



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: ATISN 25009

9 September 2025

Dear ,

Request for information - ATISN 25009

Information requested

Thank you for your request which we received on the 30 July 2025. You asked for the following information regarding M4 Traffic, Road Charging, and Related Policy:

1. How many vehicles have passed through the section of the M4 motorway between Junction 25 (Caerleon) and Junction 29 (Castleton) in each of the following calendar or financial years?
 - 2018
 - 2019
 - 2020
 - 2021
 - 2022
 - 2023
 - 2024 (year-to-date if available)

Please provide breakdowns by vehicle type (e.g. cars, vans, HGVs) and indicate whether figures refer to annual totals or average daily flows.

2. In the last two years (since July 2023), has the Welsh Government or any of its agencies (including Transport for Wales or Future Generations Commissioner) undertaken any work—formal or informal—on proposals to introduce:
 - Congestion charging or tolling on the M4
 - Low Emission Zones (LEZs) or Clean Air Zones (CAZs) affecting the M4 corridor or surrounding roads
 - Any other road pricing or car usage restriction schemes in or near Newport/Cardiff

If so, please provide:

- A list of all reports, internal briefings, working papers or correspondence related to these discussions
 - The departments or named officials involved
 - Any modelling, forecasts, or scenario planning documents
3. Has the Welsh Government engaged with Newport City Council, Cardiff Council, or Natural Resources Wales about congestion, pollution, or road charging policies on or near the M4 between Junctions 24–29?

Please list the dates and nature of meetings, emails, or written correspondence on these topics since 2021.

4. Has the Welsh Government undertaken or commissioned any environmental, social justice, or public health modelling related to car use, private vehicle ownership, or the M4 corridor between J24 and J29 since January 2021?

If so, please provide:

- The names of each report or model
 - The authors or commissioning body
 - A brief summary of conclusions
 - Whether the studies included any assumptions about reducing car ownership or “mode shift” away from private vehicles
5. What has been the total public cost of all M4-related environmental and transport modelling, consultancy, and engagement activity since 2021?

Please include:

- Consultancy fees
 - Public engagement costs
 - Modelling contracts
 - Payments to think tanks or advocacy groups
6. Has the Welsh Government provided any public funding or entered into contracts since 2021 with advocacy organisations, charities, or consultants who promote:
- “Degrowth”
 - Restrictions on private car ownership
 - Campaigns against road-building or motoring infrastructure
 - The redistribution of road space away from cars and towards cycling/public transport
 - “15-minute city”-style urban planning

If so, please provide:

- The names of all organisations or consultants involved
- The amount of funding or contract value
- The purpose of the funding or contract

- The relevant department(s)
7. Has the Welsh Government paid or contracted any organisation or individual since 2021 to promote political, ideological, or activist messaging in relation to climate change, “net zero”, or anti-car policy?

Please list:

- All individuals or organisations paid
- The amount and purpose of each contract
- Any associated public campaigns, messaging, or media spending

Our response

Firstly, I apologise for the delay in responding to you. Secondly, I can confirm that the Welsh Government holds the information you have requested for questions one, four and seven, however, I believe it will be very time consuming to deal with questions two, three, five and six.

If I estimate it will take more than 24 working hours of time to determine whether we hold the information and to thereafter locate, retrieve and extract it, the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 allow me to refuse to deal with it. The appropriate limit specified for central government is £600, representative of the estimated cost if taking over 24 working hours of time. The requested information for questions two, three, five and six has not been catalogued and there is no pre-existing list of documents of the type you have identified in your request. A basic search of our filing system reveals a substantial number of records that could potentially fall within scope, and would require a significant amount of administrative time, in excess of 24 hours to determine whether we hold this information and to thereafter locate, retrieve and extract it.

In order for me to search for the information you are seeking, it would be helpful if you could provide more specific requests for information for questions two, three, five and six, for example by narrowing its scope by being more specific about what information you particularly wish to obtain, including any dates or period of time relevant to the information required. If you do refine your request in this way, this will be treated as a new request. Otherwise, I am unable to process these parts of your request.

Further information on each question can be found below:

For question one, I confirm we hold information caught by your request. I have concluded, however, that it is exempt from disclosure under Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, information otherwise available. The information is available at the following link, please note that a further breakdown by junction / link is not held by the Welsh Government.

