

1 August 2025

Dear

ATISN 24960 - Sustainable Farming Scheme economic impact assessment

Information requested

Thank you for your request which I received on 17 July 2025. You asked for:

A copy of the economic impact assessment for the revised Sustainable Farming Scheme

Our response

I have decided that the information is exempt from disclosure under regulation 12(4)(d) of the Environmental Information Regulations and is therefore withheld. The reasons for applying this exception are set out in full at Annex A to this letter.

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

Annex A

Application of exemptions/exceptions

The Freedom of information Act/Environmental Information Regulations provide a right for anyone to ask a public authority to make requested information available to the wider public. As the release of requested information is to the world, not just the requester, public authorities need to consider the effects of making the information freely available to everybody. Any personal interest the requester has for accessing the information cannot override those wider considerations.

I have decided to withhold the following information:

A copy of the economic impact assessment for the revised Sustainable Farming Scheme

This Annex sets out the reasons for the engagement of regulation 12(4)(d) of the Environmental Information Regulations and our subsequent consideration of the Public Interest Test.

Engagement of regulation 12(4)(d) (information in the course of completion) of the Environmental Information Regulations

The Welsh Government believes that the economic impact assessment for the revised Sustainable Farming Scheme should be exempt from disclosure. The information is due for publication in September but remains incomplete at this time.

Public Interest Test

In order to satisfy the public interest test in relation to the exemption(s), it is necessary to conclude that the public interest arguments in favour of withholding the information are sufficient to *outweigh* the public interest arguments in favour of release.

Public interest arguments in favour of disclosure

There is a clear public interest in the openness and transparency of government, and in the content of this economic impact assessment being placed in the public domain, where it may undergo public scrutiny, inform open debate and provide assurance relating to the scheme.

Public interest arguments in favour of withholding

The danger of putting incomplete information, and information that has not undergone quality assurance checks, into the public domain is that this will, in fact, damage the public interest identified above, by potentially misinforming public debate, placing potentially incorrect and incomplete data and analysis into the public domain, which will lead to incorrect conclusions, and that will damage public trust in the information supplied by Government.

Balance of public interest test

Although there is a very clear and strong public interest in release of the information into the public domain, the question here is not whether the information may be published at all. It is clearly intended that we publish this information soon. The question is whether it should be released now. On that question, the risk of placing incorrect and incomplete information into the public domain outweighs any public interest in early publication, and so the information is withheld.