
**LOCAL AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT – CARDIFF COUNCIL AIR QUALITY
ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2023: PERFORMANCE MONITORING
SCRUTINY**

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members with background information to aid scrutiny of the report to Cabinet regarding Cardiff Council's Local Air Quality Annual Progress Report, which is due to be considered by Cabinet.

Scope of the Scrutiny

2. At their meeting on 14 December 2023, the Cabinet will consider a report entitled 'Cardiff Council 2023 Air Quality Progress Report' and notes the reason for the report as:
 - Note and accept the monitored results gathered in 2022 and approve the 2023 Annual Progress Report (as attached as Appendix A1) for submission to Welsh Government for approval by the 31st of December 2023.
3. During this scrutiny, Members have the opportunity to explore:
 - The progress and performance of the Council in relation to the national air quality objectives Wales;¹
 - The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on air quality in Cardiff;
 - The recommendations to Cabinet.

Background

4. Scientific evidence shows that increased risk of heart disease, strokes, respiratory illness and other diseases that reduce life expectancy can be caused by that poor air quality. Therefore, air quality is the biggest environmental risk to public health

¹ [Standards and Objectives | Air Quality In Wales \(gov.wales\)5778](https://gov.wales/standards-and-objectives-air-quality-in-wales)

in the UK ², and Public Health Wales have stated that it is their greatest concern after smoking, and in Wales it is estimated that 1,100 deaths could have been avoided that are linked to NO₂ exposure each year, based on 2011-12 data.

5. The main causes of poor air quality are particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) which are mostly from vehicle emissions.
6. The estimated number of avoidable deaths based on the latest available information from Public Health Wales (2017) for the total number of all cause non-accidental deaths due to long-term mortality attributable to air pollution as between 178 - 227 deaths.
7. There is also a disproportionate impact on vulnerable population groups and dependant on living conditions/location.
8. Local authorities have a statutory duty under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 & Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland 2007 to manage local air quality. Under Section 82 of the Environment Act 1995 the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) process places an obligation on all local authorities to regularly review and assess air quality in their areas, and to determine whether or not air quality objectives are likely to be achieved.
9. The air quality objectives applicable to LAQM in Wales are set out in the Air Quality (Wales) Regulations 2000, No. 1940 (Wales 138) and Air Quality (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2002, No 3182 (Wales 298).
10. *Where the air quality reviews indicate that the air quality objectives may not be met, the local authority is required to designate an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). Action must then be taken to provide an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) for each identified AQMA to ensure that air quality in the identified area improves.*
11. *In 2018, Shared Regulatory Services and Cardiff Council developed a citywide Clean Air Strategy & Action Plan (CASAP) for Cardiff. The strategy coincides with Cardiff's Capital Ambition report and helps to implement and deliver the priorities outlined in the Ambition report with an overarching aim to improve air quality to protect and improve public health in Cardiff.*

² Estimating local mortality burdens associated with particulate air pollution', Public Health England, (2014)

12. The current Air Quality Annual Progress Report for the Council provides details on the ratified data for air quality monitoring undertaken in 2022 within the Cardiff Council area. The report includes monitoring results for the previous calendar year, a progress report on action plan implementation and an update on any new policies or developments likely to affect local air quality.
13. Following the Direction received from the Welsh Government in 2020 to address concerns around Castle Street and the submission of a [Full Business Case](#), a number of measures were put in place to improve the local air quality including the following which were due to start before the COVID pandemic in 2020:
- Implementation of Electric Buses – 36 Electric Buses;
 - Bus Retro Fitting Programme;
 - Taxi Mitigation Scheme; and
 - City Centre Transportation Improvements.
14. The City Centre North scheme was constructed on an interim basis following Cabinet approval in June 2021, with the understanding that this would be reviewed following full post COVID recovery. During this time regular monitoring has taken place to ensure air quality compliance. The results for 2022 detailed that compliance was achieved with concentrations of 33.8 µg/m³ recorded.
15. To ensure a permanent solution was introduced a further Directive was issued in September 2022 and assessments and modelling undertaken into the effectiveness of the interim scheme and alternative solutions.
16. In April 2023 Cabinet considered the proposed options and supported the existing scheme being made permanent.
17. A Final Plan for the scheme was submitted to Welsh Government following their initial approval in August 2023 and final approval is awaited.

Structure of the Papers

18. The draft report to Cabinet is attached at **Appendix A** with the 2022 Annual Air Quality Progress Report attached at **Appendix A1**
19. The Progress Report consists of the following sections:

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20. A full **Table of Contents** can be found on **Page xi** of the Progress Report.

