

**COFNOD O BENDERFYNIAD WEDI'I DDIRPRWYO GAN SWYDDOG  
RECORD OF DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION**

**Penderfyniad Allweddol | Key Decision** ✓

**PWNC | SUBJECT:** Publication of the 2023 Air Quality Progress Report

**DIBEN YR ADRODDIAD | PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:**

The purpose of this report is to approve the publication of the “2023 Air Quality Progress Report” for public consultation and to confirm the Director - Public Health, Protection & Community Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities will consider the outcome of the public consultation and should it be deemed appropriate, accept the 2023 Air Quality Progress Report.

**PENDERFYNIAD WEDI'I DDIRPRWYO | DELEGATED DECISION:**

The Council publishes the “2023 Air Quality Progress Report” for public consultation; and

The Director - Public Health, Protection & Community Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities, considers the outcome of the public consultation and if appropriate:

(a) accepts the ‘2023 Air Quality Progress Report’.



Louise Davies

02.10.23

**Llofnod y Prif Swyddog**  
Chief Officer Signature

**Enw (priflythrennau)**  
Name (Print Name)

**Dyddiad**  
Date

**Mae'r penderfyniad yn cael ei wneud yn unol ag Adran 15 o Ddeddf Llywodraeth Leol 2000 (Swyddogaethau'r Corff Gweithredol) ac yn y cylch gorchwyl sy wedi'i nodi yn Adran 5 o Ran 3 o Gyfansoddiad y Cyngor.**

The decision is taken in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government Act, 2000 (Executive Functions) and in the terms set out in Section 5 of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution.

**YMGYNGHORI | CONSULTATION**



02.10.23

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**LLOFNOD YR AELOD YMGYNGHOROL O'R CABINET**  
CONSULTEE CABINET MEMBER SIGNATURE

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**DYDDIAD | DATE**

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**LLOFNOD SWYDDOG YMGYNGHOROL**  
CONSULTEE OFFICER SIGNATURE

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**DYDDIAD | DATE**

**WILL THIS DECISION HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE WARD?**  
**A FYDD Y PENDERFYNIAD YMA'N CAEL EFFAITH AR Y WARD?**

**NA FYDD | NO**

**Any further comments/Need for Local Member to be informed:**  
**Unrhyw sylwadau pellach/Oes angen rhoi gwybod i'r Aelod Lleol?:**

**No**

**RHEOLAU'R WEITHDREFN GALW-I-MEWN | CALL IN PROCEDURE RULES.**

**A YW'R PENDERFYNIAD YN UN BRYN A HEB FOD YN DESTUN PROSES GALW-I-MEWN GAN Y PWYLLGOR TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU?:**

**IS THE DECISION DEEMED URGENT AND NOT SUBJECT TO CALL-IN BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:**

**NAC YDY | NO<sup>√</sup>**

**Rheswm dros fod yn fater brys | Reason for Urgency:**

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**Os yw'n cael ei ystyried yn fater brys - Ilofnod y Llywydd, y Dirprwy Lywydd neu Bennaeth y Gwasanaeth Cyflogedig yn cadarnhau cytundeb fod y penderfyniad arfaethedig yn rhesymol yn yr holl amgylchiadau iddo gael ei drin fel mater brys, yn unol â rheol gweithdrefn trosolwg a chraffu 17.2:**

*If deemed urgent* - signature of Presiding Member or Deputy Presiding Member or Head of Paid Service confirming agreement that the proposed decision is reasonable in all the circumstances for it being treated as a matter of urgency, in accordance with the overview and scrutiny procedure rule 17.2:

.....  
(Llywydd | *Presiding Member*)

.....  
(Dyddiad | *Date*)

**DS - Os yw hwn yn benderfyniad sy'n cael ei ail-ystyried yna does dim modd galw'r penderfyniad i mewn a bydd y penderfyniad yn dod i rym o'r dyddiad mae'r penderfyniad wedi'i lofnodi.**

**NB - If this is a reconsidered decision then the decision Cannot be Called In and the decision will take effect from the date the decision is signed.**

AT DDEFNYDD Y SWYDDFA YN UNIG | FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

