## Noise Pollution

**Organisation:**First Minister

**Source:**Welsh Assembly - NAFW Oral Answers

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Suzy Davies: 10. What consideration will the Welsh Government be giving to noise pollution in the forthcoming Planning Bill? OAQ(4)1572(FM)

Carwyn Jones (The First Minister): I can say to the Member that technical advice note 11 already provides a comprehensive framework for addressing noise as part of the planning process.

Suzy Davies: Thank you for that, First Minister. Of course, noise from public construction and improvement work can have a major impact on the wellbeing of those living nearby, in terms of not just volume but duration, as you know from your own constituency. When contractors run behind schedule, they will seek permission from the local authority to work outside business hours in order to avoid paying a penalty for failing to finish the work on time, thereby exacerbating the effect on residents. As there are virtually no successful prosecutions for noise nuisance under existing laws, how do you think your Government can give an effective voice to residents and business owners who complain bitterly that they have no effective redress in the circumstances I described under the existing guidelines?

Carwyn Jones: There is redress under existing law, but I share the Member's concern that the existing law may not be as effective as it might be. I have had experiences-as I am sure she will have had-of constituents who have complained about noise and monitoring is then done, but, often, it seems that that monitoring is done once the emitters of the noise have been warned. That is a situation I am sure we have all come across. Consideration may well have to be given, not via the planning Bill but via other means, to making sure that, where noise nuisance is measured, it is done in an unannounced way. I think that that is where we might need to look in future.

Lord Elis-Thomas: Does the First Minister share my ambition for this planning Bill, namely that it will truly provide an opportunity to release businesses and the people of Wales from the overly stern and short-termist plans that have affected us over the years? Is the First Minister certain that the Bill will appear in July, as has been pledged, and that there will be enough opportunity for the people of Wales to discuss these significant environmental Bills so that, as we legislate anew in these areas, we can make a real difference?

Carwyn Jones: That is exceptionally important, of course, in order to ensure that any Bills are effective in the future. I am confident that there will be sufficient discussion in this place and, of course, with the public at large.

26 March 2014