

Caerphilly County Borough Council WelTAG Stage 3 Feasibility Study

Consultation Summary Report

Introduction

The European Union Ambient Air Quality Directive (2008/50/EC) sets legally binding limits for concentrations of certain air pollutants in outdoor air termed 'limit values'. The A472, Hafod-yr-Ynys Road exceeds the limit value for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and Caerphilly County Borough Council is investigating measures to bring forward reductions in NO₂ to ensure compliance with the Ambient Air Quality Directive in the shortest possible time.

A feasibility study has predicted that a 'Do Minimum' scenario, which involves public awareness raising and educational campaigns would achieve compliance by 2025. The study also assessed a number of options and concluded that demolition of the houses at 1-20 Woodside Terrace to include 1&2 Woodside Shops and Yr Adfa will achieve compliance with the air quality limit values in the shortest possible time; by 2022.

Caerphilly Council's Cabinet have considered the findings from the study. Following deliberations regarding the potential impact on the mental health and well-being of the residents, together with the potential to create financial hardship; the Cabinet agreed to consult on the 'Do Minimum' option as the preferred option for securing compliance with the Air Quality Directive. In addition, the Council have lobbied Welsh Government for additional financial support, in order to prevent those affected residents being forced into financial hardship in the event that the demolition option is subsequently required.

Following the Cabinet Decision and the outcome of the Feasibility Study, a 10 week Public Consultation commenced on Tuesday 02 April to allow people to submit their views on the draft version of the Stage 3 Feasibility Study Report prior to the submission of the final report to Welsh Government on 30 June 2019.

Method

All stakeholders have been sign posted to the consultation by social media, with additional e-mails and written correspondence being sent to key stakeholders / groups to maximise the number of responses received during the consultation period.

Engagement

Key engagement mechanisms included:

- Online - via the CCBC Website, social media (including Facebook and Twitter)
- E-mails and written correspondence (letters to local residents)
- Paper Questionnaires – hand delivered to residents directly affected by the outcome of the feasibility study.
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Social Media

The consultation was promoted via social media at the outset of the consultation period with occasional social media reminders thereafter.

Survey

The questionnaire was designed to seek residents, stakeholder and visitors views on

- The Cabinet decision to support 'Do minimum' as a preferred option whilst lobbying Welsh Government for additional funding should the demolition option be pursued, and;
- The outcome of the WelTAG Stage 3 Feasibility Study to demolish 23 properties to the Southern side of the A472.

Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed in relation to each of the options set out for delivering compliance with the European Union Ambient Air Quality Directive (2008/50/EC) in the 'shortest possible time'. There was also provision within the questionnaire to explain why they agreed/disagreed with any of the options put forward and to note any equality implications.

Survey Findings

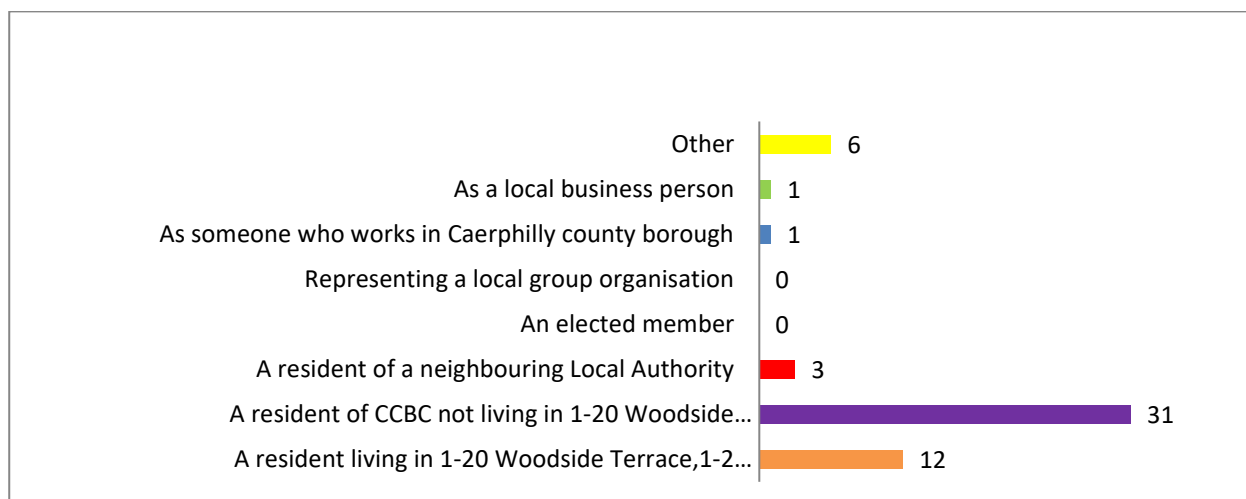
A total of 54 responses were received and have been included in this analysis. Not all respondents answered every question and where the number of responses to a question is lower, this figure is noted in brackets next to the heading of the relevant question.