DYDDIADAU CYHOEDDI A GWEITHREDU | PUBLICATION & IMPLEMENTATION DATES

CYHOEDDI | PUBLICATION

Cyhoeddi ar Wefan y Cyngor | Publication on the Council's Website:- \_\_\_\_03.10.23\_\_\_\_

DYDDIAD | DATE

GWEITHREDU'R PENDERFYNIAD | IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

**Nodwch:** Fydd y penderfyniad hwn ddim yn dod i rym nac yn cael ei weithredu'n llawn nes cyn pen 3 diwrnod gwaith ar ôl ei gyhoeddi. Nod hyn yw ei alluogi i gael ei "Alw i Mewn" yn unol â Rheol 17.1, Rheolau Gweithdrefn Trosolwg a Chraffu.

**Note:** This decision will not come into force and may not be implemented until the expiry of 3 clear working days after its publication to enable it to be the subject to the Call-In Procedure in Rule 17.1 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

Yn amodol ar y drefn "Galw i Mewn", caiff y penderfyniad ei roi ar waith ar / Subject to Call In the implementation date will be

\_\_\_\_09.10.23\_\_\_\_

DYDDIAD / DATE

WEDI'I GYMERADWYO I'W GYHOEDDI: ✓ | APPROVED FOR PUBLICATION :✓

**Rhagor o wybodaeth | Further Information:**

Cyfadran   Directorate:	Public Health, Protection & Community Services
Enw'r Person Cyswllt Contact Name:	Neil Pilliner
Swydd   Designation:	Environmental Protection & Housing Standards Manager
Rhif Ffôn   Telephone Number:	01443 425001



## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION**

#### **REPORT TO ACCOMPANY A DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES**

**2<sup>nd</sup> OCTOBER 2023**

#### **PUBLICATION OF THE 2023 AIR QUALITY PROGRESS REPORT**

**Author:** Neil Pilliner, Environmental Protection & Housing Standards Manager

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

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to publish the Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council 2023 Air Quality Progress Report, for public consultation.
- 1.2 Dependent upon the outcome of the public consultation:
  - a) to accept the 2023 Air Quality Progress Report; and
  - b) continue, as circumstances allow, to undertake the Local Authority's annual reporting duties in relation to the analysis of local air quality and review of local air quality management.
- 1.3 In accordance with the Local Authority's scheme of delegation, this report has been prepared to accompany the intended Officer decision of the Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services, as described below.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that:
  - a) The Local Authority publishes the 2023 Air Quality Progress Report for public consultation; and
  - b) The Director - Public Health, Protection & Community Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Public Health & Communities, considers the outcome of the public consultation and if appropriate:
    - i. accepts the '2023 Air Quality Progress Report'.

### **3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The Local Authority conducts regular monitoring and review of ambient outdoor air quality within its area to determine compliance to statutory Air Quality Objectives [AQOs], set by Welsh Government to protect public health. The 2023 Air Quality Progress Report provides the latest examination of this work as well as an assessment of possible future influences upon local air quality management and the

continued progress the Local Authority and its partners are making to advance the improvement of local air quality.

- 3.2 Local air quality will vary over time in response to changes to local, regional and national sources of pollutants as well as fluctuations in climate and weather. Yet it remains the case that the vast majority of Rhondda Cynon Taf experiences compliant air quality, which is likely to remain so into the future and potentially continue to improve. Only a limited number of small areas within Rhondda Cynon Taf associated with busy urban road junctions, the regional road network or specific local sources are likely to be vulnerable to non-compliant air quality.
- 3.3 Currently Rhondda Cynon Taf has sixteen Air Quality Management Areas [AQMAs], all of which are in respect of breaches of AQOs for Nitrogen Dioxide. These AQMAs are of limited size and are distributed throughout the County Borough. In recent times the majority of these AQMAs have experienced air quality that is compliant to the relevant AQOs for NO<sub>2</sub>. It is expected that detailed reviews of the AQMAs may occur over the next few years, to determine if compliance has been sustained within their geographical areas and whether each AQMA requires amendment or revocation.
- 3.4 In addition to reviewing understanding of local air quality, the Local Authority may also take actions that hopefully work towards improving air quality within an AQMA. To facilitate the implementation of cost-effective actions, the Local Authority has adopted Air Quality Action Plans [AQAPs] for each of its sixteen AQMAs.
- 3.5 To ensure effective prioritisation of resources, continued accountability, developing co-ordination with stakeholders, public participation and to satisfy its statutory obligations, it is necessary for the Local Authority to publish the 2023 Air Quality Progress Report for consultation.

