

COFNOD O BENDERFYNIAD WEDI'I DDIRPRWYO GAN SWYDDOG

RECORD OF KEY OFFICER DELEGATED DECISION

Penderfyniad Allweddol | Key Decision ✓

Mae'r Penderfyniad Wedi'i Ddirprwyo hwn wedi'i bennu yn 'Benderfyniad Allweddol' gan ei fod yn debygol o:

This Delegated Decision has been established as a 'Key Decision' as it is likely:

a) arwain at y Cyngor yn ysgwyddo gwariant sylweddol neu wneud arbedion sylweddol;
to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant;

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neu / or:

b) fod yn arwyddocaol o ran sut mae'n effeithio ar gymunedau sy'n byw neu'n gweithio mewn ardal sy'n cynnwys dwy etholaeth neu adran etholiadol neu ragor.
to be significant in terms of its effects on Communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral wards.

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c) Eraill / Other:

PWNC | SUBJECT: Publication of the 2025 Air Quality Progress Report

DIBEN YR ADRODDIAD | PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:

The purpose of this report is to approve the publication of the "2025 Air Quality Progress Report" for public consultation and to confirm the Director Public Health, Protection & Community Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities will consider the outcome of the public consultation, and should it be deemed appropriate, accept the 2025 Air Quality Progress Report, its findings and recommendations.

PENDERFYNIAD WEDI'I DDIRPRWYO | DELEGATED DECISION:

- a) Approval to publicise the 2025 Air Quality Progress Report for public consultation.
- b) That the Director Public Health, Protection & Community Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities considers the outcome of the public consultation and if appropriate:
 - a) Accepts the '2025 Air Quality Progress Report'.
 - b) Continue, as resources allow, to undertake the Local Authority's annual reporting duties in relation to the assessment of local air quality and its management.



Llofnod y Prif Swyddog
Chief Officer Signature

Louise Davies

Enw (priflythrennau)
Name (Print Name)


7th October 2025

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

	<p>Cabinet Member for Communities</p>	<p>07.10.25</p>
<p>LLOFNOD YR YMGYNGHOROL O'R CABINET CONSULTEE CABINET MEMBER SIGNATURE</p>	<p>ENW A SWYDD NAME AND DESIGNATION</p>	<p>DYDDIAD DATE</p>

<p>LLOFNODSWYDDOG YMGYNGHOROL CONSULTEE OFFICER SIGNATURE</p>	<p>ENW A SWYDD NAME AND DESIGNATION</p>	<p>DYDDIAD DATE</p>

WILL THIS DECISION HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE WARD?

A FYDD Y PENDERFYNIAD YMA’N CAEL EFFAITH AR Y WARD?

~~BYDD | YES~~

NA FYDD | NO

Any further comments/Need for Local Member to be informed?:

Unrhyw sylwadau pellach/Oes angen rhoi gwybod i’r Aelod Lleol?:

This decision recognises the improved air quality within 10 wards and enables the Local Authority to maintain its focus on the 6 remaining areas that may experience ongoing challenges to achieving sustainable compliance to relevant Air Quality Objectives. Nonetheless, the Local Authority will, at present, maintain its current assessment capabilities within those areas that, as a consequence of this decision, will no longer be included within an Air Quality Management Area whilst also continuing to aspire to improve air quality throughout all its area.

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:

~~YDY | YES~~

NAC YDY | NO

Rheswm dros fod yn fater brys | Reason for Urgency:

.....
Os yw'n cael ei ystyried yn fater brys - llofnod y Llywydd, y Dirprwy Llywydd 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:- 08-10-25

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

14-10-25

DYDDIAD / DATE

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



Rhagor o wybodaeth | Further Information:

Cyfadrn 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

PUBLICATION OF THE 2025 AIR QUALITY PROGRESS REPORT

7th OCTOBER 2025

REPORT OF DIRECTOR PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Author(s): 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 2025 Air Quality Progress Report, for public consultation and, dependent upon the outcome of the public consultation, to accept the 2025 Air Quality Progress Report, its findings and recommendations.
- 1.2 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 To publish the 2025 Air Quality Progress Report for public consultation.
- 2.2 Dependent upon the outcome of public consultation, to adopt the findings and recommendations of the 2025 Air Quality Progress Report.
- 2.3 Continue, as resources allow, to undertake the Local Authority's annual reporting duties in relation to the assessment of local air quality and its management.

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 2025 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 The vast majority of Rhondda Cynon Taf is understood to experience compliant air quality, which is likely to remain so into the future. With the expectation that air quality may continue to marginally improve into the near future and, with the gradual

adoption of new transport technologies, there is the potential for further sustained improvement in the longer-term.

