



REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – FOR INFORMATION

SUBJECT: AIR QUALITY UPDATE – HAFOD-YR-YNYS

REPORT BY: INTERIM CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide members with an update on air quality at Hafod-yr-ynys and the feasibility study of proposed options for reducing levels of nitrogen dioxide at Hafod-yr-ynys following the Air Quality Direction issued to the Authority by Welsh Government.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The national nitrogen dioxide air quality objectives are being exceeded at receptor locations on Hafod-yr-ynys Road. The local authority is required to designate any area failing the national air quality objectives as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and produce an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) which details measures to bring the pollutant back within acceptable limits. The AQAP was approved by Cabinet and subsequently Welsh Government in March 2018.
- 2.2 In addition to providing results which inform the Local Air Quality Management regime and action planning process, the continuous nitrogen dioxide monitor at Hafod-yr-ynys also forms part of DEFRA's national Automatic Urban and Rural Network (AURN). The AURN is a network of continuous monitors throughout the UK that inform a national Pollution Climate Model which is used for air quality reporting purposes to Europe to demonstrate compliance with the Ambient Air Quality Directive. Hafod-yr-ynys and Cardiff are two areas in Wales showing non-compliance with the Ambient Air Quality Directive.
- 2.3 In February 2018 Welsh Government issued an Air Quality Direction to Caerphilly CBC to undertake a feasibility study for the area and to produce a preferred option or basket of options which will achieve compliance with the Ambient Air Quality Directive air quality objectives in the 'shortest possible time'. This report provides an update of the feasibility process to date and informs members of the next steps.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) is a statutory requirement. Addressing air quality contributes to the Caerphilly Public Services Board Well-being Plan 2018-2023, supporting the Positive Change, Positive People and Positive Places objectives.

The work also supports the following Corporate Well-being Objectives, identified within the Council's Corporate Plan 2018-2023:

- Promote a modern, integrated and sustainable transport system that increases opportunity, promotes prosperity and minimises the adverse impacts on the environment
- Creating a county borough that supports a healthy lifestyle in accordance with the Sustainable Development Principle within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Addressing air quality contributes to the following Well-being goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A globally responsible Wales

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 Over the past 18 months, the media has focussed on the public health significance of poor air quality and this has attracted attention from many pressure groups and organisations such as Client Earth, the British Lung Foundation and Healthy Air Cymru. Client Earth currently have pending court proceedings against the UK and Welsh Governments for non-compliance with the Ambient Air Quality Directive. The Welsh Government have been tasked with producing a Plan which details how they intend to bring about compliance in those areas highlighted by the national air quality model which are currently failing the Ambient Air Quality Directive. Hafod-yr-ynys along with parts of Cardiff and certain trunk roads throughout Wales are those areas identified as being non-compliant. The Welsh Government recently consulted on a Supplementary Plan for ‘tackling roadside concentrations of nitrogen dioxide in Wales.’ The plan details actions of Welsh Government with respect to the trunk roads, for which they are responsible but also details what is required of Caerphilly and Cardiff Councils.

To demonstrate commitment to reducing levels of nitrogen dioxide within those areas mentioned within the Plan, the Minister for Environment has issued an Air Quality Direction to Caerphilly and Cardiff Councils requiring them to undertake a process to bring about compliance with the Ambient Air Quality Directive. The process involves the production of three reports, namely:

Initial Scoping Proposals by 30th March 2018 – setting out the approach to the feasibility study, the scope of work, governance, procurement approach, resourcing, indicative costs and timings

Initial Plan by 30th September 2018 – Setting out the case for change and identifying, exploring, analysing and developing options for measures which the local authority will implement to deliver compliance with indicative costs for those options

Final Plan by 30th June 2019 – Identifying in detail the preferred option for delivering compliance in the shortest possible time, and including a full business case setting out value for money considerations and implementation arrangements.

The Minister has also made £20M of funding available to local authorities to cover the costs of the feasibility process and implementation of any proposed actions.

With respect to Hafod-yr-ynys, the feasibility study process required by the Air Quality Direction is now running alongside the Local Air Quality Management regime but both processes have the same desired outcome, which is, compliance with the air quality objective for nitrogen dioxide. The difference is the feasibility study process will be heavily scrutinised by the courts due to the pending Client Earth case, so far more evidence is required to ensure as a Council, we have considered everything in appropriate detail and that our chosen actions for Hafod-yr-ynys will achieve compliance.

Following the issuing of the Air Quality Direction to the authority, Environmental Health Officers have deployed further traffic and air quality monitoring in and around Hafod-yr-ynys to better understand and properly define what is causing the air quality exceedances so that any actions taken forward can be properly modelled and are relevant and proportionate to the scale of the problem.

With respect to the Air Quality Direction, an Initial Scoping Report was produced and submitted to Welsh Government prior to the 30th March 2018 which set out the local authority's intentions with respect to progressing the work.

The next part of the Direction is the production of the Initial Plan, which is the feasibility study and part of this process repeats work that has been undertaken for the Action Planning process under the Local Air Quality Management regime. It requires the local authority to produce a list of actions which will reduce levels of nitrogen dioxide within the area to achieve compliance with the Air Quality Directive in the 'shortest possible time'.

An air quality workshop was held with key partners and stakeholders on the 3rd July 2018 where a list of options was produced. The authority's transport and air quality consultants have considered the options produced from the workshop and have assessed them for their effectiveness, the timescale involved in taking forward the action and the deliverability of the action.

The proposals are currently being modelled to consider how they will affect traffic in the local area as well as their effectiveness in terms of air quality, i.e. by how much will the proposal reduce the level of nitrogen dioxide. Following the air quality and traffic modelling process, a proposed option or basket of options will be presented to Welsh Government for consideration.

The air quality and traffic modelling work is still progressing at present and will be presented to Cabinet in late September for agreement prior to submitting the report to Welsh Government.

The last part of the reporting process is the production of a Final Plan, which must be submitted to Welsh Government by no later than 30th June 2019. The progression of this work and endorsement of the Final Plan will be reported to Members in due course.

5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 5.1 Local Air Quality Management contributes to the Well-being Goals as set out in the Links to Strategy above. The service's activity in this regard is consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act in that it is focussed on preventing harm to public health. The service follows a statutory process in relation to Local Air Quality Management and uses a range of strategies, activities and interventions that ensure an integrated and balanced approach to service delivery. This process seeks to balance the need for proactive intervention programmes with the need to promote, educate and inform both key stakeholders and the public; collaborating with them to promote and improve air quality over the long term.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no equalities implications associated with this report.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. However the preferred option or basket of options to achieve compliance with the Ambient Air Quality Directive is likely to attract significant costs should the solution be infrastructure related. Welsh Government are currently meeting costs associated with the feasibility study.

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Welsh Government have agreed to finance the costs associated with employing a temporary member of staff to assist with the delivery of this work.

9. CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 The consultees listed below have been consulted and their views have been incorporated accordingly.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 Members are asked to note the progress to date on the feasibility study associated with the Hafod-yr-ynys Air Quality Management Area.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 (1) To mitigate any potential impacts on health and to comply with the statutory obligations on the Local Authority.
- (2) To ensure that work required from the Air Quality Direction issued to the local authority by Welsh Government is progressed effectively.

12. STATUTORY POWER

- 12.1 Environment Act 1995.

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Consultees: Robert Hartshorn, Head of Policy and Public Protection
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Cllr Nigel George, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services
Councillor Carl Thomas, Crumlin Ward Member
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