

New trial to banish loud engines and exhausts on Britain's noisiest streets

- competition launched for Britain's noisiest streets to benefit from innovative noise camera technology trials backed by £300,000 government investment
- Transport Secretary sets ambition to 'banish boy racers', encouraging MPs across England and Wales to apply to run trials in their local area
- disrespectful drivers could be hit with fine for revving engines and using illegal exhausts

A search for Britain's noisiest streets has been launched by the Department for Transport (DfT) with 4 areas across England and Wales set to trial new phase 2 technology to help stop rowdy motorists revving their engines unnecessarily or using illegal exhausts.

Since the technology is in design phase, MPs are being invited to submit applications to trial new innovative noise cameras in their local area, helping to ensure communities can enjoy their public and residential spaces peacefully.

The technology, backed by £300,000, can automatically detect when vehicles are breaking legal noise requirements, helping provide police and local authorities with the tools and evidence to take action against drivers who flout noise laws. Police have existing powers, including the ability to issue fines, but currently have trouble gathering evidence.

The latest phase of noise trials builds on a 3-year programme to perfect the technology. Research shows noise pollution can have significant impacts on physical and mental health for local residents – with heart attacks, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and stress all linked to long-term contact with loud environments.

Excessive noise pollution can mean children struggle to get a good night's sleep and hardworking people's lives are made more stressful. In England alone, the annual social cost of urban road noise was estimated to be up to £10 billion a decade ago. This is the total economic cost of exposure to noise pollution, including lost productivity from sleep disturbance and health costs from heart attacks, strokes and dementia.

As set out in the government's [Levelling Up white paper](#), complaints about noise are highest among the most economically deprived areas, with those in more disadvantaged areas as much as 3 times as likely to suffer from noise nuisance.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

We want those in Britain's noisiest streets, who are kept up at

night by unbearable revving engines and noisy exhausts, to come forward with the help of volunteer areas to test and perfect the latest innovative technology.

For too long, rowdy drivers have been able to get away with disturbing our communities with illegal noisy vehicles. It's time we clamp down on this nuisance, banish the boy racer and restore peace and quiet to local streets.

The technology being used in the trial can provide real-time reports that police can use as evidence and may result in more targeted and efficient enforcement methods to crack down on noisy motorists. By testing this tech in rural and urban areas, the public can help develop the new road technology.

The trial led by the Atkins-Jacobs Joint Venture is formed by the 2 professional services firms to provide technical consultancy including acoustics expertise, design, modelling and asset management.

This follows commitments made by the government to ensure that all parts of Britain have the same powers to deal with noise complaints, including providing them with effective tools for tackling incidents that constitute crime and antisocial behaviour and which can make life a misery for others.

Atkins-Jacobs Joint Venture Practice Director Andrew Pearce said:

This scheme is a critical development for people living in areas affected by antisocial driving. It demonstrates how we can use technology to take a highly targeted approach to solving these problems.

Testing different noise measurement technologies with a range of vehicles in this controlled environment means we can ensure tickets are only sent to drivers with illegal and antisocial cars or bikes.

Highway authorities will be able to automate noise enforcement and get on top of the problem without using up valuable police resources.

Existing legislation requires exhausts and silencers to be maintained in good working order and not altered so as to increase noise. Under the Road Traffic Act 1988 (Section 42) the potential penalty for non-compliance with these requirements is a £50 on-the-spot fine.

The announcement today (30 April 2022) follows preliminary testing of a prototype noise camera by DfT back in 2019, which showed the technology can identify individual vehicles in certain circumstances and assign noise levels to them.

Noise Abatement Society chief executive Gloria Elliott OBE said:

Excessively noisy vehicles cause unnecessary disturbance, stress and anxiety to many and, in some cases, physical pain. They disrupt the environment and people's peaceful enjoyment of their homes and public places.

Communities across the UK are increasingly suffering from this entirely avoidable blight. The Noise Abatement Society applauds rigorous, evidence-based solutions to address this issue and protect the public.