

News story: Government to fund local authority plans to tackle air pollution

Further action to tackle air pollution in the UK has been set out today as the government publishes a [supplement to its plan](#) to improve air quality. It details how thirty-three local authorities will now take action to reduce harmful NO2 emissions.

Ten local authorities will now take forward new measures, developed with and funded by central government, to reduce pollution levels. These are;

- Dudley
- Leicester
- Newcastle-under Lyme
- Portsmouth
- Reading
- Wolverhampton
- Sandwell
- Solihull
- Basingstoke and Deane
- South Gloucestershire

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

While air quality has improved significantly in recent years, we know urgent action is still required to tackle roadside air pollution in our towns and cities.

This is why through our £3.5 billion national air quality plan, we are working with local authorities across the UK and I am pleased ten local authorities will now implement new measures to drive down pollution.

The Roads Minister Jesse Norman and I have written to the leaders of all the authorities that have submitted feasibility studies to thank them for their hard work and underline that Defra will continue to support them to improve air quality in their areas.

While Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2) levels have fallen significantly in recent decades, including a 27% drop since 2010, the UK Plan for Tackling Roadside Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations outlines how councils with the worst levels of air pollution at busy road junctions and hot-spots must take robust action.

Ministerial directions

Earlier this year, Ministerial Directions were issued to 33 local authorities, requiring them to submit studies on the steps they can take to comply with roadside NO2 limits in the shortest amount of time.

Today, the government published a supplement to this plan setting out work carried out with those 33 local authorities and the further action which will now be taken.

Action being taken

The ten local authorities will now take forward new measures to tackle air pollution, including;

- The retrofitting of approximately 400 buses with technology to reduce emissions
- Traffic management measures such as adjustments to signalling to reduce congestion
- Behavioural change campaigns to encourage individuals to take action and reduce their contribution to air pollution

Eight local authorities will now carry out a more detailed study outlining in detail how they will tackle the more persistent air quality problems they have identified. These studies will be presented to government by 31 October 2019 at the latest.

The local authorities include;

- Bolsover
- Bradford
- Portsmouth
- Broxbourne
- Newcastle-under-Lyme
- Stoke-on-Trent
- Leicester
- Liverpool

Portsmouth, Leicester and Newcastle-under-Lyme are being directed to carry out more detailed studies, but have also identified measures that can bring forward compliance quicker.

Eighteen other local authorities are already operating within legal limits or have not found any measures to bring compliance sooner. These will be expected to maintain their work to reduce pollution levels and improve the quality of the air.

The government will ensure sufficient funding is in place to support all the activities set out in this supplement to the national plan.

Funding

Also announced today is the Air Quality Grant for 2018-19 which will provide support to local authorities across England to deliver projects to improve air quality. Applicants in previous years have been awarded funding to install electric vehicle charging points, improve cycling infrastructure and develop local online air quality resources.

This year's grant of £3million is the largest air quality grant to date.

The full Supplement to the [N02 Plan](#) is available online.