

16 February 2023

Dear

Request for information - ATISN 17056

I wrote to you on 27 January regarding your request for information.

Your request

You asked for the following information:

Subject: Change to 20 mph speed limit in built up areas: freedom of information request

1. What estimate has been made of the additional particulates will be released into the atmosphere in the built up areas when the 20 mph limit is fully introduced?
2. What measures are being taken to ameliorate the increased pollution?

Subject: Traffic delays around the Brynglas Tunnels: freedom of information request

1. The level of pollution now around the Brynglas tunnels and what it was before the introduction of the 50 mph speed limit?
2. The number of minutes lost because of hold ups on the M4 on either side of the Brynglas tunnels? Surely the slower speeds on most afternoons increases the pollution significantly. This also would deter any business who is based in England from setting up plants in Wales as their transport of goods to customers would be significantly delayed – and be more costly (the cost of a driver and lorry per hour is not insignificant).
3. Any estimate of the reduced pollution in this area if the M4 relief road had been built.

Our Response

I can confirm that we hold some of the information you have requested.

Subject: Change to 20 mph speed limit in built up areas: freedom of information request

For questions one and two, the information regarding the evaluation is already available in the public domain and can be accessed using the following link:

[An evaluation of the impacts of on vehicle emissions of a 20mph speed restriction in London \(edinburgh.gov.uk\)](https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/evaluation-impacts-vehicle-emissions-20mph-speed-restriction-london)

Also available in the public domain is the following link to the Explanatory Memorandum to the Restricted Roads (20mph Speed Limit) (Wales) Order 2022:

[EM template for sub leg \(senedd.wales\)](https://www.senedd.wales/em-template-sub-leg)

Subject: Traffic delays around the Brynglas Tunnels: freedom of information request

For question one, the speed restrictions were implemented in June 2018 to reduce levels and exposure in the soonest time. These restrictions were identified as something which would reduce exposure and speed up compliance with NO₂ limit values.

The Annual Mean (μm^3) NO₂ levels recorded at monitors adjacent to Brynglas tunnels are as follows:

In 2018 Annual Mean 2018 (μm^3) NO₂ concentrations were 74.7

In 2021 Annual Mean 2021 (μm^3) NO₂ concentrations were 47.7

Please note that the latest 2022 data is currently unavailable. We do not hold the accurate information yet, however we will be publishing the data in spring 2023.



I confirm that we do not hold any specific information in relation to question two based on what has been asked. We measure traffic speeds and can indicate travel time delays for a set period or for example between certain junctions. Travel delays vary each day and it should be noted that delays can occur for many reasons including the volume of traffic, breakdowns, traffic incidents and for abnormal load movements.

For your final question regarding the M4 relief road air quality, this information is already available in the public domain. Please use the following link to view this particular chapter of the Environmental Statement: [Report \(gov.wales\)](#)

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

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