Issues identified in the Cabinet Report

21. The Cabinet report notes that in 2021 following the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions that air quality data collection continued and normal monitoring resumed.

22. **Point 22** of the Cabinet report identifies four Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) declared across Cardiff which have all been declared due to exceedances of the annual mean NO₂ Air Quality Standard (40 µg/m³), known to be derived from road transport. These areas are:

- **Cardiff City Centre AQMA** (declared 1/4/13 to incorporate Westgate Street; formerly St Marys St AQMA);
- **Ely Bridge AQMA** (declared 1/2/07);
- **Stephenson Court AQMA** (declared 1/ 12/10); and
- **Llandaff AQMA** (declared 1/4/13).

23. According to the Cabinet report, **points 24 – 33**, Cardiff had four automatic air quality monitoring sites in 2021, located at Frederick Street in the City Centre, Richard's Terrace, just off Newport Road, Castle Street³ and Lakeside Primary School. **The results obtained at 3 of these sites, excluding Lakeside (see point 30 of the Cabinet report) demonstrate compliance with the national air**

³ Installed late summer 2020 and operational from October 2020

quality objectives for both NO₂ and PM₁₀ which are set at 40 µg/m³ as an annual average.

24. **Points 33** – notes information and the indicative monitoring data (**Table 2**) on four additional air monitors sensors located across Cardiff in 2022 and, namely:

- **Lower Cathedral Road**
- **North Road**
- **Lansdowne Road, Canton and**
- **Llandaff**

25. However, this has reduced from seven due to operational issues.

26. The installation of an additional 47 real time analyses is noted in **point 32**, with further details provided in **point 69**

27. Further to this, points **34 – 38** state that **out of the 135** Cardiff Council operated specifically allocated non automatic monitoring sites in Cardiff which monitor levels of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), **none of them recorded exceedances of the annual average objective set for NO₂ (40 µg/m³).**

28. As noted at **point 36**, the concentrations recorded for 2022 are suggestive that air pollution levels across Cardiff have improved and transport patterns are now more stable following previous COVID restrictions

29. **Point 37** comments that the Council will continue to work to reduce air pollution as there is no defined safe level when describing air quality

30. **City Centre AQMA – Point 38 / Figure 1** – Show that air quality has decrease slightly sites, following the re-opening of Castle Street, however NO₂ levels remain below the annual objective limit of 40 µg/m³.

31. **Ely Bridge AQMA - Point 39 / Figure 2** - Sites 117, 192 & 218 recorded annual average levels of NO₂ below the annual objective limit of 40 µg/m³.

32. **Llandaff AQMA – Point 40 - 44 / Figure 3** - Site 212, in 2019 had an annual average reading of 41.3 µg/m³. For 2020, it recorded a concentration of 33 µg/m³, a reduction of 20%. However, this has now increased in 2021 to 37 µg/m³, an increase of 4%, as the number of cars on the road has increased after covid restrictions are lifted In 2022 the concentrations at this location have increased

again, taking them very close to the annual objective limit, and as a consequence, further actions will be required to ensure air quality levels improve.

33. **Stephenson Court, Newport Rd, AQMA – point 45 / Figure 4** - No monitoring sites within the Stephenson Court AQMA (Sites, 81, 131 & 198) recorded concentrations $>30 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.

34. The work in relation to the introduction of Road User Charging is noted in **point 56**, and the impact that this policy change will have on air quality.

35. **Points 57-63** of the Cabinet report provides detail of the **School Streets Pilot Project (2019)** which involves the temporary closure of road links surrounding an initial 6 specific schools in Cardiff, selected following an assessment and concerns raised, with the idea to encourage parents, staff and children to adopt an alternative mode of travel. The results obtained from each of the school sites indicated **full compliance with the NO₂ annual average objective of 40 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ at all sites**, namely:

- Whitchurch High Lower;
- Ysgol Melin Gruffydd;
- Peter Lea Primary;
- Llandaff Church in Wales Primary;
- Pencaerau School; and
- Lansdowne Primary.

36. The air quality in the proximity of 17 schools is currently being monitored.

37. **Cardiff Council Clean Air Plan: Response to the Welsh Government Direction – points 64 and 66** note that following previous temporary work undertaken to improve air quality on **Castle Street** further legal direction under part IV of the Environment act 1995 was issued to the Council by the Welsh Government, requiring the need for maintained compliance with NO₂ limits.

