



## REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 17TH SEPTEMBER 2013

**SUBJECT: AIR QUALITY UPDATE**

**REPORT BY: ACTING DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 This report advises members of the intention to seek Cabinet approval to:

- (1) Extend the current Caerphilly Town Centre Air Quality Management Area to include certain properties along Nantgarw Road and Ton-y-Felin Road, Caerphilly;
- (2) Issue for consultation a draft Air Quality Action Plan for improving air quality in and around Caerphilly Town Centre Air Quality Management Area;
- (3) Designate Hafod-yr-ynys Road, Crumlin as an Air Quality Management Area.
- (4) Establish a Steering Group in relation to the Hafod-yr-ynys Air Quality Management Area.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 This report provides an update in respect of air quality. The report informs the Committee of air quality findings to date in the Caerphilly and Hafod-yr-ynys areas and provides an explanation of the actions required of the Local Authority.
- 2.2 The national air quality objectives are being exceeded at receptor locations around Caerphilly Town Centre and along Hafod-yr-ynys Road, Crumlin. The Local Authority is required to designate any area failing the national air quality objectives as an Air Quality Management Area and produce an Action Plan which details measures to bring the pollutant within acceptable limits.
- 2.3 Scrutiny Committee Members' views are sought on the proposals to seek Cabinet approval to extend the current Caerphilly Town Centre Air Quality Management Area, to issue a draft Air Quality Action Plan for consultation, and to designate an Air Quality Management Area along Hafod-yr-ynys Road, Crumlin.

### **3. LINKS TO STRATEGY**

- 3.1 Addressing air quality contributes to the Healthier Caerphilly and Greener Caerphilly, priorities within the Caerphilly Local Service Board single integrated plan, Caerphilly Delivers. In meeting its statutory requirements the Council has an Air Quality Strategy that is required to be reviewed and assessed annually to ensure that air quality complies with the national air quality objectives.

## **4. THE REPORT**

- 4.1 All local authorities are required by the Environment Act 1995 to review and assess air quality within their area for present and future years.

Previous reports to the Living Environment Scrutiny Committee have provided information on the air quality monitoring being undertaken within the County Borough. Under the provisions of the Environment Act 1995, the Government has established a set of national objectives for specific pollutants having regard to scientific and national evidence on the effects on health. Local Authorities are required to carry out reviews to determine whether there is compliance with these objectives and if there is not, to incorporate management controls to improve air quality bringing it within the acceptable levels.

Assessments to date show that, air quality throughout the Borough is generally good. However, there are two areas of concern, namely Caerphilly town centre (which already is an Air Quality Management Area) and, Hafod-yr-ynys Road, Crumlin. Both of these areas are affected with unacceptable levels of nitrogen dioxide, which is primarily associated with vehicle exhaust emissions and is a respiratory irritant.

### **4.2 Caerphilly Town Centre Air Quality Management Area**

Caerphilly Town Centre Air Quality Management Area was designated in September 2008, see Appendix 1 for a map of the current Air Quality Management Area. Air quality assessments post 2008, have continued to show results above the air quality objective limit for nitrogen dioxide. More recently, air quality monitoring locations at Nantgarw Road and Ton-y-Felin Road have shown results above the air quality objective. The annual mean objective limit for nitrogen dioxide is  $40 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ . Where it appears that the air quality objective is not being achieved or is not likely to be achieved then an Air Quality Management Area must be designated. The annual mean levels of nitrogen dioxide for 2012 being measured at locations on Nantgarw Road and Ton-y-Felin Road ranged between  $37 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  and  $41 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ . Following the submission of the 2013 Nantgarw Road Detailed Assessment report to Welsh Government the Local Authority is now required to undertake its recommendations and extend the existing town centre Air Quality Management Area to include the affected locations.

This report therefore advises Members of the intention to seek Cabinet approval to extend the current Caerphilly Town Centre Air Quality Management Area to incorporate the exceeding areas along Nantgarw Road and Ton-y-Felin Road as delineated in the map contained in Appendix 2. The detail of the residential properties falling within these areas is provided in Appendices 2a and 2b.

The air quality issues within the proposed extension to the Air Quality Management Area will be dealt with by the Caerphilly Town Centre Action Plan, which is currently in draft format and is due to go out to public consultation mid October. It is attached at Appendix 4.

### **4.3 Hafod-Yr-Ynys Road, Crumlin**

Hafod-yr-ynys is just inside the County boundary between Crumlin and Pontypool on the A472. The residential properties along Hafod-yr-ynys Road, including Woodside Terrace and New Houses, are situated in the foot of a high-sided valley. On the south side of the road the properties are mainly terraced houses and beyond the large supporting wall on the north side of the Road are a mixture of semi-detached and detached housing. The A472 is a major commuter route.

The annual mean levels of nitrogen dioxide being measured at locations along Woodside Terrace and on the opposite side of the road at New Houses ranged between  $45 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  and  $71 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  in 2012. Following the submission of the 2013 Hafod-yr-ynys Detailed Assessment report to Welsh Government the Local Authority is now required to undertake its recommendations and designate an Air Quality Management Area along Hafod-yr-ynys Road.

