4 November

ATISN 26-0019

Dear

Thank you for your request for information received on 13 October 2026

You requested information relating to motorway junction closures or restrictions on the M4 around Newport, specifically Junction 27 (High Cross) and the eastbound slip roads at Junctions 26 (Malpas) and 25 (Caerleon).

We have considered your request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 ("the EIR").

Response

Before responding to the individual elements of your request, it may be helpful to clarify that no decision has been taken to close Junction 27 or the eastbound slip roads at Junctions 26 and 25.

The Deputy Minister's statement of 6 October 2026 announced the outcome of the M4 around Newport Review and a programme of further work. The review identified a range of potential interventions for further consideration. No preferred option has been selected and no statutory process has commenced in relation to any future intervention.

Question 1: Traffic Modelling and Impact Reports

You asked for copies of all traffic forecasting reports, traffic modelling datasets, congestion assessments, or network simulation reports held or commissioned by the Welsh Government (including any work compiled by consultants such as Arup) regarding the impact of these junction closures on both the M4 corridor and the surrounding local road networks (including Newport and surrounding boroughs like Caerphilly).

The Welsh Government does not hold traffic forecasting reports, traffic modelling datasets, congestion assessments or network simulation reports prepared specifically in relation to the closure of Junction 27 or the eastbound slip roads at Junctions 26 and 25.

The Welsh Government does hold information which informed the wider M4 around Newport Review. This information is publicly available at:

M4 around Newport Review
M4 Corridor Enhancement Measures Programme (M4CEM) Appraisal Handbook
M4 Corridor Around Newport Public Local Inquiry evidence

In accordance with regulation 6(1)(b) of the EIR, information that is already publicly available and easily accessible is exempt from disclosure.

Question 2: Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs)

You asked for details of whether any draft Traffic Regulation Orders, experimental orders, or formal TRO submissions have been drafted, published, or prepared for submission regarding these specific junction and slip-road closures, including copies of any such documentation or statements of reason.

The Welsh Government does not hold the information requested.

No draft Traffic Regulation Orders, Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders, statutory notices, statements of reasons or formal submissions have been prepared regarding the closure of Junction 27 or the eastbound slip roads at Junctions 26 and 25.

Question 3: Feasibility Studies and Options Appraisals

You asked for copies of any recent feasibility studies, business cases, internal briefings, or working papers produced since 2024 evaluating these junction closures as a method for managing congestion at the Brynglas Tunnels.

The Welsh Government holds information within the scope of this request.

The principal assessment work undertaken to date is contained within the published M4 around Newport Review and supporting evidence documents referred to in response to Question 1.

The Welsh Government also holds information contained within a ministerial presentation and a Cabinet paper prepared to support ministerial consideration of the findings of the M4 around Newport Review prior to the Deputy Minister's statement on 6 October 2026.

Information from those documents that falls within the scope of your request and is not otherwise publicly available is provided at Annex A.

Some information has been withheld under regulation 12(4)(e) of the EIR. The withheld information comprises of advice and recommendations provided to Ministers, and discussion of future work and next steps following completion of the review.

Regulation 12(4)(e) is subject to the public interest test.

We recognise the public interest in openness and transparency regarding transport policy and in understanding how Ministers reached the conclusions announced on 6 October 2026.

However, we consider there is a stronger public interest in maintaining a private space in which Ministers and officials can discuss options and develop policy before decisions are taken. While the review has been completed and published, further

work has been commissioned and consideration of future interventions remains ongoing. Disclosure of advice and recommendations provided to Ministers at this stage would be likely to prejudice that process.

We have therefore concluded that the public interest in maintaining the exception outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

Question 4: Local Authority Correspondence

You asked for copies of formal correspondence, consultation responses, or meeting minutes between the Welsh Government (including Transport for Wales) and Newport City Council regarding local objections or network management concerns related to these proposals.

The Welsh Government identified correspondence between the Welsh Government officials and Newport City Council relating to the wider M4 around Newport Review.

Having reviewed this information, we consider parts of it fall within the scope of your request because they discuss local network impacts and issues relevant to measures considered through the review.

Copies of the relevant information are enclosed at Annex B.

We have not identified any consultation responses or correspondence concerning objections to specific proposals to close Junction 27 or the eastbound slip roads at Junctions 26 and 25. This reflects the fact that no such proposals have been formally developed or consulted upon.

Personal data has been redacted from the enclosed correspondence under regulation 13 of the EIR.

Your Rights

If you are dissatisfied with our handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to:

Information Rights Unit
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

Email: Freedomofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

However, the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely,

Annex A

Information disclosed from ministerial briefing material

The following information has been extracted from internal briefing material prepared to support ministerial consideration of the M4 around Newport Review and falls within the scope of the request.

Background

The M4 is one of Wales's most strategically important transport links, supporting freight movements, connectivity and economic activity across south Wales and between Wales and England.