38. Assessments and modelling work was undertaken in 2022 to inform options to improve the air quality and a report taken to Cabinet in April 2023. The Cabinet supported the original scheme and a final plan was submitted to Welsh Government, final approval for the interim scheme to be made permanent is awaited.

39. In January 2022 an EV Taxi Scheme (**point 67**) was launched by the Council in partnership with a local vehicle hire company has acquired five fully electric wheelchair accessible Dynamo Hackney Carriage Taxis, further work needs to be done to incentivise the scheme take up, to support this a report was recently considered by the Licensing Authority in relation to lifting the moratorium on new hackney carriage plates, on the condition that any new plates are issues to EV, wheel chair accessible or Euro 6 emission standards or better.
40. Establishing a real-time city-wide air quality monitoring network (**points 69 - 71**) – was supported by the fitting of an additional 47 indicative real time monitors across the city' s four AQMA's and nears areas of concern i.e., schools and health centres. The results for 2023 monitoring will be published in Annual Monitoring Report in December 2024

Proposed Recommendations to Cabinet

41. The report to Cabinet contains the following recommendations:

- To note and accept the monitored results gathered in 2022 and approve the 2023 Annual Progress Report (as attached at Appendix A1) for submission to Welsh Government for approval by 31st December 2023.

Financial Implications

42. The financial implications noted in **points 73 -77** relate to the SRS's existing budget to carry out air quality monitoring across the city.

43. Also noted is the funding for the permanent Castle Street scheme which is awaiting approval from Welsh Government.

44. A full review of the Clean Air Strategy and Action Plan following the completion of the Castle Street Scheme, and any actions identified to address the decreasing air quality in the Llandaff AQMA

Legal Implications

45. The legal implications noted in **points 78 – 80** relate to the Air Quality Legal Direction and the legislative framework for decision making.

46. The duties in relation to Equalities is noted in **points 81 – 83**

47. A 'standard' response regarding the Well Being of Future Generations is noted in **points 84 - 86.**

HR Implications

48. None noted in **point 88.**

Property Implications

49. None noted in **point 89.**

Previous Scrutiny

50. The Environmental Scrutiny Committee has been very involved in reviewing the work being undertaken by the Council to improve air quality in the city. Pre decision and update reports were received in March 2018 and March 2019 respectively as well as a Task and Finish Group inquiry in 2017/18 titled 'Improving Cardiff's Air Quality'. The inquiry considered a range of aspects that have an impact on Cardiff's air quality and consulted with a number of industry experts. The report made 31 recommendations and was presented to Cabinet on the 20th September 2018, a response to which was presented to the Scrutiny Committee in January 2020⁴, and resulted in further observations and comments via the Chair's letter⁵.

51. In June 2019, the Committee received and provided comment on a pre-decision item titled 'Air Quality Feasibility Study Final Plan - Full Business Case & City Centre Transport Improvements'⁶ and more recently, in June 2021, a further pre-decision report on City Centre Next Steps – Castle Street and City Centre East (Phase 1 + Canal).

52. The Committee has also examined the subject of air quality during scrutiny of associated topics and Council strategies such as One Planet Cardiff, Active Travel, Cardiff Bus Strategy and the Cardiff Transport White Paper.

⁴ [Agenda item - Cabinet Response to the Environmental Scrutiny Committee Report Titled 'Improving Cardiff's Air Quality' : City of Cardiff Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

⁵ [\(Public Pack\)Correspondence Following Committee Meeting Agenda Supplement for Environmental Scrutiny Committee, 21/01/2020 16:30 \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

⁶ [\(Public Pack\)Correspondence Following the Committee Meeting Agenda Supplement for Environmental Scrutiny Committee, 12/06/2019 16:30 \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

53. Following the Committees scrutiny of the annual monitoring report in December 2022, a letter was sent to Cabinet on 14th December 2022⁷ no recommendations were made although further information was requested.

Way Forward

54. Councillor Caro Wild, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Councillor Dan De'Ath, Cabinet Member for Transport & Strategic Planning have been invited to make a statement. Andrew Gregory, Director of Planning, Transport and Environment as well as other representatives from Shared Regulatory Services have also been invited to answer questions and assist the Committee in its consideration of the item.

Legal Implications

55. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters, there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

56. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters, there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are

⁷ [Letter to Cabinet](#)

implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to:

- i) Consider the information in this report, its appendices and the information presented at the meeting;
- ii) Determine whether they would like to make any comments, observations or recommendations to the Cabinet on this matter in time for its meeting on 14 December 2023; and
- iii) Decide the way forward for any future scrutiny of the issues discussed.

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1 December 2023