

£20m Air Quality Fund among new measures to improve air quality in Wales

Among the measures will be a new £20m fund to reduce emissions and improve the environment in Wales. The Air Quality Fund, which will run until 2021, will support local authorities to comply with nitrogen dioxide limits and improve air quality in their areas.

Speaking during a plenary debate, the Minister announced a consultation will be launched tomorrow on plans for Clean Air Zones, designated areas where action is taken to reduce public and environmental exposure to airborne pollutants.

The proposals include stopping or restricting access for the most polluting vehicles entering a Clean Air Zone, thereby reducing road congestion and emissions within the Clean Air Zones and neighbouring areas.

A consultation will open tomorrow on plans to reduce concentrations of nitrogen dioxide, as part of the wider UK plan to tackle roadside NO₂ concentrations.

The Minister also confirmed immediate measures, including temporary speed limits, will come into force within the next two months to reduce nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) levels on roads where levels are currently above legal limits. Among the restrictions will be the introduction of 50 mph speed limits over the short length of the exceedance at five locations:

- A494 at Deeside
- A483 at Wrexham
- M4 between Junctions 41 & 42 (Port Talbot)
- M4 between junctions 25 & 26 (Newport)
- A470 between Upper Boat & Pontypridd

The measures are expected to deliver immediate improvements to air quality at the key locations, with 50mph speed limits expected to reduce emissions by up to 18%.

A new Air Quality in Wales website will also be launched, enabling people to check live air quality information for their area. The website will provide local data on current and forecasted air pollution levels, as well as historical data. It will also include educational materials, games and tools for schools and improved health advice.

Minister for Environment Hannah Blythyn said:

“I am delighted to announce a package of measures to improve air quality in Wales, including a £20 million fund to help local

authorities put arrangements in place to reduce air pollution in their areas.

“We will encourage local authorities to introduce Clean Air Zones, where evidence suggests they are needed to reduce harmful emissions, as well as launching a new website which allows people to check the air quality in their area.

“Delivering clean air in Wales is one of my key priorities. I am committed to taking action to reduce air pollution in Wales to support a healthier future for our communities and protect our natural environment.

“I am confident the measures I am announcing today will help support the changes we need to make in Wales to deliver cleaner air.