Its performance has a direct influence on productivity, access to employment and training opportunities, and business competitiveness.

Following consideration of the substantial body of evidence already available in relation to the M4 around Newport, Welsh Government officials, supported by Arup, undertook a focused review of existing evidence. The review considered a range of road-based, public transport and network management interventions and examined their likely costs, benefits, constraints and delivery implications.

Findings of the Review

The review concluded that the challenges affecting the M4 around Newport remain significant and that there is no single intervention capable of resolving them.

Instead, the review found that improvements are likely to require a combination of measures capable of improving network resilience, supporting more sustainable travel choices and improving reliability across the wider transport network.

The review also concluded that no individual option, and no combination of options assessed through the review, would fully resolve the challenges affecting the M4 around Newport, with even the most extensive package of interventions unlikely to eliminate congestion entirely over the longer term.

The review identified a range of interventions that could be considered further and concluded that additional work would be required before any intervention could be progressed.

Junction Management Measures Considered

As part of the review, operational changes to the existing motorway network were considered as one of several possible approaches to improving traffic flow and reducing congestion.

One option considered involved:

- closure of Junction 27 (High Cross);
- closure of the east-facing slip roads at Junction 26 (Malpas); and
- closure of the east-facing slip roads at Junction 25 (Caerleon).

The purpose of the option was to reduce use of the motorway by local traffic and reduce merging, diverging and weaving movements in the vicinity of the Brynglas Tunnels.

The review noted that while such measures could improve traffic flow on parts of the motorway network, they would also result in traffic being reassigned onto local roads and alternative junctions, requiring further assessment of wider network impacts.

The review estimated that these measures could reduce traffic flows on parts of the M4 around Newport by up to approximately 3%.

The review did not identify this option as a standalone solution to the challenges affecting the M4 around Newport and concluded that further work would be required before any intervention could be taken forward.

Ministerial Presentation - Summary of Findings

- congestion and resilience issues on the M4 around Newport continue to affect journey reliability and network performance;
- no single intervention resolves all identified issues;
- a range of potential measures were considered, including operational changes to the existing motorway network, public transport measures and wider network improvements;
- further appraisal and engineering work would be required before any future intervention could be developed.

The presentation also noted that junction management measures, including closure of Junction 27 and east-facing slips at Junctions 26 and 25, were considered as part of the review and would require further assessment of impacts on the local highway network before any future decisions could be taken.

Next Steps

The review informed a programme of further work comprising:

- continued investment in maintaining and renewing the existing Strategic Road Network;
- development of a Five-Year Delivery Plan focused on practical improvements to reliability, resilience and connectivity on the M4 around Newport; and
- further engineering, technical and appraisal work to support future consideration of longer-term interventions.

The review concluded that practical improvements can be progressed in the shorter term while additional evidence is developed to inform decisions on any future interventions.

Annex B

Correspondence between the Welsh Government and Newport City Council

Date: 24 August 2026

From: Newport City Council

To: Welsh Government

Subject: Deputy Minister Mark Hooper MS Recent visit to Newport City Council

I would like to personally thank you for taking the time to visit the City of Newport on Wednesday 5th August and for the candid discussion, which was welcomed by the Authority. Whilst we welcomed the time to exchange views and understand the rationale behind the proposals, I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate Newport City Council's continued opposition to the proposed junction closures. As you will be aware, this position reflects not only the views expressed locally but also the outcome of a formal motion approved by Full Council.

We remain firmly of the view that the proposed changes would have a significant impact on residents, businesses and connectivity across the city which is a Gateway City to Wales, with the fastest growing population in Wales, and we will continue to advocate for an alternative approach that better meets the needs of Newport communities.

We are clear that, previously, transport planning inspectors and regional traffic models have consistently rejected or resisted permanent closures due to the following impacts:

- No Meaningful Impact on the Mainline: Traffic models showed that sealing these junctions would not significantly reduce congestion for long-distance motorway traffic.
- Severe Local Gridlock: Diverting 20%+ of local traffic off the slip roads immediately overloads

Newport’s urban road network, including an adverse impact on bus service reliability. And on that basis, we believe there are no grounds for this to take place.

Thank you again for your visit and for taking the time to hear directly from those affected.

We look forward to working with you.

Your sincerely,

[redacted]

Date: 26 August 2026

From: Welsh Government

To: Newport City Council

Subject: Recent visit to Newport City Council

Thank you for your letter of 24 August and for the constructive discussion during my recent visit to Newport. I welcomed the opportunity to hear directly from you and your colleagues about the Council's views on this issue.

I recognise the concerns that you raised. No decisions have been made, and work is continuing to consider the available options and their potential impacts. As that work progresses, the implications for Newport, its residents and businesses will be an important consideration.

I value the positive engagement we have had to date and remain committed to working closely with you and your teams as the work develops.

Thank you again for writing and I look forward to continuing our discussions in the months
ahead.

Yours sincerely,