# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **Noise and Soundscape Plan for Wales 2023-2028 – our national strategy on soundscapes** |
| **DATE** | **04 December 2023** |
| **BY** | **Julie James MS, Minister for Climate Change** |

One of the objectives of our Programme for Government is to make our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work. The Welsh Government recognises both the positive and the negative impacts that sounds can have on people’s health and well-being. We should care not only about unwanted noise, but also about the sounds people do want to hear.

We are the first UK nation to include soundscapes not only in national policy but also now in primary legislation, through our [Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Bill](https://business.senedd.wales/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=40984). In presenting the Welsh Government with this year’s John Connell Soundscape Award, the UK Noise Abatement Society said that the Bill process has resulted in greater understanding of soundscape within the Government, puts soundscape on a statutory footing for the first time in the UK and globally, and sets an expectation for evidence-based, transparent and inclusive development of future applied soundscape practices. Members of the Senedd approved the Bill at stage 4, completing scrutiny and its passage through the Senedd.

Today I am publishing our [Noise and Soundscape Plan](https://www.gov.wales/noise-and-soundscape-plan-for-wales-2023-2028) for the five-year period from 2023 to 2028. It replaces the previous Noise and Soundscape Action Plan 2018-2023 (NSAP), and will be our first statutory national strategy on soundscapes published in accordance with Part 2 of the [Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Bill](https://business.senedd.wales/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=40984).

The Plan retains and refines the core messages of the NSAP, which include:

* our ambition for appropriate soundscapes;
* our commitment to embed the five ways of working in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 into noise and soundscape policy; and
* our commitment to join up action on noise and air quality wherever it makes sense to do so.

The Plan sets out what we have delivered over the last five years, such as noise mitigation works completed on the trunk road network. It also highlights developments in planning policy and guidance. Notably, this includes our work towards publishing and implementing a new [Technical Advice Note (TAN 11)](https://www.gov.wales/revised-planning-guidance-relation-air-quality-noise-and-soundscape) and related soundscape design guidance.

The Plan highlights our latest [noise maps](https://datamap.gov.wales/layergroups/geonode:Environmental_Noise_Mapping_2022) and results from the noise questions asked in the [National Survey for Wales](https://www.gov.wales/national-survey-wales) 2021-22. In addition, it covers new topics that have come to the fore within the last five years, such as remote working, aural diversity, air source heat pumps, changes in speed limits, and fireworks.

Following the 14-week consultation on the draft Plan which we held over the summer, additional text has been inserted covering issues such as outdoor events, barking dogs and tranquil protected landscapes. We have also said we will:

* include noise messaging in the air pollution awareness-raising activities that we will carry out under the Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Bill;
* promote the overlaying of noise maps with spatial data on air pollution, health and deprivation as we improve our local air quality management regime; and
* work with external partners to develop professional training for practitioners on soundscape assessment and design.

A summary of consultation responses and the Welsh Government’s full response to the consultation may be found on the [Welsh Government website](https://www.gov.wales/noise-and-soundscape-plan-wales-2023-2028).

The Noise and Soundscape Plan 2023-2028 and the latest noise maps published on DataMapWales and shown in Annex A of the Plan are to be considered formally adopted for the purposes of Part 6 of the Environmental Noise (Wales) Regulations 2006 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (Assessments of Local Well-being) Regulations 2017.

<https://www.gov.wales/noise-and-soundscape-plan-for-wales-2023-2028>

External link: [Noise Abatement Society](https://noiseabatementsociety.org/campaigns/john-connell-awards/)