



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

19 January 2022

Ein cyf/Our ref: ATISN 15776

Dear

Request for Information – ATISN 15776

I wrote to you on 7 January regarding your request for information regarding the Road Review Panel's review of the Llanbedr bypass. In respect of every meeting held by Lynn Sloman as part of her review of the Llanbedr bypass:

Information requested

You have asked for the following information:

1. The name of the organisation or individual with whom the meeting was held
2. The date and location of the meeting
3. The names of all meeting attendees
4. The mode of transport used by Lynn Sloman to access the meeting
5. All notes, records and minutes of the meeting.

Our Response

I can confirm that the Welsh Government holds information captured by your request.

Lynn Sloman had one meeting with Gwynedd Council on 4 October 2021. The attendees were Lynn Sloman, Matt Jones, Amanda Jones, Alexandra Bamon Jones, Tudor Lewis Williams, Dylan Rhys Griffiths, Dafydd Wyn Williams, Nia Carys Bowden and Sioned Eirian Williams. No official minutes were produced for this meeting. A Welsh Government official took his own notes, and I am releasing these at Annex B to this document. However some of the information has been withheld under regulation 12(4)(e) of the EIR Regulations, internal communications. Full reasoning for applying this exception is appended at Annex A.

Lynn Sloman also had a meeting on 28 September 2021 with the Welsh Government Economy Team (Wendy Boddington, Elaine Choules and Dewi Williams) and John Whalley of Aerospace Wales. It was held on Teams and no minutes were taken.

The meetings of the panellists are available online. The dates, minutes and attendees of which are already on public record and available at the following link:

<https://gov.wales/roads-review>



BUDDSODDWYR | INVESTORS
MEWN POBL | IN PEOPLE

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 .

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

Regulation 12(4)(e) – internal communications

Regulation 12(4)(e) states that a public authority may refuse to disclose information to the extent that—

(e) the request involves the disclosure of internal communications.

Guidance from the Information Commissioner has confirmed that this exception is drafted broadly and is a class based exception which covers all internal communications, not just those that are sensitive or actually reflect internal thinking. The concept of ‘internal communications’ covers a wide range of information and includes any information intended to be communicated to others or saved in a file where it may be consulted by others. I can confirm that the information held by the Welsh Government which is captured by your request amounts to internal communications.

Regulation 12(4)(e) is a qualified (public interest tested) exception. Even if the exception is engaged, public authorities must go on to apply the public interest test set out in regulation 12(1)(b). A public authority can only withhold the information if the public interest in maintaining the exception outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. Because of this, consideration has been given to the effects of disclosure to the world at large rather than any personal interest you may have in being provided with the information.

Public Interest Test

The Welsh Government acknowledges the presumption in favour of disclosure under Regulation 12(2) and we acknowledge there is a public interest in openness and transparency within Government, particularly in terms of ensuring transparent and accountable government by disclosing how the Welsh Government utilises its resources, spends public money and that both are invested wisely on behalf of the people of Wales.

Some notes were taken by a Welsh Government official but were never intended as a formal minute, and have not been checked for accuracy or agreed by attendees. Some of the information captured in these minutes refers to a procurement that has not yet been undertaken.

Release of information regarding to a commercial procurement would be likely to prejudice Welsh Government’s ability to conduct any such future procurement in an open and competitive manner, as it would place some information into the public domain that would prejudice the ability of some parties to undertake the procurement on a level playing field. This could lead to commercial loss for those parties and open any such procurement up to challenge, which would also be a net loss to the public purse.

Additionally, as the accuracy of some of that information might be in dispute, the placing of such information in the public domain could lead to inaccurate understanding of the procurement process, which would again lead to challenges causing a commercial loss and harm to the trust in the accuracy of information published by Welsh Government.

The Welsh Government believes the public interest in this project is satisfied by the amount of information being released to you in the above letter as well as the information that is already published in relation to the meetings with the panellists.

In this regard, the Welsh Government believes the balance of public interest to withhold the information outweighs the public interest to release it for the reasons outlined above. The information has therefore been withheld under Regulation 12(4)(e) of the EIRs.

Meeting with Gwynedd Council on 4 October 2021

LS – Intro. 4 weeks timescale to respond to ministers. 2 questions posed. Also taking into account WTS, Future Wales and Net Zero Wales (evolving) policy, plus WelTAG review. Has visited Llanbedr. Has had conversations with WG officials in transport and economy. Interested to hear officials view about things she should take into account for two questions posed.

Sioned – .Has been discussions with WG for many years. Access has been identified as a barrier to the development of the airfield. Turnoff at the village itself is the problem. No pavements in the village. Difficult to encourage people to walk and cycle in the village. Development of the airfield was a concern that it would lead to more traffic in the village. This is where GC turned to highways colleagues. Scoped different options. Historic bridge and environment so can't knock it down. Refers to env colleagues. Wanted to derisk development of the site and investments to it. 2 barriers – access and flooding. This scheme came forward to solve access problem. Plans are substantial investments. Site is commercially unique for Wales and if serious about it we need to address the barriers.

Dafydd – Head of environment – client role for road schemes. Appointed consultants. Scope to do anything on A496 because of bridge and houses is very limited. School in area has footway but little options on A496. Used WelTAG process to identify options. Had stakeholder engagements as part of that. Also been to see community council on various occasions. Looking at 2 questions – believe that link around Llanbedr would create opportunities in the village additional to improving air quality. Are looking for ways to make it possible for Gwynedd visitors to have more PT choice due to rurality. Scheme would open up village. Talking to Tudor on options for opening up village. Would like to see reasonable speed on bypass to balance CO2 issues. One thing that wasn't in info pack – there is issue of response times for emergency vehicles navigating Llanbedr. Restricted highway width with onstreet parking. Lots of documents issued to review. You'll see the environmental work considered as GC acknowledge this is a special area.

[Redacted – Section 12(4)(e)]

LS – Traffic impact assessment – Number of parking spaces down as c800? Sioned – different phases of development of site. ACTION – GC to share plans. Sioned – Imminent phase of WEFO funded work. [Redacted – Section 12(4)(e)]

Sioned - Aerospace use is unique to this site. [Redacted – Section 12(4)(e)].

Tudor – Has been working for a few years on Civils side and has never seen a project like this with so much environmental consideration. Has been through planning twice. Advance environmental works going on now to build a bat roost and building lakes near Mochras road. Alexandra – Have highlighted in template how much the project – environmental masterplans – have committed to enhance biodiversity. Have been agreed with National Park. Achieves benefit not just mitigation.

Dafydd – Looking at 2 question – non transport solutions – Thinks they've been looked at but GC haven't been explicit. **[Redacted – Section 12(4)(e)]**

MJ – Reinforces differences between RR and ministerial decision. Suggests representations on issues such as design speed should be made by GC to sponsor side of WG in parallel to RR Chair presenting her advice to Minister on the issue.

Dafydd – Would like to give RR a few lines on the 2 questions of the review.

MJ – GC can draw our attention to material that they think is useful. RR do not wish to cause generation of new material.

[Redacted – Section 12(4)(e)]