

20 March 2025

Dear

Complaint in respect of request for information ATISN 22015

Thank you for your e-mail which was received by the Welsh Government on 30 November 2024. I have set out at Annex 1 to this letter the details of your complaint which was referred to me for an internal review (my review was conducted in accordance with the procedure outlined in [Requesting information from the Welsh Government](#) which is available by post on request or via the internet).

Please accept my apologies for the delay in providing you with this response.

In reviewing your original request for information and the disclosure response, I sought further clarification from the drafting team and requested they consider some other potential searches for the information requested beyond what was looked at for the original response.

I can confirm that a broader set of searches across our public bodies unit's records has been undertaken and no additional information relevant to the request has been found.

I have therefore concluded that the disclosure response to the request was correct and accurate, and the information held in scope of your request was provided.

If you are dissatisfied with this response, you 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

Telephone: 0303 123 1113

Website: www.ico.org.uk

Yours sincerely

Annex 1

Part 1 of the request

I will accept that the question is partially answered but not look to further internal review.

I appreciate the costs and challenges of providing a more specific response and agree this could form the basis of further more specific public information request(s).

However, the response has not answered the specific question as to what **dedicated long term specific** reviews have been taken of all the objectives that have been set, what the outcomes have been leading to any review of subsequent policy objectives.

I do accept that various scrutiny takes place of decisions such as eg financial spending etc or of some decisions in a shorter time frame.

It is also the case that external organisations – such as the Institute of Welsh Affairs conduct their own reviews.

It may be that the inherent short-termism outlook of the Assembly and Welsh Government (as referred to above) provides a blinker to answering the question.

Conclusion: No further internal review is requested.

Part 2 of the request

I totally do not accept the response to part 2 of the request and request further internal review.

The Assembly has reviewed and indeed amalgamated / dissolved many organisations who had functions in Wales since its creation in 1998. As an example, such organisations include the Welsh Development Agency, Welsh Tourist Board, Elwa, CCW and the Fisheries Committees.

Such actions have resulted in the changing of many hundreds, even thousands, of Welsh jobs. It has cost many many millions of Welsh pounds. The changes will have impacted upon every individual in Wales in some way or other.

The policy / organisational changes put in place were done on the basis that service delivery or costs etc would be improved upon (otherwise why do it?) although there will be other more specific objectives. Indeed, the objectives for each organisational review were clearly set out and likely outcomes assessed before the final decision were taken. So far, so good.

It would, in my opinion, be a terrible indictment if there were no follow up programme of action to review outcomes against original objectives over an appropriate time period. How else could good and bad actions be identified, resulting in future policy actions supporting the good, and making sure mistakes were not repeated? So, I would say that such reviews are essential to maintain good governance practice. That is further context.

The Welsh Government response is, frankly, risible, in my view.

Having spent millions of pounds as I have said, and impacted upon the lives of thousands of people whether they were employed or service beneficiaries, then Welsh Government should at least hold a list of a) affected organisations and b) dates of action.

Such a list should not be referred to, as does the response, by reference to timed sporadic random searches in iShare! An informed more focused search would surely illicit results? The requested information should already exist as a stated and automatically available obvious list confirming the work of the Welsh Government and Senedd since its existence. For its own internal purposes if no other, Welsh Government should hold a list of relevant historical Welsh Organisations noting which have been dissolved (some after over a 100 years of existence) and the extent their functions have been transferred, dropped or ignored.

In the context that I think such a list should automatically exist, and it is in a strong public interest that one should exist, I cannot accept the arguments provided in refusing to answer my question.

In not providing a list, the second part of my question c) falls mute "*and b) state the number of these organisations from the above list for which a subsequent dedicated and comprehensive review has taken place which review the extent to which the original objectives for organisational change and the presumed costs and benefits were subsequently delivered*"

I take the position that, although it might take some further work, that the question should be answered in full.

I hope that from the above explanation you will agree with me that it would be in the public interest to provide such information. Indeed, such ought already be readily available in Welsh Government material if it is doing its job effectively and therefore it would not cost very much at all. And the public can draw due inference, should the information not become available.

Finally, providing an accessible organisational list containing the requested information a) b) and c) would allow the public to be more informed and request any further information on a more specific organisational basis. Something that is precluded by the response to my query which provides zero information.

I hope that you will agree with me that Part 2 of my request is a reasonable request which you will accordingly further internally review.

That respecting the huge significance of the actions undertaken by the Assembly / Welsh Government in the "moving" of work / functions undertaken by historic organisations into the Welsh Government (or not), that it is strongly in the public interest that such a list with the information at a), b) and preferably also c) be provided forthwith.

Conclusion: Further internal review of Part 2 is requested.