- 3.3 Currently Rhondda Cynon Taf has six 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 associated with specific parts of busy urban local roads or the regional trunk road network.
- 3.4 In addition to reviewing understanding of local air quality, the Local Authority can 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 already adopted Air Quality Action Plans [AQAPs] for each of its current 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 2025 Air Quality Progress Report for consultation.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Within the County Borough, 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, with combustion-engine motor vehicles currently representing the most significant local emission source. 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. 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, may have a demonstrable effect on both local and regional levels of air pollution.
- 4.3 For more than a decade, a consistent improving trend in nitrogen dioxide throughout most parts of the County Borough reinforces the understanding that the vast majority of Rhondda Cynon Taf is expected to continue to show levels of nitrogen dioxide that are well within compliance to the relevant AQOs for nitrogen dioxide. In 2024, levels of nitrogen dioxide continued to improve, after a period of stability since 2020. With the expectation that levels of nitrogen dioxide may continue to marginally improve into the near future and with the hope that the gradual adoption of new transport technologies will significantly spur greater improvement in the longer-term future.

- 4.4 There are localised areas within Rhondda Cynon Taf which have observed elevated levels of nitrogen dioxide, that were on occasion above or at risk of being above the relevant AQOs for nitrogen dioxide, and as such have been included within six current AQMAs. The Cymmer, Ferndale, Mt Ash Town Centre, Nightingales Bush, Pontypridd Town Centre and Tylorstown AQMAs, although having experienced significant improvement in recent years, are likely to potentially remain at risk of being non-compliant to the annual AQO for nitrogen dioxide into the near-term whilst future improvements are expected to continue to manifest.
- 4.5 In addition to nitrogen dioxide, Particulate Matter has also been assessed. Particulate Matter is comprised of everything within the outside air that is not a gas. It can consist of a huge variety of chemical compounds and materials and, due to their often small size, they can have the potential to impact human health. PM₁₀ is a particular size of Particulate Matter that has relevant AQOs. In general, levels of PM₁₀ within the County Borough are expected to be well within compliance to these AQOs. The monitoring of PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} has been undertaken by the Local Authority at Garth Avenue, Glyncoch. Analysis of the results underlies the likely significant influences of various operations at Craig Yr Hesg Quarry upon local air quality. Although, at present the location likely remains compliant to the current AQOs for PM₁₀ the continuation of monitoring is necessary to ensure any future changes, which could have the potential to impact on the local prevalence of PM₁₀, can be considered. For information, the Local Authority monitors PM_{2.5} but does not carry out the statutory assessment of PM_{2.5}, this is undertaken by Welsh Government.
- 4.6 There is an aspiration that all communities within Rhondda Cynon Taf will experience low levels of air pollution 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 mid Rhondda (Cymmer, Ferndale and Tylorstown) and at Mountain Ash as likely to benefit the most from a targeted approach to improve local air quality
- 4.7 The Local Authority continues, where possible, to implement or influence the implementation of actions within its AQAPs as well as other actions that may more generally improve local air quality. Improvement actions undertaken recently include:
- Progression of the South Wales Metro and introduction of 'tap and go' ticketing
 - Completion of the A4119 Coed Ely Dualling Scheme.
 - Installation of additional dedicated electrical vehicle charging points at public car parks.
 - Subsidised (£1.50 max fare) bus travel within Rhondda Cynon Taf during certain parts of the year as well as defined free post-16 to 19 education travel.
 - Progressing a multi-million pound phased works programme to upgrade and improve a number of active travel routes.
 - Installing partial barriers using green infrastructure (hedging and trees) at Mountain Ash Comprehensive School.

- 4.8 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.
- 4.9 The ascent of the Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Act 2025, could have implications as to how the Local Authority performs certain local air quality management duties. It is possible statutory guidance from Welsh Government may become available in the near-future that may require future decision-making to consider the need for the reappraisal of priorities and/or resources as well as enhanced collaborative working arrangements.
- 4.10 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 2026.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 5.1 The 2025 Air Quality Progress Report, its findings and recommendations is not considered a “strategic decision”, due to its technical basis and limited scope, albeit it’s publication and outcomes do relate to specific statutory duties held by the Local Authority. Neither is an Equality Impact Assessment believed necessary at this time as the 2025 Air Quality Progress Report does not stipulate any actions or a course of conduct that would have direct equality and diversity implications per se. Certain consequential actions associated with it, for instance the publication of environmental information, will likely require appropriate adjustment in the normal course of ensuing reasonable access and the ability for all to engage.
- 5.2 It is acknowledged that improvements to air quality may have direct socio-economic impact by making a location more economically desirable but perhaps more significant is the indirect benefit of potentially improving the health of those disadvantaged. Conversely, failure to work towards achieving compliance to relevant AQOs or to maintain effective cross-agenda working practices, could potentially slow desired sustainable development and the attainment of corporate goals and priorities.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The 2025 Air Quality Progress Report is primarily a technical report that is likely to be of limited general interest. As such the 2025 Air Quality Progress Report is not expected to have any negative implications as to the promotion of the Welsh Language. However, proactive translation of summary information which could have a wider audience will be undertaken, for instance a bilingual Executive Summary providing prominence to the Welsh Language.