Respondent Profile (n=54)

A profile of respondents provides context for an analysis of the responses received.

As shown in **Graph 1**, the largest proportion (31) of those who responded indicated that they were residents living in the borough. In addition 12 respondents indicated that they are residents of 1-20 Woodside Terrace, 1&2 Woodside Shops and Yr Adfa. Under the 'other' category 4 people indicated that they were either friends or relatives of those living in Woodside Terrace.

Graph 1: Interest in Consultation (n=54)

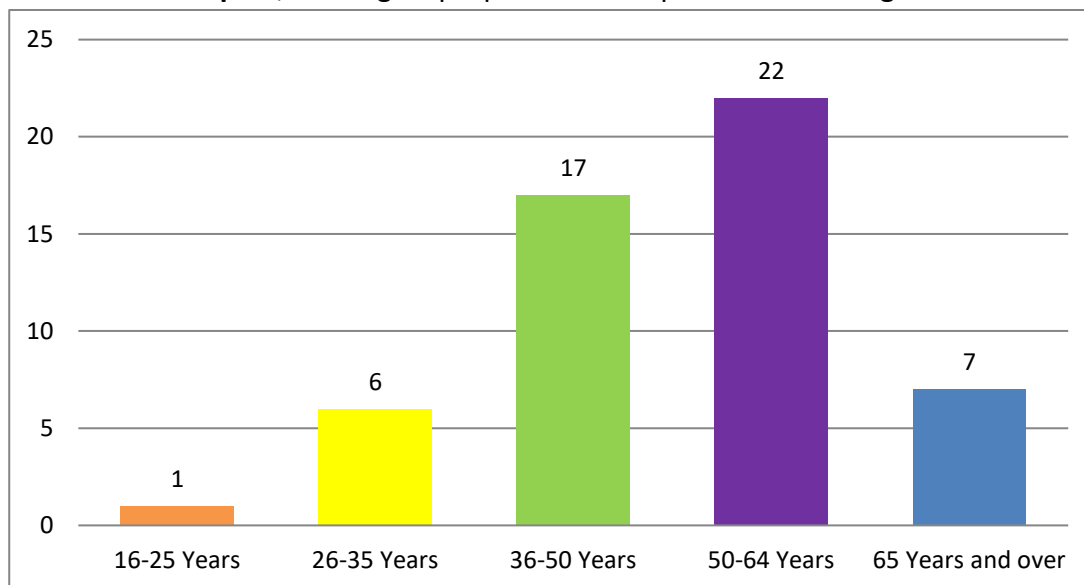


Gender (n= 54)

Of those who gave a response to this question, 25 were female and 29 were male.

Age Groups (n=53)

As shown in **Graph 2**, the largest proportion of respondents were aged 50 and over.



Equalities (n=53)

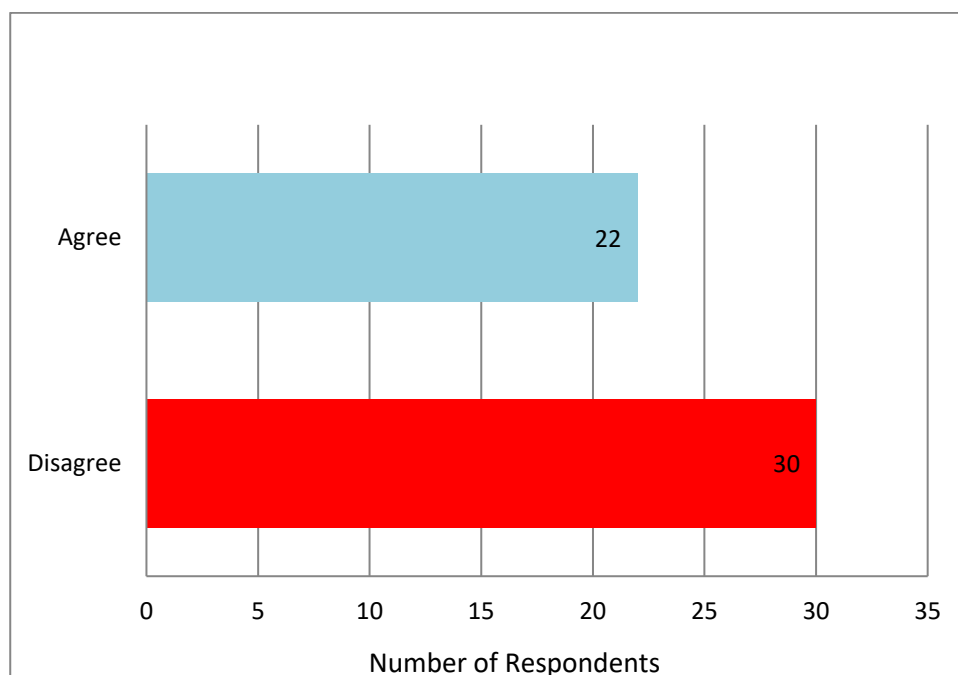
53 of the respondents felt that their responses to the public consultation was not influenced positively or negatively by any of the characteristics listed within Q9 of the questionnaire. However 1 respondent commented that their answer was influenced by the fact that he/she has 3 small children who all depend on her.

