



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

# Welsh Government Update

November 2023



# The Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Bill

- The Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Bill was passed by Senedd Cymru on 28 November 2023.
- Royal assent is likely to be in January 2024.

Bill Section Overview	Provisions Coming into Force
National Targets – Establishes a national target setting regime including duties to set targets for PM <sub>2.5</sub> and an additional pollutant. Powers to enable WMs to make long-term air quality targets in respect of any matter relating to air quality in Wales.	March 2024
Promoting awareness – Places a duty on Welsh Ministers to promote awareness of air pollution and ways it can be reduced.	March 2024
Active Travel – Places a duty on Welsh Ministers and local authorities to promote active travel.	By Statutory Instrument
National Air Quality Strategy – Amends section 80 of the Environment Act 1995 to update the provision for Wales.	March 2024
Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) – Clarifies and strengthens existing LAQM legislation to ensure it operates more effectively.	By Statutory Instrument
Smoke Control – Amends existing legislation provisions for Wales to better enable local authorities to manage and enforce smoke control areas. In particular, turns the current criminal sanctions regime into a civil sanctions regime to aid enforcement.	By Statutory Instrument
Trunk Road Charging – Expands the circumstances for Welsh Ministers to implement Clean Air Zones or Low Emission Zones.	March 2024
Stationary Idling – Introduces a power for Welsh Ministers to create a monetary range for a fixed penalty notice.	March 2024
Soundscapes - Places a duty on Welsh Ministers to publish a national soundscapes strategy.	March 2024

# The Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Bill: Implementation

## What comes next?

- **Local Air Quality Management:** updated statutory guidance and templates – by March 2025
- **Smoke control guidance** – by March 2025
- **Anti-engine idling guidance** – by March 2025
- **National Air Quality Strategy (Clean Air Plan)** – by April 2028
- **Noise and Soundscape Plan 2023-2028** to be treated as first National Strategy on Soundscapes, synchronising with reviews of the National Air Quality Strategy from 2028
- **Active Travel** – In 2024, Welsh Ministers to publish a statement setting out intent of how they intend to meet duty, including the role that other public bodies will play. Welsh Ministers will subsequently publish a report of steps taken. Local authorities to publish reports on promoting awareness alongside Active Travel Network Maps by 1 December 2026.

# The Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Bill: Implementation

**National Air Quality targets** (assuming Royal Assent January 2024):

- PM<sub>2.5</sub> target – by January 2027
- Target for one of the following: ammonia, PM10, ground level ozone, nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide or sulphur dioxide - by January 2030.

## **Phase 1 - PM2.5 target development timeline:**

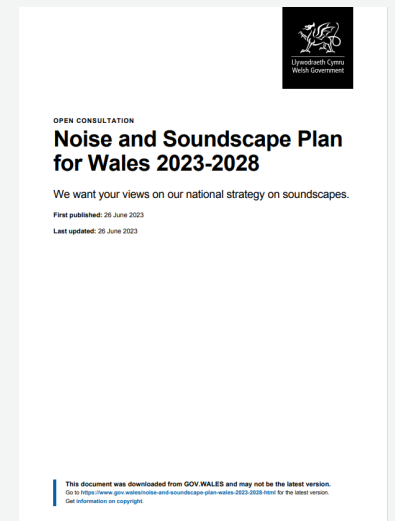
1. Decide target scope (autumn 2023)
2. Developing evidenced targets (spring 2025)
3. Public consultation (October 2025 – January 2026)
4. Senedd Elections (May 2026)
5. Final drafting and laying of target legislation (September – December 2026)

## **Phase 2 - Additional targets development timeline:**

1. Decide target scope (autumn 2023)
2. Developing evidenced targets (spring 2025)
3. Decision on long-term targets for pollutants in addition to PM2.5 (to be determined)

# Noise and Soundscapes

- Noise and Soundscape Plan for Wales 2023-2028 due to be adopted and published on Monday 4 December, replacing the Noise and Soundscape Action Plan 2018-2023.
- Two months after the Bill gains Royal Assent, the Plan will officially become the first National Strategy on Soundscapes.
- Local authorities should have regard to it when exercising functions that may affect soundscapes.
- This should not be a significant change for anyone who currently has regard to the Noise and Soundscape Action Plan 2018-2023, as the core messages remain the same.
- Noise regulators meeting in mid-December to give an overview of the consultation outcome and key points in the new Plan.
- Work to finalise the new TAN 11 planning guidance covering air quality and soundscapes has resumed and will continue into 2024, building on the Bill and the Noise and Soundscape Plan.





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**Diolch / Thank you**

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