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Evidence suggests that the lowest social economic groups are most likely to experience poor air quality and are likely to be the most adversely affected by it. As an example, Nitrogen Dioxide is a ubiquitous yet harmful gas that may reduce the quality and length of life of chronically exposed individuals. It is often most observed in urban areas or near strategic transport infrastructure. Within RCT, the emissions from motor vehicles are currently believed to be the largest local source of Nitrogen Dioxide. In recognition of its importance to public health, the “level of Nitrogen Dioxide in ambient air” has been set, by Welsh Government, as National Indicator No. 4.
- 4.2 Although the vast majority of the County Borough experiences relatively low levels of Nitrogen Dioxide, the reasons why it can become elevated in certain distinct locations can be very specific to the area concerned. Often the local topography & urban environment, volume, speed and composition of road traffic, as well as the management and the likelihood of chronic congestion can be important influences. Strategic arterial roads, for instance the A470 and the A4119, may have a demonstrable effect on both local and regional levels of air pollution.

- 4.3 Prior to 2020, overall reductions in national emission inventories of certain air pollutants as well as the adoption of “newer vehicles subject to stricter emissions standards” and certain local transport network improvements may have, in part, helped to sustain a more recent trend of reducing levels of Nitrogen Dioxide. During 2020, COVID-19 related disruption likely brought about additional unprecedented reductions in the levels of Nitrogen Dioxide, as many local and regional sources of Nitrogen Dioxide were muted during this period.
- 4.4 However, since 2020 levels of Nitrogen Dioxide have increased since the very low levels observed in 2020, as the impact of COVID-19 related disruption diminished. Nonetheless, levels of Nitrogen Dioxide continue to remain lower than pre 2020 observations, with the majority of AQMAs still experiencing levels of Nitrogen Dioxide compliant with the relevant AQOs for Nitrogen Dioxide.
- 4.5 Only the Cymmer, Ferndale, Mountain Ash Town Centre, Nightingales Bush, Pontypridd Town Centre and Tylorstown AQMAs appear likely to potentially remain non-compliant into the medium-term, notwithstanding future targeted improvement actions. The remaining majority of AQMAs are expected to become compliant in the near-term and as such likely to be subject to detailed reviews over the next few years to determine if compliance has been sustained within their geographical areas and whether each of these AQMA requires amendment or revocation.
- 4.6 There is an aspiration that all communities within Rhondda Cynon Taf will experience low levels of Nitrogen Dioxide that, at the least, are compliant with the relevant AQOs. In working with its partners, the Local Authority has drawn upon expertise and analysis to help identify those communities which may benefit the most from an active approach to improve local air quality. This approach has highlighted the prioritisation of actions targeted at mid Rhondda (Cymmer, Ferndale and Tylorstown) and at Mountain Ash as being of particular importance.
- 4.7 It is acknowledged that when working towards achieving compliance to an AQO within an AQMA, it may be necessary to draw upon a range of both national and local actions. Currently the Local Authority has adopted AQAPs that identify and facilitate bespoke targeted measures that could be utilised to work towards achieving compliance within the associated AQMA.
- 4.8 For example, actions to improve active travel routes, informing behavioural transport change so as to promote sustainable travel, supporting the EV transition, modifying existing traffic management and enhancement of targeted green infrastructure all feature significantly within the adopted AQAPs.
- 4.9 For many AQMAs, where compliance is expected to be achieved in the near-term, the AQAPs may act as a reserve and are only likely to be progressed if expectations around local air quality aren't met. However, for some AQMAs, where action may be necessary to achieve compliance as quickly as reasonably possible, it is expected that their AQAPs may needed to be implemented to further this goal.
- 4.10 Many issues underlining poor air quality are also significant in the broader Active Travel, Climate Change, Environmental Noise and Biodiversity Agendas. Effective



solutions to improve air quality can supplement efforts in tackling climate change and environmental noise. Close integration with the Active Travel Agenda, Climate Change Agenda and Noise Action Plan Priority Areas will continue to be aspired to in future local air quality management.