- 6.2 The Local Authority will also continue to encourage and, where it can, support its partners in delivering air quality related services that provide prominence to the Welsh Language. This may help to further support the use of the Welsh Language in this specific setting.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The 2025 Air Quality Progress Report recommends continuing the current level of provision with regards to local air quality monitoring and analysis in pursuit of the Local Authority's Air Quality Management Duty, and these costs can be met from existing budget.
- 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 required capital funding has been agreed to replace the air quality monitoring equipment when the need arises in the future.

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 and the principles and working practices necessary to facilitate the goals of the Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the 2025 Air Quality Progress Report has been compiled in accordance with the Welsh Government issued reporting template for local air quality management.
- 8.3 Under Section 85 of the Act, the Welsh Government 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 should Welsh Government feel it necessary to do so.
- 8.4 Local air quality management duties and AQOs are an obligation derived from United Kingdom primary legislation.

9. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 9.1 To discharge its statutory responsibilities, the Local Authority will consult upon the 2025 Air Quality Progress Report, its findings and recommendations 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 the Report.

10. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 10.1 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.
- 10.2 The quality of air that we breathe is important to creating a healthier Wales and it is also inherently linked either directly or indirectly to a Prosperous Wales, as well as a number of other agendas which may influence Equality, Resilience and Global Responsibility. As a result, the quality of local air and its improvement, can have significant relevance to the Council's pursuit of Wales Seven Well-being Goals.
- 10.3 The importance of local Air Quality is reflected within the Council's 'Making a Difference Corporate Plan 2025 – 2030'. The well-being objective "Work and Business" references the priority of a "well connected County Borough" and in this pursuit recognises the need to support active and sustainable travel options, partly due to its positive impact upon local air quality. Within the "Nature and the Environment" well-being objective, the priority "protecting and enhancing the natural environment" makes specific reference to "improving air quality through traffic management" and other Council actions, with the associated outcome being "improved air quality across the County Borough".
- 10.4 Continued assessment and periodic review as well as sustaining a targeted approach to air quality improvement, recognises where improvements have been made and where further work may be necessary. This supports **long-term working**, as trends in local air quality may only be fully understood over years and where it can take a considerable period of time for some interventions to be fully appreciated. It also contributes to the **integrated working** of several wide-ranging but often interrelated agendas, including transport, active and sustainable travel, climate change and biodiversity. Correspondingly maintaining local air quality expertise and understanding can help to support **collaboration** between agendas and a 'win-win' approach to service delivery. For instance, measures to increase and support active and sustainable travel resulting in greater community connectivity, can directly improve air quality as well as being a sustainable driving force for local and regional employment and leisure opportunities.
- 10.5 Air quality and its impacts can be highly influenced by local circumstances which change over time, requiring its understanding to be frequently reappraised. Individuals, communities, developers, stakeholders and partner organisation often value reliable and robust information about air quality. By providing continuity to air quality assessment and undertaking statutory consultation upon it, it supports widescale **involvement** which facilitates valuable input to the understanding of local air quality, prior to final decision making. It also helps support more effective interventions that are more widely accepted and may aspire to efficiently **prevent** poorer air quality, that could otherwise be linked to future development.

- 10.6 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 2025 Air Quality Progress Report furthers the Local Authority delivery of the Future Generations agenda.
- 10.7 Local air quality management and its successful delivery is also recognised as a theme within the 'Clean Air Plan for Wales: Healthy Air, Healthy Wales', as issued by Welsh Government, and its pursuit of improved air quality throughout all parts of Wales.

11. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS (please specify)

- 11.1 The 2025 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 the County Borough may be more at risk from elevated levels of air pollution and the associated impacts of air quality.
- 11.2 The following Electoral Divisions (ED) currently contain one or more AQMA's and subject to, previously adopted, associated AQAPs:
- Cymmer ED (Cymmer AQMA).
 - Ferndale & Maerdy ED (Ferndale AQMA).
 - Mountain Ash ED (Mountain Ash Town Centre AQMA).
 - Pontypridd Town ED (Pontypridd Town Centre AQMA).
 - Trallwng ED & Treforest ED (Nightingales Bush AQMA).
 - Tylorstown and Ynyshir ED (Tylorstown AQMA).

12. CONCLUSION

- 12.1 Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council has produced the 2025 Air Quality Progress Report for public dissemination and comment.
- 12.2 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 may be re-examined.
- 12.3 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.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION

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

PUBLICATION OF THE 2025 AIR QUALITY PROGRESS REPORT

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Community Services Scrutiny Committee

Background Papers

2025 Air Quality Progress Report

Officer to contact

Neil Pilliner, Environmental Protection & Housing Standards Manager