

P-06-1427 Create a sustainable traffic plan for the Rhiangoll Valley

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 24 Mehefin 2024
Petitions Committee | 24 June 2024

Reference: SR24/8621-4

Petition Number: P-06-1427

Petition title: Create a sustainable traffic plan for the Rhiangoll Valley

Text of petition:

1. Reduced speed limits through the village of Cwmdru to 30mph and 20mph past the pub, houses and playground.
2. Enforcement of exhaust noise regulations with the installation of monitoring and enforcement cameras at both ends of the A479.
3. Creation of a weight limit for the full length of the road to ensure vibration from heavy freight causes no further damage to historic buildings.
4. Installation of routes for healthy and environmentally sustainable travel such as walking and cycling.

The Rhiangoll Valley is served by a main road called the A479 which runs from south to north starting at the Nant y Ffin junction near Crickhowell and ending in Talgarth.



The bends in the road and scenic views attract motorcycles and cars in the summer who often speed and cause sustained periods of excess noise from loud exhausts.

There are very limited opportunities for sustainable travel such as cycling on the A479 due to the speed and many blind bends in the road. There have been complaints of damage to buildings caused by vibration from heavy freight travelling through the villages and past houses near to the road. There are very limited opportunities for speed enforcement in the traditional and accepted ways due to the topography of the road.

The residents demand action against excess speed, exhaust noise and heavy freight. The residents also demand safe ways to sustainably travel around and between their communities.

1. Background

The Welsh Government is the highway authority for the Welsh trunk road and motorway network and is responsible for maintenance and improvement of the network including the A479. The North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent has responsibility for the day to day operation and maintenance of the road.

The A479 connects Crickhowell and Llyswen through the Rhiangoll Valley. A 2021 Road Safety Foundation report considered the statistical risk of a fatal or serious injury crash on British motorways and 'A' roads (based on 2017-2019 data). The report classified the A479 as a "medium-high" risk road. 14% of Britain's A road/motorway network was classed as medium-high risk with only 2% in the "high risk" category.

The petitioner argues for the introduction of a number of traffic measures along the route.

These include lowering the speed limit through the village of Cwmdu - Ordnance Survey speed data accessed by Senedd Research shows the current speed limit is 40mph. The Welsh Government is responsible for setting speed limits on trunk roads in line with its current guidance. This was issued in 2009 and states that "20mph speed limits may be used on trunk roads in exceptional circumstances, generally over short lengths and for limited times of the day".

This guidance is in the process of being reviewed in light of the default 20mph speed limit policy. In response to a written question relating to 20mph speed limits on a different trunk road, the Welsh Government stated in 2023 “we will review the speed limits across the trunk road network, following publication of the [updated] guidance”.

2. Welsh Government action

In his letter to the Chair dated 5 June, the Cabinet Secretary for North Wales and Transport responds to the petitioner’s points. He also outlines that Welsh Government officials have met with local councillors to discuss the concerns.

The Cabinet Secretary also refers to the work taking place to update speed limit guidance (discussed earlier in this brief) and states:

...guidance for roads where people live will be published towards the latter end of the 2024/25 financial year, and following the release of the new guidance [the] Welsh Government will review the speed limits across our Trunk Road Network, including at Cwmdru. Until then, we are not making any changes to individual speed limits so we can ensure the consistency with the new guidance.

3. Welsh Parliament action

The issue of road safety and traffic measures on the A479 does not appear to have been raised in the Senedd. However, in 2020 a section of the road was shut for several months as a result of a landslide. In 2021 James Evans MS tabled a written question on extra funding for the local authority to repair damage on the local road network caused by “excessive use” while the A479 was shut.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.