- 4.11 A number of actions to improve air quality have been implemented in the recent past. These include the continued construction of the A4119 Coed Ely Dualling Scheme and South Wales Metro Infrastructure, installation of more than seventy dedicated electrical vehicle charging points at thirty-one public car parks, free-for-all bus travel within the County Borough during March, subsidised (£1 max fare) travel schemes during part of the summer of 2023 and multimillion pound phased works to improve a number of active travel routes
- 4.12 The progression of the [Environment \(Air Quality and Soundscapes\) \(Wales\) Bill](#), could have implications as to how the Local Authority performs certain local air quality management duties into the future. This may require future decision-making to consider the need for the reappraisal of priorities and/or resources as well as enhanced collaborative working arrangements.
- 4.13 Whilst acknowledging significant future resource uncertainty and should circumstances allow, the Local Authority will continue to support the continuity of its local air quality management reporting by working towards producing an air quality progress report in 2024.

## **5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The 2023 Air Quality Progress Report does not stipulate any actions or a course of conduct that would have equality and diversity implications per se. An Equality Impact Assessment is not necessary at this time.

## **6. CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 To discharge its statutory responsibilities, the Local Authority will consult upon the 2023 Air Quality Progress Report with the public and other statutory consultees as prescribed by Schedule 11 of the Environmental Act 1995; including the Welsh Government who will peer review its findings.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

- 7.1 The 2023 Air Quality Progress Report recommends continuing the current level of provision with regards local air quality monitoring and analysis. This is estimated to have a revenue cost (but not staff and on-costs) of approximately £23,500 per year<sup>1</sup>.
- 7.2 Several significant pieces of monitoring equipment utilised by the Local Authority have been in use for more than fifteen years and are approaching their end of life. The Local Authority is not able, at this time, to commit to renewing current monitoring provisions. Should future capital expenditure be required to replace failed

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<sup>1</sup> Based upon estimate of 2022 direct expenditure.

equipment or if ongoing costs or resourcing scarcity impact other key services provided by the Department then the Local Authority may determine to revise its current air quality monitoring and review provisions.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

- 8.1 Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council is under a legal obligation, in accordance with Section 82(1) of the Environment Act 1995 [the Act], to review local air quality within its area and make an assessment of likely compliance to the relevant statutory AQOs, as set in regulations.
- 8.2 To maintain consistency with statutory guidance<sup>2</sup> and the principles and working practices necessary to facilitate the goals of the Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the 2023 Air Quality Progress Report has been compiled in accordance with the Welsh Government issued reporting template for local air quality management.
- 8.3 The Local Authority is also under a legal obligation, in accordance with Section 84(2) of the Act, to adopt appropriate AQAPs for each of the AQMAs. Statutory guidance also requires that these AQAPs are regularly reviewed, at least every five years, and revised where necessary. The Local Authority is not currently under a legal obligation to achieve compliance to an AQO or fully implement an AQAP immediately. However, the Local Authority is required to demonstrate annually its progress towards implementing the AQAPs and, in doing so, achieving compliance to the AQOs.
- 8.4 Under Section 85 of the Act, the Senedd may compel the Local Authority to act in a certain way in regard to local air quality. Statutory guidance has clarified that such a direction will be issued to instruct the Local Authority to undertake its local air quality management duties, including declaring, amending or revoking an AQMA or AQAP should Welsh Government feel it necessary to do so.
- 8.5 Local air quality management duties and AQOs are an obligation derived from United Kingdom primary legislation.

## **9. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT**

- 9.1 Both mortality and morbidity factors associated with poor air quality have increased in importance, as understanding of the health impact of air quality has improved. This includes a greater appreciation of the accumulative impacts poor air quality can have on deprived communities affected by higher rates of poor health.
- 9.2 In regard to ‘People: Independent, Healthy & Successful’ within the Making a Difference, The Council’s Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024, local air quality management may directly bring about improved health outcomes for local communities. This will be achieved by improving the quality of air these communities may regularly experience, as well as addressing the perceptions of poor air quality and its effect on local amenity.

