**Date issued:** 18 May 2022

**Freedom of Information Request**

We are writing in response to your Freedom of Information request. Your request has been considered in accordance with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act and our Data and Information Management Policy.

**Your Questions Answered**

1. **Please specify which of the properties you manage have netting installed as a wild bird deterrent.**

Llandudno Junction ( Staffed Location )

Bangor  ( Staffed Location )

Rhyl ( Staffed Location )

Chester ( Staffed Location )

Shrewsbury  ( Staffed Location )

Aberystwyth  ( Staffed Location )

Barmouth ( Unstaffed Location )

Colwyn Bay ( Staffed Location )

Wrexham General ( wired mesh under road bridge ) ( Staffed Location )

Pontypridd ( Staffed Location )

Hereford ( Staffed Location )

1. **Please specify which of these nettings (in response to question a) are situated in a position where they cannot be accessed (either as a safety issue or any other reason) by yourselves or your contractors within 25 hours.**

This is the case at all of the above named locations. It is very difficult to get any contractor to site within 25 hours; however, all netting can be accessed safely but given that it is installed at high level, the contractor must source access equipment, staff and then carry out the works at quiet periods to ensure the works are done safely and with no risk to station users.

1. **Please specify which of the nettings have a plastic tunnel installed.**

Chester is the only site where a plastic tunnel is installed at some locations. These are a recent installation and were recommended by a pest control company. Staff on site are monitoring these and if found to be successful, could be considered for other locations.

1. **Please specify how often the nettings are inspected at the locations specified for trapped birds.**

At the staffed locations listed above: netting are visually checked daily by the teams on duty and any trapped birds are reported.

At the unstaffed location, Barmouth: This station is visited by the cleaning team once a week, who undertake a visual check and report any trapped birds as necessary. Train crew passing through the station may also report any issues they notice.

1. **Please specify what is your policy for dealing with the trapped birds ie are they set free or sent for treatment to a nearby Rescue or do you trap and despatch ie trap and kill?**

TfW does not have a specific policy for dealing with trapped birds. We would be reliant on the birds finding their own way back out, whilst our appointed contractor would be requested  to undertake a site visit to resolve any issues with the netting. Opening the netting would cause further issues, with potentially a far greater number of birds entering the netting. If the recently installed tunnels at Chester station prove successful, this may be rolled out at other locations where the issue of trapped birds have been noted.

1. **Please specify how often checks are carried out for damage/tension to the netting at your properties.**

Staffed Locations are checked visually on a daily basis. The unstaffed location - Barmouth - is visited by the cleaning team once a week, who undertake a visual check. As Chester has the largest area of netting and is one the of the oldest installations, we have instructed a contractor to undertake more regular and more vigorous checks for potential issues/entry points that may have developed since we have undertaken repairs and improvements over the previous few months. Since the beginning of May, the contractor has undertaken weekly visits to check the work undertaken. These inspections will then be reduced to monthly inspections for June/July/August, with the potential to reduce these to three-monthly inspections from September onwards. Repair works to the netting at Hereford have also been recently undertaken.

1. **Please specify the time lapse between holes/damage/lack of tension identified to the netting and the actual maintenance that is necessary being carried out.**

It is not possible to give a specific response period as this depends on the nature of the issue and its location within a site. As such, the response period is unique to each incident.

1. **Please specify what properties you manage at which you use lethal methods to control the birds.**

TfW does have a planned a programme for culling birds. Culls are undertaken only when all other avenues of bird control have been explored and exhausted.

1. **Please specify if you have had an independent assessment of this safety issue and who carried out this assessment.**

As a public facility we have a duty of care to both the customers and staff who use, or are based at, these locations. Pigeon netting is  installed to reduce the potential of birds roosting in areas where staff and station users need to go and to limit any hazards arising from the roosting birds such as pigeon excrement, which is a hygiene issue, a slip hazard and is very unsightly. Our duty of care to ensure health and safety of staff and station users is our priority. Our internal health and safety ambassadors undertake planned inspections to assess risk and feedback any concerns and issues, whilst members of our Health and Safety team conduct audits to assess risks to users. PiCAS (the Pigeon Control Advisory Service) has been contacted to provide costings to undertake a site visit to Chester station and provide any recommendations.

1. **Please specify how many birds have been killed, when they have been killed (including the times of day and dates) and what methods were used to kill them at each of the locations mentioned (in response to question h).**

Three culls have been undertaken at Chester station this year. This work was undertaken out of hours when there was no train services running and no members of the public were at the station. All efforts are made to remove dead birds from site as part of the same visit.

5th March - Night Shift, station closed - 30 birds

12th March - Night Shift, station closed - 25 birds

23rd April - Night Shift, station closed - 30 birds

1. **Stock Doves sometimes live in the same locations as pigeons. This species is Amber Listed and therefore Protected. Please specify that the Person/People you employ to control the pigeons has/have been aware of this and confirm that they actually know the difference between a Stock Dove and a Feral Pigeon. Since most 'shoots' are conducted at night this can be a serious problem.**

The contractors that are used are full licensed and we rely on their experience and knowledge. A site visit would normally be undertaken to assess the situation prior to a  cull being agreed/undertaken.

1. **Please specify if the shooting of pigeons is Transport for Wales Policy and why this is considered necessary if you already have netting in place. Please specify clearly what the reasons are and how they have been identified.**

It is not possible to have  netting in  all areas of a station. In these instances, the netting is then supplemented by the installation of bird spikes but there may still be areas where birds roost. When maintenance to areas above the netting is carried out this may result in the netting being temporarily removed or damaged allowing birds access. Once birds are behind the netting they are all but impossible to coax out which is why we leave then to find their own way out and are also trialling the plastic escape chutes. There is no planned programme for culling pigeons and no formal policy. Culls are undertaken only when all other avenues of bird control have been explored and exhausted.

1. **Please specify which Pest Control company is employed by Transport For Wales.**

This information is exempt from disclosure under S.43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 – prejudice to commercial interests, as it is TfW’s belief that disclosure of this information is likely to prejudice the commercial interests of the appointed contractors. TfW only uses licenced pest control companies.

We hope this information is of use to you.

Yours sincerely,

**Transport for Wales**

**Appeal Rights**

If you are unhappy with the way your request has been handled and wish to make a complaint or request a review of our decision, please write to the Head of Freedom of Information at either Transport for Wales, 3 Llys Cdwyn, Pontypridd, CF37 4TH or freedomofinformation@tfw.wales. Your request must be submitted within 40 working days of receipt of this letter. If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision.

The Information Commissioner (ICO) can be contacted at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or you can contact the ICO through the 'Make a Complaint' section of their website on this link: <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>

The relevant section to select will be "Official or Public Information".