its performance against the targets agreed in relation to the event.
2. The Welsh Government does not hold this information.
3. We consider the information requested to be exempt from disclosure under Section 43(commercial interests) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Full reasoning for applying this exemption is given at Annex A to this letter.
4. Beyond the funding provided to the organisers, there is no additional cost to Welsh Government to prepare for and provide facilities for the event.
5. The Welsh Government is not aware of any specific studies undertaken to understand the effects of the events on the people and businesses of Swansea. In relation to the impact of road closures, the event organisers worked directly with Swansea City Council's traffic management department and communications teams to ensure local people and businesses were informed well in advance of the event taking place. Swansea City Council, along with British Triathlon and Ironman, publicised the detailed road changes to a wide audience five or six weeks before the event so that communities could plan ahead. Specific provision was made for those that needed more specific access, such as carers and NHS staff and access for emergency services was maintained throughout. Feedback on the inaugural event will help to inform the planning for future years.
6. The information is available at [IRONMAN 70.3 Swansea FAQs - Enjoy Swansea Bay \(visitswanseabay.com\)](https://www.visitswanseabay.com/ironman-70.3-swanea-faq).
7. The information is available at [IRONMAN 70.3 Swansea FAQs - Enjoy Swansea Bay \(visitswanseabay.com\)](https://www.visitswanseabay.com/ironman-70.3-swanea-faq).
8. In deciding the event date for this year, consideration was given to the wider events calendar in Swansea and Wales, water temperature and potential negative impacts on other mass participation sports organisers in Wales. The current Ironman events calendar was also taken into consideration. You may wish to note that the date next year has been changed to 15/16 July 2023 which sits outside the peak school holiday period.
9. As with all major events, a number of event stakeholder debriefs will occur in the coming weeks which will ensure the events continuously improve in future years. As part of the event monitoring process, the Welsh Government will be provided with a post event report from Ironman and WTPS.

## Next steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit, Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ  
or Email: [Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales](mailto:Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales). Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. However, please note that the

Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely

## **ANNEX A**

### ATISN 16562 – Consideration For and Against Disclosure of Information

Decisions relating to non-disclosure have been taken with due consideration of the exemption identified under Section 43(2), commercial interests, of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Section 43 is a qualified (public interest tested) exemption and in order to engage it, I must show that the public interest in withholding the information is greater than the public interest in releasing it. I have therefore given consideration to the effects of disclosure of the information to the world at large, as the information is made available to anybody and everybody, not just the requestor. As such, when considering your request I have considered the wider effects of disclosure rather than any personal interest you may have in being provided with the information.

#### Section 43(2) – commercial interests

The exemption states:

(2) Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it).

The Welsh Government(WG) is of the view that revealing the information to question 3 would be likely to prejudice our commercial interests should it be disclosed at this point in time. Releasing information relating to the cost of events into the public domain would negatively affect WG's ability to negotiate with future event providers on a level playing field. The information would reveal commercially sensitive information not otherwise publicly available and which, if disclosed would be likely to prejudice our service offering and future strategy and development.

Disclosing the information would give us a disadvantage in future dealings for any potential future events. It would place WG at a distinct commercial advantage when negotiating and therefore prejudice our ability to engage in future commercial activities. It would also allow other potential event organisers and competitors to host

those events an insight into our methodology and proprietary information pertaining to our consideration of the amount of investment we would consider in attracting these events balanced against our estimate of their worth as a whole to Wales. By revealing this information which they might otherwise not have considered would enable them to adjust their offering to WG's detriment. We do not believe that facilitating this type of unfair competitive advantage would be in the wider public interest.

#### Public Interest Test For Disclosure

The Welsh Government recognises the public interest in openness and transparency within government, particularly in terms of ensuring an accountable government by disclosing how the Welsh Government spends public money and that the money is invested wisely.

#### Public Interest Against Disclosure

Disclosure of this information would provide competitors and other event organisers access to a level of information not otherwise available to them. This would be likely to enable them to obtain an advantage when negotiating with or against the Welsh Government. We do not believe facilitating this type of unfair competitive advantage would be in the wider public interest.

For example, disclosure of information would allow event organisers to understand previous investments and potentially negotiate a detrimental position for the Welsh Government. To freely disclose the information would give competitors aiming to attract similar events a distinct commercial advantage and stepping stone which would be likely to prejudice our ability to engage in fair and level playing field for our commercial activities. WG do not have access to similar information on its competitors as they do not publish it, so would be at a significant disadvantage. We believe the resultant harm should this information be released, would be substantial.

Whilst the withheld information would be of interest to other competitors and event organisers, we do not believe it would be of sufficient interest to the wider public. Release of the information would also allow potential competitors/event organisers access to a level of detail that they otherwise wouldn't have, so as to enable them to obtain a commercial advantage when competing for other major events. I do not believe that facilitating this type of unfair competitive advantage would be in the wider public interest. I further do not believe there is a public interest in prejudicing the commercial interests of the Welsh Government by the release of this information.

I am aware that, as a general rule, the sensitivity of information is likely to reduce over time; therefore the age of the information, or timing of the request, may be relevant in determining whether to apply an exemption, or where the public interest may lie. In this case, however, the information captured is very much current information. I believe therefore that the balance of the public interest falls in favour of withholding the information.