

Dear

Requesting ATISN 16666

Thank you for your request for information which I received on 16 September 2022. You asked for the following information regarding the 20mph speed limit in urban areas:

On 12th July 2022, Minister for Climate Change, Julie James, said in support of the proposal “the evidence is clear.....” What is that evidence?

- 1 In that evidence, have the following issues been taken into account, and in what way? Are measures based on facts and past studies, or merely wishful political thinking?
 - Pedestrian safety;
 - The safety of cyclists and the increased risk of them being injured by a passing vehicle that is taking much longer to pass;
 - Changes in public health resulting from changes in vehicle emissions;
 - Increases in carbon emissions resulting from the less efficient use of the fuel burnt in vehicle engines, and the consequent deleterious effect on climate change;
 - The cost of implementing the measures;
 - Increased journey times.

- 2 There are a number of pilot projects underway to understand the efficacy of the policy being applied across the whole of Wales. What are the metrics that will be applied to the analysis, particularly as regards:
 - Number of accidents to different classes of road users;
 - Changes in air pollution and the consequent impact on public health;
 - Changes in carbon emissions from vehicles;
 - Changes in the modal split, particularly the split between walking and cycling on the one hand and cars on the other;
 - Increases in journey times and the consequent increased cost to motorists in terms reduced time available for gainful activities, whether working or for leisure;
 - Increased levels of traffic congestion on main roads and consequent increases in traffic on residential streets as motorists try to avoid that congestion;
 - The cost to businesses of the policy;
 - The cost of the pilot studies.

If the answers to my questions are contained in your technical papers, I will be quite happy for you to send me those without you taking extracts from them, both as regards the evidence justifying the policy itself and the method of analysis of the pilot projects. If you are aware explicitly that any of the bullet point issues listed have not been considered, please say so. In my experience, as a retired adviser to both central and local government in Wales, such documents were always available. But perhaps policy is no longer evidence based.

Our response

I can confirm that the Welsh Government holds information captured by your request. For question one, please use the following link to access the information you have requested regarding the 20mph speed limit in urban areas:

[The state of the evidence on 20mph speed limits with regards to road safety, active travel and air pollution impacts: August 2018 \(gov.wales\)](#)

Other evidence can be found in the 20mph taskforce report:

[20mph Task Force Group report | GOV.WALES](#)

And the Explanatory Memorandum laid with the legislation for 20mph as the default speed limit on restricted roads:

[EM template for sub leg \(senedd.wales\)](#)

For question two, please see the information below containing a list of the 13 metrics:

- Percentage traffic compliance with the 20mph speed limit [KPI 1.1]
- Change in 85th percentile (85%ile) speed [KPI 1.2]
- Change in mean speed [KPI 1.3]
- Vehicle journey times and journey time variation, based on the difference between the 5th percentile (5%ile) and 95th percentile (95%ile) times as a proxy for journey time reliability, on main through routes. This will be assessed separately for general traffic and buses. [KPI 1.4]
- Child pedestrian (age 5-11) casualty rate, by sex & deprivation fifth, also by sex and urban/rural [KPI 2.1]
- Pedestrians and cyclists age 65-74 casualty rate, by sex & deprivation fifth, also by sex and urban/rural [KPI 2.2]
- Pedestrians and cyclists (age 75+) casualty rate, by sex & deprivation fifth, also by sex and urban/rural [KPI 2.3]
- Change in attitude to active travel use in built-up areas [KPI 3.1]
- Change in vehicle/pedestrian yield behaviours [KPI 3.2]
- Change in local air quality - NOx, PM10, PM2.5 [KPI 4.1]
- Change in CO2 emissions [KPI 4.2]
- Scale of traffic re-assignment to alternative routes [KPI 4.3]
- Change in public attitudes towards 20mph speed limits [KPI 5.1], which will take account of perceptions of traffic speeds, traffic noise and effects on residential amenity. This will be a qualitative assessment based on focus group findings.

There is no KPI linked specifically to cost to business (change in vehicle journey times on main through routes KPI 1.4, could be used as a proxy for this).

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