



Ein cyf/Our ref ATISN 14177

Dear ,

Request for Information – ATISN 14177

I wrote to you on 24 July regarding your request for information on funding for bus operators. You asked for:

- **Information held by us, or by others on our behalf relating to any Covid-19 related financial support provided by the Welsh Government to bus operators in south-east Wales since March 2020, broken down by the amount and type of financial support received by each bus operator, specifically for:**
 - i. **Cardiff City Transport Services Ltd,**
 - ii. **Newport Transport Ltd,**
 - iii. **Phil Anslow Ltd,**
 - iv. **Varteg Motors Ltd,**
 - v. **New Adventure Travel Ltd.**

You explained that the type of support should include, but is not limited to, grant funding from the Welsh Government Economic Resilience Fund or other Covid-19 related funding as well as funding via Development Bank Wales and the Bounce Back loan scheme, the Business Interruption Loan Scheme and the Future Fund.

I confirm we hold some information caught by your request. We do not hold any information on financial support which may have been paid in relation to the UK Government funding schemes you referred to (Bounce Back loan scheme, the Business Interruption Loan Scheme and the Future Fund). You may wish to write to the UK Government to see whether they hold any information in relation those payments.

Similarly, we do not hold any information on payments which may have been made by Development Bank Wales. You may wish to write to Development Bank Wales to check whether it holds any information on funding.



It is possible some of the companies may have benefitted from the non-domestic rates (NDR) grant during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Welsh Government does not hold payment information on the NDR grant scheme as it is administered by local authorities. You may wish to write to the relevant local authority to see if they hold any information.

It is also possible some of the bus companies you refer to may have received funding under the Mandatory Concessionary Fare compensation scheme, the Bus Services Support Grant, MyTravelpass compensation and/or the Bus Hardship Fund during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Welsh Government Public Transport Division does not make any direct payments to bus operators. Payments, including any payments made in relation to Covid-19, are made by local authorities and therefore we hold no information in that regard. You would need to contact the relevant local authorities for that information.

We do hold some information in relation to payments made under the Economic Resilience Fund. We do not hold any information in relation to Phil Anslow Ltd, Varteg Motors Ltd and New Adventure Travel Ltd under this Fund. For the remaining two companies, Cardiff City Transport Services Ltd and Newport Transport Ltd, I am withholding the information under Section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, information intended for future publication. The reasons for withholding this information is given at the end of this letter.

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

Section 22 – Information Intended for Future Publication

Section 22 states that *Information is exempt information if –*

- a) *The information is held by the public authority with a view to its publication, by the authority or any other person, at some future date (whether determined or not)*
- b) *The information was already held with a view to such publication at the time the request for information was made, and*
- c) *It is reasonable in all the circumstances that the information should be withheld from disclosure until the date referred to in paragraph a).*

I am of the opinion that subsections (a) and (b) above are met because the information is held with a view to its publication. This information is expected to be published in the coming months.

With regards to part (c), I have given consideration as to whether it would be 'reasonable in all the circumstances' that the information should be withheld from disclosure until the proposed publication date. I am of the opinion that releasing the information at this time would cause disruption to the Welsh Government's intentions in relation to its publication arrangements. Thus I am content that the exemption is engaged.

Section 22 is a public interest exemption. This means that, in order to withhold information, I must show that the public interest in withholding is greater than the public interest in releasing it.

In terms of the public interest, it is recognised there is public interest in there being openness and transparency within Government. That is why information has already been published in relation to the funding awarded to organisations under Phase 1 of the Economic Resilience Fund. Those payments can be viewed on the Business Wales website at <https://businesswales.gov.wales/welsh-government-economic-resilience-fund-phase-1-awarded-organisations>.

Information relating to other payments made to businesses under the Economic Resilience Fund is currently being prepared with a view to it being published on the Business Wales website. The proposed publication for this information has been agreed as part of normal business.

A thorough validation will be undertaken to ensure the accuracy of the information before it will be published. Given the significant volume of information to be published, restricting access to individual payments ahead of publication means the information will be published in a co-ordinated manner to all people at the same time, together with contextual and explanatory text.

To that end, I do not think it is reasonable in all the circumstances or in the public interest to release this information prematurely. Rather, I believe the public interest would be best served if the information were released as scheduled along with all other similar transactions from the Economic Resilience Fund.

I am satisfied therefore that the balance of the public interest falls in favour of withholding the information.