

New plan to tackle roadside air pollution in Wales

The [document](#) sets out action the Welsh Government is taking on five sites on the Welsh Government Managed Road Network and in two Welsh local authority areas. The actions are designed to achieve legal limits for NO₂ within the shortest possible time and, most importantly, protect public health.

Temporary 50 mph speed limits were introduced in June at the five sections of the Motorway and Trunk Road Network which exceed legal limits. The plan proposes to make these speed limits permanent, along with the introduction of variable diversion routes in Newport. The speed limits and diversion will be subject to review periodically.

The Welsh Government has placed a Direction on Cardiff and Caerphilly Councils to undertake an assessment by 30 June 2019 to identify the best option to achieve statutory NO₂ limit values within the shortest possible time. The Welsh Government has also allocated £20 million towards supporting the two local authorities to achieve compliance.

The Welsh Government will be publishing a Clean Air Plan for Wales next year which will identify key pollutants, their effects on public health and the natural environment in Wales and what actions need to be taken to improve air quality.

Environment Minister, Hannah Blythyn, said:

“Everyone in Wales has the right to clean air. We are working actively, alongside the other UK nations, to transform our most polluted towns and cities into clean and healthy urban spaces.

“While the focus of this plan is to reduce concentrations of NO₂ around roads where exceedances have been identified, we are developing a range of other measures to improve air quality. We are committed to making improvements to air quality in Wales through planning, infrastructure, regulation and health communication measures.”

Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport, Ken Skates, said:

“To deliver immediate improvements to air quality, temporary 50 mph speed limits were introduced at the five sections of the Motorway and Trunk Road Network until the outcome of the further work was known.

“It’s important to remember an estimated 23,500 deaths are caused in the UK each year by long-term nitrogen dioxide exposure. We must

therefore ensure action is taken to not only meet our legal obligations but, most importantly, provide the right conditions for better health and well-being.”