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<sup>2</sup> Welsh Government, Local Air Quality Policy Guidance for Wales LAQM.PG(17)(W), 2017

- 9.3 In regard to ‘Places: Where people are proud to live, work and play’ within the Making a Difference, The Council’s Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024, air quality is recognised as an important element of this Objective with its highlighted link to transportation and green infrastructure. Many of the actions within adopted AQAPs draw up both these themes and, should they be implemented, would support the efforts to achieve this Corporate Objective. For instance, measures to increase and support public transport and resultant community connectivity, can have a driving effect for local and regional employment and leisure opportunities.
- 9.4 In regard to ‘Prosperity: People and business are innovative, entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper’ within the Making a Difference, The Council’s Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024, local air quality management may indirectly improve local amenity, which in turn can support greater desirability and investment within the area. In addition, actions within adopted AQAPs are likely to attempt to harness innovation and best practice to bring about cost-effective air quality improvement.
- 9.5 Local air quality management statutory guidance incorporates the principles and ways of working associated within the Well-being of Future Generations Act. By fully abiding by this guidance and utilising a method that acknowledges and promotes sustainable multi-agenda delivery, the 2023 Air Quality Progress Report furthers the Local Authority delivery of the Future Generations agenda.

**10. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS (please specify)**

- 10.1 The 2023 Air Quality Progress Report is a strategic report, as it examines and reports upon air quality, and the factors that may influence it, throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf. However, for a variety of reasons, specific parts of Rhondda Cynon Taf may be more at risk from elevated levels and the associated impacts of air quality.
- 10.2 The following wards currently contain one or more Air Quality Management Areas and subject to, previously adopted, associated Air Quality Action Plans:
- Aberdare East ED (Aberdare Town Centre AQMA)
  - Brynna & Llanharan ED (Llanharan AQMA)
  - Church Village ED (Church Village AQMA)
  - Cilfynydd ED (Cilfynydd AQMA)
  - Cymmer ED (Cymmer AQMA)
  - Ferndale & Maerdy ED (Ferndale AQMA)
  - Llwyn-y-pia ED (Llwynypia AQMA)
  - Mountain Ash ED (Mountain Ash Town Centre AQMA)
  - Pontyclun East ED (Mwyndy AQMA)
  - Pontypridd Town ED (Pontypridd Town Centre AQMA)
  - Taff’s Well ED (Nantgarw AQMA)
  - Trallwng ED (Nightingales Bush AQMA)
  - Treforest ED (Broadway & Nightingales Bush & Treforest AQMAs)
  - Tonyrefail East ED (Tonyrefail AQMA)
  - Tylorstown and Ynyshir ED (Tylorstown AQMA)

## **11. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 The Executive Summary of the 2023 Air Quality Progress Report and supporting literature for the public consultation (including RCTCBC webpage) will be provided in Welsh and English, with any request for additional translation into Welsh would also be supported and engagement in Welsh will be welcomed.
- 11.2 The 2023 Air Quality Progress Report and its findings is not expected to adversely impact the delivery or compliance to Welsh language requirements.

## **12. CONCLUSION**

- 12.1 Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council has produced the 2023 Air Quality Progress Report and will now publish its findings for public dissemination and comment.
- 12.2 The Local Authority has identified that it is necessary, subject to the outcome of public consultation, to accept the assessment of local air quality and the review of actions, developments and policies, which may affect local air quality management.
- 12.3 To comply with statutory obligations and promote understanding of the situation, a comprehensive consultation will be undertaken. The responses received, including that from the Welsh Government, will inform any final decision and if necessary, this matter will be re-examined.



**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH LOCAL AUTHORITY**

**DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION**

**2<sup>nd</sup> OCTOBER 2023**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION & COMMUNITY SERVICES**

**PUBLICATION OF THE 2023 AIR QUALITY PROGRESS REPORT**

**Officer to Contact:**

Neil Pilliner, Environmental Protection & Housing Standards Manager - 01443 425001

**Other Information:**

2023 Air Quality Progress Report provided on request.

**Relevant Scrutiny Committee**

Community Services Scrutiny