



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Our ref: ATISN 25052

2 September 2025

Dear ,

Request for information: ATISN 25052

Information requested

Thank you for your request which I received on 11 August 2025. You asked for the following information regarding the possible establishment of a Clean Air Zone (CAZ) or Pay Per Mile Scheme on the M4 motorway around Newport (junctions J23a to J28):

1. Have there been any assessments or modelling comparing the efficacy of existing 50 mph speed limits versus potential Clean Air Zone implementation in terms of reducing NO₂ and PM_{2.5} levels? i.e. Clean Air Zone or a Pay per Mile Congestion Charge.
2. Are there any records demonstrating how and when the powers under the Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) Bill are intended to be used regarding trunk roads, include the Newport M4?
3. Is there any specific criteria or environmental thresholds that would trigger a shift from speed limit enforcement to Clean Air Zone enforcement?
4. Has there been any legislation passed at the Welsh Senedd which would allow the implementation of a Clean Air Zone (CAZ) or a Pay Per Mile congestion charge on the M4?
5. Has there been any public consultation responses, petitions, or stakeholder feedback relevant to Clean Air Zone proposals for the M4 at Newport?
6. Are there any details of alternative strategies considered or implemented (e.g., active travel, enhanced public transport, rail improvements) as part of broader air quality efforts.
7. If a Clean Air Zone (CAZ) or a Pay Per Mile congestion charge on the M4, how much has been suggested, as a daily charge (in any report)?

8. What did the final Burns Commission report recommend in terms of a Clean Air Zone (CAZ) or a Pay Per Mile congestion charge on the M4 around Newport?
9. Will the Welsh Government implement the recommendations of the Burns Report?

Our response

I can confirm that the Welsh Government holds some of the information you have requested. Please see information below:

1. Have there been any assessments or modelling comparing the efficacy of existing 50 mph speed limits versus potential Clean Air Zone implementation in terms of reducing NO₂ and PM_{2.5} levels? i.e. Clean Air Zone or a Pay per Mile Congestion Charge.

No such comparison has been undertaken.

2. Are there any records demonstrating how and when the powers under the Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) Bill are intended to be used regarding trunk roads, include the Newport M4?

No such records exist.

3. Is there any specific criteria or environmental thresholds that would trigger a shift from speed limit enforcement to Clean Air Zone enforcement?

No such criteria nor environmental thresholds have been set.

4. Has there been any legislation passed at the Welsh Senedd which would allow the implementation of a Clean Air Zone (CAZ) or a Pay Per Mile congestion charge on the M4?

Yes, the Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) Bill, [enacted](#) in February 2024, provides powers for Welsh Ministers to introduce trunk road charging schemes “for the purpose of reducing or limiting air pollution”. There are no plans, currently, to introduce a Clean Air Zone, pay per mile scheme or congestion charge on Welsh trunk roads.

5. Has there been any public consultation responses, petitions, or stakeholder feedback relevant to Clean Air Zone proposals for the M4 at Newport?

Yes, we consulted between 21 September 2018 – 2 November 2018 on proposals to achieve compliance with nitrogen dioxide limits, including potential Clean Air Zones/Low Emissions Zones. The summary of consultation responses can be found [here](#).

A Clean Air Zone travel behaviour survey was also undertaken in 2021 to help understand how the public, and businesses, would respond to charging on the M4 between junctions 25 and 26 if introduced in 2023.

6. Are there any details of alternative strategies considered or implemented (e.g., active travel, enhanced public transport, rail improvements) as part of broader air quality efforts.

The [M4 NEWPORT J25 TO J26 – WELTAG STAGE THREE REPORT](#) identifies the measures considered in relation to compliance with statutory NO₂ limits. A separate review, by South East Wales Transport Commission, was undertaken regarding options to tackle congestion on the M4 in South East Wales. The Commission took into account environmental issues, including air quality, in their review. The final recommendations can be found [here](#).

7. If a Clean Air Zone (CAZ) or a Pay Per Mile congestion charge on the M4, how much has been suggested, as a daily charge (in any report)?

As noted above, a travel behaviour survey was undertaken in 2021 in relation to a potential charging Clean Air Zone on the M4 at Newport. For the purposes of the survey, three charging levels were suggested for private cars (£3/£5/£8), three for Light Goods Vehicles (£6/£9/£12.50) and a single charge for Heavy Goods Vehicles (£50). No scheme has subsequently been proposed for introduction at Newport M4 following the survey.

8. What did the final Burns Commission report recommend in terms of a Clean Air Zone (CAZ) or a Pay Per Mile congestion charge on the M4 around Newport?

Road User Charging is addressed at paragraphs 237 – 244 within the final recommendations (link provided in the response to question 6). The Commission pointed to several matters that should be considered in future policy decisions on Road User Charging in South East Wales. Pay per mile was not recommended in the absence of a UK-wide scheme.

9. Will the Welsh Government implement the recommendations of the Burns Report?

Yes, the Welsh Government has accepted, in principle, all of the final recommendations of the South East Wales Transport Commission. The full response can be found [here](#). A Burns Delivery Unit has been established by Transport for Wales to accelerate implementation of the recommendations. Further information can be found [here](#).

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: Freedomofinformation@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