



# Designation of National Highways as a "Relevant Public Authority"

CIEH submission to the DEFRA consultation

June 2022

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## **About the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH)**

CIEH is the professional voice for environmental health representing over 7,000 members working in the public, private and third sectors, in 52 countries around the world. It ensures the highest standards of professional competence in its members, in the belief that through environmental health action people's health can be improved.

Environmental health has an important and unique contribution to make to improving public health and reducing health inequalities. CIEH campaigns to ensure that government policy addresses the needs of communities and business in achieving and maintaining improvements to health and health protection.

For more information visit [www.cieh.org](http://www.cieh.org) and follow CIEH on Twitter @The\_CIEH.

Any enquiries about this response should be directed to:

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**5. Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to designate National Highways as a “Relevant Public Authority”?**

Strongly agree

**6. Please set out any evidence you wish to provide in support of your answer to question 5.**

We have long called for National Highways to be designated as a Relevant Public Authority to support closer working between National Highways and local authorities towards achieving local air quality improvements. We are pleased to see the Government consulting on this proposal.

National Highways are responsible for all major roads, which are part of the Strategic Road Network. If a detailed assessment indicates that a road under the control of National Highways is a significant contributor to a local Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), the local authority currently has no authority over that section of road and therefore is unable to take action. Designating National Highways as a Relevant Public Authority would ensure that there is a legal framework for National Highways to be involved in the AQMA process, as a key air quality partner, with responsibilities to work together with the local authority in order to identify relevant solutions and measures to reduce air pollution and protect public health.

We would also like to see specific and strategic targets for air quality to be allocated to National Highways, so that the body also works independently of local authority partnerships to improve the levels of air pollution across its whole road network. Wider targets for air quality would also ensure that there are greater incentives for National Highways to work more closely with local authorities to identify and implement potential solutions.

Some of our members have told us that they have experienced difficulties in getting in touch with National Highways leads who have overall responsibility for managing air quality, sharing data and liaising with local highways and environmental health departments. A wider priority around air quality combined with a designation as the Relevant Public Authority should lead to specialist resources being allocated to this function.

**7. Do you agree or disagree that designating National Highways as a “Relevant Air Public Authority” would increase the effectiveness of local air quality management?**

Strongly agree

**8. What do you think of the draft statutory guidance “working with National Highways” (please see [Annex A](#))? Please set out any comments or suggested improvements you think we should consider.**

No comment.

**9. Do you agree or disagree with our assessment of impacts set out in the Regulatory Triage Assessment document (please see [Annex B](#))? Please set out your reasons for agreement/disagreement.**

Agree. As national body, National Highways' policies should be aligned with those of central government, which includes the improvement of air quality and climate change mitigation.

**10. Do you have any further comments or views on the designation of National Highways as a Relevant Public Authority?**

No.