[Road traffic statistics - Wales region.](#)

For question two, Clean Air Zones have been considered as potential measures to support compliance with statutory nitrogen dioxide limits along the M4 at Newport and on the A470 between Upper Boat and Pontypridd. Further information can be found in our published supplemental plan to the UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations 2017 and our consultation on measures to achieve compliance with limit values for nitrogen dioxide. As stated above, you may wish to refine this part of your request by being more specific about what information you particularly wish to obtain, including any dates or period of time relevant to the information required. If you do refine your request in this way, this will be treated as a new request.

For question three, as above, you may wish to refine your request by narrowing its scope.

For question four, Transport for Wales, funded by the Welsh Government, produces and maintains a regional transport model that includes the M4. The South East Wales Transport Model (SEWTM) was updated in 2022 and two forecast years were produced for 2032 and 2042. These models consider the demand on the transport network in the region for a range of future scenarios, such as variances in traffic levels, to determine the impact on the network and travel patterns across Wales. The Welsh Government has commissioned a dispersion modelling assessment to understand how a change in speed limits at M4 Newport would impact nitrogen dioxide concentrations at points of potential public exposure between junctions 25 and 26. This work has not completed at this stage.

The Welsh Government also previously commissioned modelling to understand how a Clean Air Zone could help support compliance with statutory nitrogen dioxide limits on the M4 between junctions 25-26.

Please see the requested information below for documents captured by your request:-

- M4 J25 – J26: Clean Air Zone Scoping Report, WSP, March 2021

Outlines the proposed project plan for reviewing Clean Air Zone options.

- Technical Note – WG CAZ Demand Forecasting Assumptions, WSP, July 2022

This document concerns the methodology for forecasting traffic levels. It was deemed likely that traffic levels would bounce back from the lows of 2020 and 2021, with a more gradual recovery then following up to 2026 when traffic would be expected to grow at the same trajectory as before.

- M4 Newport & A470 Pontypridd Clean Air Zones Modelling: Local Model Validation Report, WSP, August 2022

This report describes how the 2014 M4 Corridor Around Newport model was adapted, rebased, calibrated and validated to support assessment of the impact of Clean Air Zones.

- M4 Newport & A470 Pontypridd Clean Air Zones: Traffic Forecasting Report, WSP, August 2022

This document sets out the methodology and results of traffic modelling assessment for Clean Air Zone options. The conclusions noted a projected reduction in traffic through the proposed Clean Air Zones due to non-compliant vehicles avoiding the area, and a consequent increase in traffic through alternative routes.

- M4 J25 – J26 & A470 Clean Air Zones: Air Quality Assessment, WSP, October 2022

This document recommended that the implementation of Clean Air Zones does not proceed immediately, and that further assessment should be undertaken.

For question five, as explained above, you may wish to refine this part of your request by narrowing its scope by being more specific about what information you particularly wish to obtain, including any dates or period of time relevant to the information required.

For question six, some technical consultants employed by the Welsh Government on transport and built environment work will undertake work in the areas mentioned i.e. design of cycling/public transport infrastructure. However, it is open to interpretation whether that would be categorised as 'promoting' such measures. As explained above, you may wish to refine this part of your request.

For your final question, the Civil Service guidelines preclude public funds from being used to promote political/ideological/activist messaging.

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: Freedomofinformation@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.

Personal Information

The request you sent me contains personal information about you - for example, your name and email address. The Welsh Government will be the data processor for this information and, in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation, it will be processed in order to fulfil our public task and meet our legal obligations under the Act to provide you with a response. We will only use this personal information to deal with your request and any matters which arise as a result of it. We will keep your personal information and all other information relating to your request for three years from the date on which your request is finally closed. Your personal information will then be disposed of securely.

Under data protection legislation, you have the right:

- to be informed of the personal data we hold about you and to access it
- require us to rectify inaccuracies in that data
- to (in certain circumstances) object to or restrict processing
- for (in certain circumstances) your data to be 'erased'
- to (in certain circumstances) data portability
- to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who is our independent regulator for data protection

For further information about the information which the Welsh Government holds and its use, or if you wish to exercise your rights under the GDPR, please see contact details below:

Data Protection Officer, Welsh Government, Cathays Park, CARDIFF, CF10 3NQ
Email: DataProtectionOfficer@gov.wales

The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are:

Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF
Telephone: 01625 545 745 or 0303 123 1113

Website: www.ico.gov.uk

Any information released under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or Environmental Information Regulations 2004 will be listed in the Welsh Government's Disclosure Log (at <http://wales.gov.uk/about/foi/responses/?lang=en>).

Yours sincerely