Options Appraisal

Feasibility Study (n=52)

It can be seen from **Graph 3** below that there is a divide of opinion in relation to the feasibility outcome. Of the 52 respondents who answered the question, 22 people agreed with the outcome of the feasibility study i.e. to demolish the properties. However, 30 people disagreed with this option.

Graph 3: Do you agree or disagree with the outcome of the Hafod-Yr-Ynys Air Quality Feasibility Study WelTAG Stage 3 Report? (n =52)



Respondents were additionally asked to give reasons why they agreed/disagreed with the feasibility study. Whilst the figures above suggest that 30 respondents disagreed with demolition, the comments that accompanied this answer did not always appear consistent with this view.

Key themes in support of the feasibility outcome include:

- Demolition is the only option that will bring about compliance with the EU Directive
- Concerns for the impact on residents, in particular health concerns
- Concern that the air quality situation will worsen over years at a quicker rate than green technology
- Increased housing development within the area will further add to air quality issues
- That improvements to air quality need to be made elsewhere not just at Woodside Terrace
- Severe uncertainty around predictions in the reduction of NO₂ to reach compliance by 2025.
- In the absence of restricting traffic type and volume, demolition is the only other option.
- Road Safety concerns – volume of traffic
- The area is extremely dilapidated

Key themes to emerge in disagreement with the feasibility outcome include:

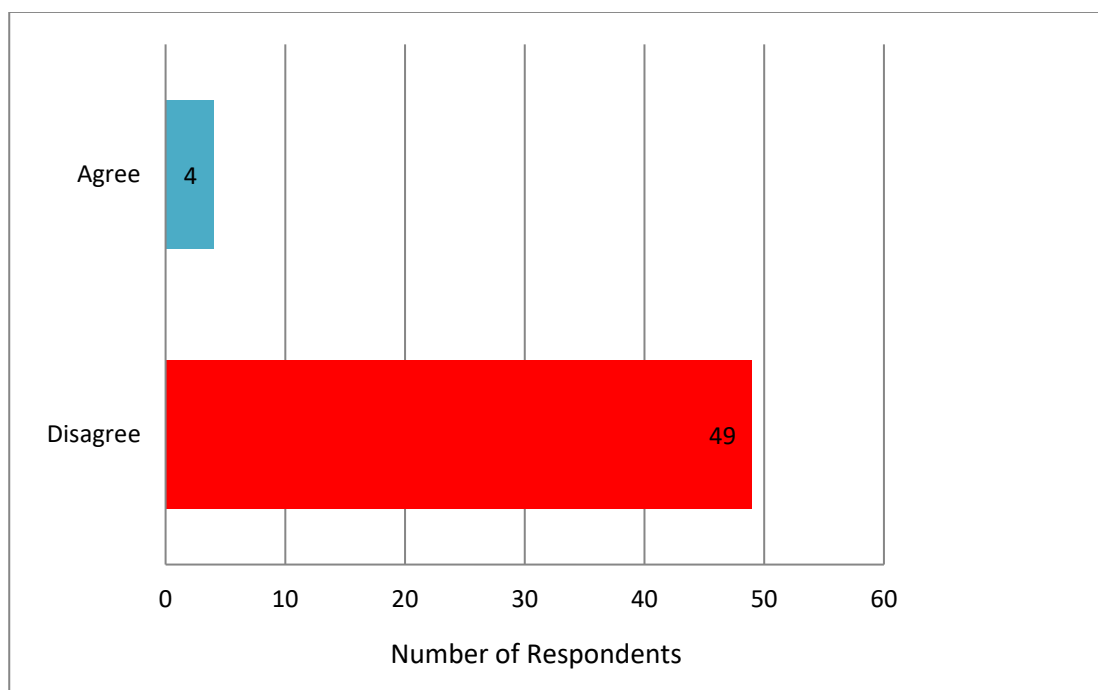
- Improvements to air quality can be made in other ways e.g. restricting traffic type and volume and improving the road network to reduce congestion
- Unreasonable to offer 10% of market value to residents.
- Re-utilise alternate traffic route through Swffryd (B4471) seen as a better option to relieve issue.

