

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd, yr Amgylchedd a Seilwaith | Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee

Bil yr Amgylchedd (Ansawdd Aer a Seinweddau) (Cymru) | The Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Bill

Ymateb gan | Evidence from Acoustics Group of the Institute for Environmental Design and Engineering at University College London - OFFICIAL ORGANISATION,

General principles

What are your views on the general principles of the Bill, and is there a need for legislation to deliver the stated policy intention?

The proposed duty on Welsh Ministers to promote awareness of air pollution is a significant step towards encouraging individuals and businesses to adopt cleaner practices and reduce their impact on the environment. This will not only improve air quality but also reduce carbon emissions, which is crucial for achieving Wales' net-zero targets.

Additionally, the proposed national soundscape strategy is a unique and innovative component of the Bill. It recognizes the impact of noise pollution on human health and well-being and aims to manage and mitigate it. This is an important step forward in environmental regulation, as soundscape quality has not been extensively considered in a regulatory framework before.

What are your views on the Bill's provisions (set out according to sections below), in particular are they workable and will they deliver the stated policy intention?

National air quality targets (sections 1 to 7)

n/a

Promoting awareness about air pollution (section 8)

n/a

National air quality strategy (sections 9 to 11)

n/a

Air quality regulations (section 12)

n/a

Local air quality management (sections 13 to 15)

n/a

Smoke control (sections 16 to 18)

n/a

Vehicle emissions (sections 19 to 21)

n/a

National soundscapes strategy (sections 22 and 23)

The national soundscape strategy is a positive and pioneering development that recognizes the importance of managing soundscape quality in Wales. It will facilitate a more integrated approach to environmental management and promote public awareness of the issue, contributing to a healthier and more sustainable future for Wales.

Specifically, for Section 22, subsection (1), the Bill states that “The Welsh Ministers must prepare and publish a strategy containing their policies with respect to the assessment and management of soundscapes in Wales.” – it may be worth considering if the scope could be slightly extended to cover the “assessment, management AND design of soundscapes in Wales”.

For subsection (2), the Bill states that “The strategy must include policies for assessing and reducing levels of noise pollution.” – it may be worth again extending the scope of the provisions to include not only reducing levels of noise pollution, BUT ALSO promoting positive and supportive soundscape for individuals and communities.

Strategic noise map and noise action plans (sections 24)

n/a

General provisions (sections 25 to 28);

n/a

What are the potential barriers to the implementation of the Bill’s provisions and how does the Bill take account of them?

n/a

How appropriate are the powers in the Bill for Welsh Ministers to make subordinate legislation (as set out in Chapter 5 of Part 1 of the Explanatory Memorandum)?

n/a

Are any unintended consequences likely to arise from the Bill?

n/a

What are your views on the Welsh Government’s assessment of the financial implications of the Bill as set out in Part 2 of the Explanatory Memorandum?

n/a