

## **EIR Request (received 25 September 2024) - Reference: DFI/2024-0385**

On a BBC article today 25/9/24, in relation to traffic congestion around the new Grand Central transport hub it advises -

A spokesperson for DfI said: "We understand that traffic delays are frustrating, and we encourage travellers to avoid the congestion by considering other sustainable and active modes of travel such as public transport, using the park and ride sites or by walking or cycling. If you do travel by car, please plan ahead and leave extra time for your journey. Records show that between 50 and 55% of traffic in Belfast has no destination in the city centre so please consider other routes where possible."

Under FOI would you send me a copy of those records?

## **Response (issued 23 October 2024)**

Thank you for your email dated 25 September 2024 requesting information held by the Department, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. You requested the following:

*A copy of the records that show between 50 and 55% of traffic in Belfast has no destination in the city centre so please consider other routes where possible.*

In considering your request on behalf of the Department I have determined that the information requested falls under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR), as opposed to FoI. Section 39 of the Freedom of Information Act specifically excludes from consideration under that Act requests for what is deemed to be environmental information. EIR gives rights of public access environmental information held by public authorities.

A guide explaining the Environmental Information Regulations can be found at:

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/foi-eir-and-access-to-information/guide-to-the-environmental-information-regulations/>.

Regrettably, I cannot provide the information that you have requested. This is because the figures quoted by the Department were presented out of context and therefore does not reflect the percentage of traffic in Belfast that has no destination in the city centre.

The Department does hold some data in relation to traffic trends for the Belfast City Centre and these are continually updated and monitored.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your time in making this request. I assure you all steps have been taken to try and avoid this situation happening in the future.

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