This report therefore advises Members of the intention to seek approval from Cabinet to designate an Air Quality Management Area along Hafod-yr-ynys Road, Hafod-yr-ynys as delineated in the map contained in Appendix 3.

There is no specific guidance that states how local authorities should define the boundaries of an Air Quality Management Area; it is at the discretion of the local authority. The boundary recommended for Hafod-yr-ynys has been decided on an evidenced based approach, with the designated area only including residential properties in the area that are failing the national air quality objective for nitrogen dioxide. These include a small area along Woodside Terrace and the opposite side of the road known as New Houses. It is important to note, that whilst only a small area will be designated, the pollutant of concern is traffic related and the Action Plan produced to improve the air quality over time will need to look beyond the area of exceedance as traffic feeds onto this road from a few junctions at the bottom of Hafod-yr-ynys hill (A472).

There will be a continuous process of air quality monitoring and assessment undertaken in and around the proposed Air Quality Management Area for Hafod-yr-ynys Road and there may be a need to amend the boundaries of the Air Quality Management Area in the future.

#### **4.4 Following Designation Of An Air Quality Management Area**

Following designation of an Air Quality Management Area, the Environment Act 1995 requires the Authority to carry out two main tasks. It firstly requires a Further Assessment, which is an in-depth study of the air quality within the Air Quality Management Area. This means looking at all possible sources that could contribute to poor air quality and where possible quantifying their contribution. This further study of air quality will allow the Authority to produce a focused Action Plan. The time period for producing this report is 12 months following designation of the Air Quality Management Area.

The second task is to produce an Action Plan for the Air Quality Management Area, which will inform Welsh Government of the actions the Authority intends to take in order to reduce the levels of nitrogen dioxide back to an acceptable limit.

Whilst the Action Plan will concentrate primarily on reducing levels of nitrogen dioxide within the Air Quality Management Area, it is important to note, as stated earlier in the report, that the pollutant of concern is traffic related. Traffic queuing and congestion is an issue along the junctions that feed the A472 not just within the confines of the Air Quality Management Area. When producing the Action Plan, it will be necessary to consider areas surrounding the junctions that feed the A472.

Due to the nature of the problem, the Action Plan will require an input from many services across the Local Authority as well as an input from external partners, local residents and businesses. A steering group will need to be established to produce and progress the Action Plan. It is envisaged that the Cabinet Member for Community & Leisure Services will chair the steering group and minutes of meetings will be reported to the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee. The steering group will need to agree terms of reference and appropriate membership to fully reflect the various interests and required experience.

There is a requirement to consult members of the public during the production of the Action Plan. Government guidance suggests that it is good practice to consult for a period of 12 weeks. An appropriate communication strategy will also need to be agreed.

## **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no Equalities implications to this report, as reducing the air pollutants in the two areas relates equally to every member of the community in those areas specified, regardless of background or individual circumstances.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The designation of an Air Quality Management Area in Hafod-yr-ynys will involve more detailed monitoring and assessment with resulting expenditure of approximately £4,500, this money will be committed out of existing Environmental Health Revenue budgets.
- 6.2 The progression of the draft Action Plan for the Caerphilly Town Centre Air Quality Management Area with its associated consultation process will have further resource implications which will be the subject of future reports.

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no personnel implications.

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

- 8.1 The report has been sent to the consultees listed below, and there are no consultation responses, which have not been reflected in the recommendations.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 The Committee are asked to comment upon the proposals to seek Cabinet approval to:

- (1) Extend the Caerphilly Town Centre Air Quality Management Area to incorporate certain properties along Nantgarw Road and Ton-y-Felin Road, Caerphilly as delineated in the map in Appendix 2.
- (2) Issue for consultation a draft Air Quality Action Plan for improving air quality in and around Caerphilly Town Centre Air Quality Management Area as attached at Appendix 4.
- (3) Designate an Air Quality Management Area along Hafod-yr-ynys Road, Crumlin as delineated in the map in Appendix 3
- (4) Establish a Steering Group in relation to the Hafod-yr-ynys Air Quality Management Area.

## **10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (1) To mitigate any potential impacts on health and to comply with the statutory obligations on the Local Authority
- (2) To ensure that the Local Air Quality Management process is progressed effectively.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

- 11.1 The Environment Act 1995 s 83.1

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**Background Papers:**

**Air Quality reports:**

Detailed Assessment of Air Quality, Nantgarw Road, Caerphilly, April 2013

Detailed Assessment of Air Quality, Hafod-yr-ynys, May 2013

Air Quality Progress Report, Caerphilly County Borough Council, August 2013

**Appendices:**

Appendix 1: Map of the current Caerphilly Town Centre Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)

Appendix 2: Map of Proposed Extension to Caerphilly Town Centre AQMA

Appendix 2a: Map of Proposed Extension to Caerphilly Town Centre AQMA (Ton-y-Felin Road section)

Appendix 2b: Map of Proposed Extension to Caerphilly Town Centre AQMA (Nantgarw Road section)

Appendix 3: Map of Proposed Hafod-yr-ynys AQMA

Appendix 4: Draft Air Quality Action Plan for Caerphilly Town Centre Air Quality Management Area