



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Our ref ATISN 14606

22 December 2020

Dear

Request for Information – ATISN 14606

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

Your request

1. In the financial years 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 what funding has been made available by the Welsh Government that could be used for the purpose of:
 - a) Tackling road noise pollution
 - b) Correcting/reducing speed limits on major roads
2. As well as the total amount of money available, I would like details of any applications made by the Vale of Glamorgan Council to these sources of finance.
3. What legal obligations does a Highways Authority have in Wales to ensure that speed limits are set correctly, and that road noise levels are not harmful to human health?
4. Welsh Government money was used for highway improvements to the A4226, between Barry and Sycamore Cross. Why is there no soundscape forecast/plan for this road project?
5. The new road has resulted in more traffic, particularly heavy vehicles, traveling through St Nicholas and Bonvilston, making the situation worse. Did the project to build this road, investigate and consider the lawfulness and impact of increasing traffic (and harmful road noise) on the A48?

My letter of 11 December included my interpretation of your request as referring to local roads only and not motorways or the trunk road network.



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 .

Our response

I can confirm we hold some information captured by your request.

For questions 1 and 2, I can confirm that the Welsh Government does not hold any information. We have not granted any funding to local authorities in 2018-2021 for the specific purpose of tackling road noise pollution or correcting/reducing speed limits on major roads.

For question 3, I can advise that there are no legal obligations for a highway authority to ensure speed limits are set correctly. Highway authorities may introduce local speed limits (which are different to the national speed limits based on road type) with powers in the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, but this is not a duty. The Welsh Government has provided guidance on Setting Local Speed Limits in Wales for all highway authorities in Wales, but it is only guidance and not statutory.

In respect of noise, whilst there is no legal limit for road traffic noise, under the Environmental Noise (Wales) Regulations 2006, Welsh Ministers have an obligation to produce and keep updated noise maps and action plans for agglomerations, major roads and major railways. The current Noise and Soundscape Action Plan for Wales 2018-23, which details the relevant duties and responsibilities can be accessed via the following link: <https://gov.wales/noise-and-soundscape-action-plan-2018-2023-0>. The Plan advises that in respect of road noise, each authority is accountable to the public and must identify for itself the appropriate level of resource and the most appropriate strategy for managing noise from the roads for which it is responsible.

For question 4, I would advise that the Welsh Government is responsible for trunk roads and motorways in Wales. The roads you have referred to are not trunk roads, therefore they are the responsibility of Vale of Glamorgan Council. However, we do hold some information in response to this question.

As part of the scheme development in 2016, the framework for considering the impacts of the scheme, including traffic noise, was the Environmental Statement. This Statement was submitted in support of the planning application and later referenced in the evidence given at the Compulsory Purchase Order public inquiry. Whilst Planning Policy Wales provides direction on soundscape plans, it was not published until December 2018, i.e. after the scheme was granted planning permission and the CPO public inquiry. A copy of the documents that supported the scheme can be downloaded from the Vale of Glamorgan website via the following link: <https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/living/Roads/Five-Mile-Lane/Five-Mile-Lane-Documents.aspx>

For your final question, as noted above, the Environmental Statement for the scheme considers the predicted noise impacts. However, you may also wish to view the revised Noise and Soundscape Action Plan referred to above.

The plan:

- aligns noise and soundscape policy in Wales with the cross-cutting framework established by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015;

- encourages greater integration between noise and air quality management activities by public bodies; and
- highlights the proposed updates to national planning policy and guidance in Wales that relate to noise and soundscape.

As part of this Plan, noise mapping of public roads in Wales in was completed in 2017 and over 200 locations have been identified as road traffic noise priority areas. These candidate priority sites can be viewed here:

<http://extrium.co.uk/walesnoiseviewer.html>.

Whilst we are responsible for those areas located on the motorway and trunk road network, the local authorities have responsibility for areas on the local road network. Each of these areas requires considerable planning and design and it is acknowledged that not all sites will be addressed in the 2018-23 current plan timescales.

As detailed in the Action Plan for Wales, the Neighbourhood Services Team 2, a partnership between Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan Councils, is responsible for investigating service requests relating to noise across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. Local authorities are able to apply for grants funding to promote similar schemes on county roads, and this would be the case for the priority areas on the A48 in Bonvilston and St Nicholas. Whilst these areas were identified before the scheme was completed, the noise mapping data would not have been available at the time when the Environmental Statement was produced.

I would, therefore, recommend that any requests for noise mitigation are directed to the Council. Contact details can be viewed online:

https://valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Contact-Us.aspx.

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