- Impact on residents has not been fully considered.
- Ambiguity surrounding reliance on vehicular emission modelling outcomes.
- No faith in assumption that residents on other side of the road aren't affected.
- The health impact assessment (in relation to demolition) does not take into consideration the psychological impacts on residents.
- Residents need safer environment to live in. Volume of traffic makes it an unhealthy place to live.
- Traffic flows are underestimated considerably.
- Demolition is the only option!

Do minimum (n=53)

In relation to the 'Do minimum' option, 49 people disagreed with the CCBC cabinet proposal and 4 of the respondents agreed. One respondent did not answer.

Graph 4: Do you agree or disagree with the proposal that 'Do minimum' is the preferred option? (n=53)



Key themes in support of the 'Do minimum' option included:

- Residents in properties included in the demolition proposal not wishing to leave their home
- Tackling the traffic emissions by taking the higher pollution vehicles off the roads and replacing with greener equivalents should be the priority of Government

Key themes in disagreement with the 'Do minimum' option included:

- Do minimum is not an option as it is not compliant with EU directive
- 'Do minimum' does not feature in the content of the feasibility study and is not an option
- 'Do minimum' will have a detrimental effect on the lives of the residents
 - This is a public health issue - everything possible should be done to reduce the impact on people's health
- Air quality will worsen if nothing is done to address the issues
- Traffic and congestion is an ongoing issue in the area and needs to be resolved

Discussion

Upon review of the data, it is apparent that the majority of people who responded to the question in relation to the feasibility study disagreed with the outcome of the report (30/54). Out of the respondents who disagreed, respondents further commented on the reasoning for their choice. For those who disagreed with the conclusions in the feasibility study (demolition), comments provided suggest that respondents felt that demolition will not encourage reductions in traffic emissions borough wide and feel that this is something that should be further considered.

Others felt that the air quality issues at Hafodyrynys could be effectively managed/reduced by other means such as further road infrastructure improvements, i.e. alternative traffic routes/diversions, construction of a by-pass to name a few. However, it should be noted that options such as a bypass which would offer an alternative route have been considered in earlier stages of the study and have been ruled out based on the timescales it would take to deliver the option.

Some residents living in the nearby vicinity felt that their properties should be included within the demolition proposal, however, real time data and modelling outcomes conclude that properties on the north side of the A472 are currently in compliance with the air quality limit value for NO₂ and demolition of the properties on the south side of the A472, will reduce the concentrations of nitrogen dioxide within the area even further. For this reason, the properties on the north side of the A472 or properties in the wider vicinity have not been included within the demolition proposal.

Some of the comments provided in support of the disagreement with the feasibility outcomes (little faith in modelling methodology and the under representation of traffic flows) still acknowledged that demolition of the properties is an option to resolve the issue going forward, not only to reduce the air quality issues within the area but also for road safety purposes.

Of those people who agreed with the feasibility outcome (22), respondents chose to provide further justification for their answers. Respondents raised concerns for the resident's health and prolonged suffering of those living at the properties. Respondents also chose to mention that it was the option that would achieve compliance with the EU directive and acknowledge that demolition should not leave residents in financial hardship should the option be implemented.

Of those who wished to elaborate on their reasoning for disagreeing with 'Do minimum' it was felt that CCBC were not taking the air quality, or health of the residents seriously.

One respondent felt that 'Do minimum would be acceptable as an 'interim' option prior to working on a long-term resolution, whilst other respondents felt the Local Authority were absolving their responsibility to address the issue at hand.

Although 22 of 52 respondents agreed with demolition, a majority (49/53 respondents) disagreed with the do minimum option. In addition, whilst there are mixed views relating to demolition, it would appear that a number of respondents did feel that demolition would be a better option going forward than do minimum.