



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref ATISN 15571

Dear

3 November 2021

Request for Information – ATISN 15571

I wrote to you on 11 October regarding your request for information.

Information requested

You asked for the following M4 pollution data that justified the 50 mph speed restriction in Newport:

1. The pollution data in the Newport section up to the change in the 50 mph section.
2. The pollution data during the time at 50mph.

You have also asked how vehicles produce less pollution driving at 50mph in a lower gear than at 70mph in the highest gear?

Our response

I can confirm that we hold information in relation to your response. However some of the information is considered exempt from disclosure under Section 21 – Information reasonably accessible by other means of the Freedom of Information Act.

For question 1, data and information relating to this request is captured in the below link on Pages 39 and 52.

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-04/tackling-roadside-nitrogen-dioxide-concentrations-in-wales.pdf>

For question 2, in March 2020 we published the following report on the annual adjusted concentrations. This was across Wales for the 5 sites but includes data captured by the request:-

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-03/annual-data-on-no2-concentrations-for-the-motorway-and-trunk-road-2018-to-2019.pdf>

an interim set was also published:-



BUDDSODDWYR | INVESTORS
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Llywodraeth Cymru /
Welsh Government
Parc Cathays / Cathays Park
CF10 3NQ

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding .

<https://gov.wales/interim-data-no2-concentrations-motorway-and-trunk-road>

For 2019 – 2020, no similar report or any other information has been produced or published. However I have attached a summary of the data information collected which is most meaningful for the request.(As attached (FOI Data Request))

For question 3, I can confirm the following –

Research has shown that reducing traffic speeds to around 50 mph has produced significant reductions in pollution as it -

- Improves and reduces fuel consumption, which then creates less pollutant gases.
- Promotes consistent speeds, which produces less braking and accelerating, reducing pollution.
- Reduces turbulence and the spread of road dust and particulate matter suspended in the air.

Nitrogen dioxide emissions are at their lowest when light vehicles, which are the main contributors to nitrogen dioxide at each of the locations, travel at speeds between 40 and 50 mph. As the exceeding locations on the road network are already affected by high levels of congestion during peak times, the 50 mph speed limits are expected to have a smoothing effect, with vehicles travelling at more constant and similar speeds.

It is best represented in the attached speed emissions graph and the ‘sweet spot’ at which emissions are at their lowest against speed.

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