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Date: 12 December 2023

Cllr Caro Wild

Cabinet Member, Climate Change

Cllr Dan De'Ath

Cabinet Member, Transport & Strategic Planning



By email

Annwyl Cyng Wild / Dear Cllr Wild

LOCAL AIR QUALITY ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

On behalf of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee held on 7th December 2023, I would like to thank you and officers for attending Committee to facilitate our consideration of the Local Air Quality Monitoring report for the year 2022, the Committee appreciated officers attending and facilitating the discussion. Members agreed that I pass on the following observations, and you will find our requests listed at the end of the letter.

Layout of the report

Members commented on the format and disjointed nature of the report when trying to identify results for specific sites as the information was contained in two separate tables on different pages that need cross referencing, and suggested incorporating the site identifier, location and result on a single table.

Officers acknowledged that the report was not easy to navigate in places and stated that the report is a template that is specified by Welsh Government however noted that **appendix** could be added to **future reports**.

It is recommended that future reports include a table that is in an easy to read format.

Roads & Road Users

The Committee asked if the reduction of buses in operation had led to increased car use and therefore a negative impact on air quality?

Officers commented that any shift in use will impact air quality however the shift currently has not been significant enough to impact overall averages in air quality.

Members asked about the measures being put in place to encourage greater use of public transport and active travel rather than penalising car use.

Officers acknowledged the need for viable alternatives to car use and noted the ongoing work in relation to the metro, Crossrail and the bus interchange, however officers also recognised that there is a lot of work to be done.

The Committee asked if there was any evidence locally that the recent introduction of 20mph was having an impact on air quality?

Officers stated that it was too early to say at the moment and that at least twelve months data would be needed before any assessments could be made, but that this could potentially be included in future reports. Although it was noted that Welsh Government used data gathered from pilots to inform the roll out across the Country.

Air Quality Reduction Measures

The Committee asked what did they attribute the improvement of air quality to and if there was any evidence to identify which interventions had the greatest impact on improving air quality, for example are green walls more effective than 'school streets'?

Officers replied that a combination of interventions rather than a single measure will have an impact. Members noted concerns that measures may be put in place that are not effective, and asked what does the Council want to achieve in relation to air quality. It was also noted that monitoring either side of green walls takes place and that air quality monitoring both inside and outside of school street zone closures is carried out. However, it is more

difficult to measure the impact of the introduction of electric busses due to the number of other vehicles on the road.

Officers stated that meeting the current National targets is a priority, however as air quality is fundamentally linked to public health we need to reduce air pollution to as lower levels as possible, which ultimately means reducing the number of cars on the road network. It was also noted that new targets may be forthcoming following any new legislation in relation to the new Clean Air Bill.

Monitoring Locations & Real Time monitoring

Members asked how the criteria used to determine locations of air monitoring stations was chosen as there appear to be areas that are heavily congested during peak travel times, and would meet the criterion for air quality monitoring., or is it by request.

Officers confirmed that it was a combination of factors and that location for 2024 were being reviewed and that they are happy to consider proposed locations going forward.

Members also queried the average reading across the year and noted that that where these are close to prescribed limits there are clearly peaks and troughs across time and there will be time where limits are exceeded.

Officers noted that only real time monitors will allow peaks and troughs in air quality to be measured and not the 'diffusion tube'. A number of real time monitors were introduced in May this year and the data quality has been monitored to ensure it is accurate and this will be included in future reports,, it was also noted that this information would also be made available on the Shared Regulator Services website in due course.

Castle Street

The committee noted that Castle Street is referred to on a number of occasions throughout the report, however the temporary solution to improve air quality is still in place, despite the Cabinet agreeing that work should be progressed to address the Legal Direction issued by Welsh Government in December 2022 and as we have heard from RNIB colleagues, this is less than ideal and potentially dangerous.

Officers stated that adjustments were needed to be made to take into account the issues that had been raised and that funding was now being sought from Welsh Government, to resolve the matter.

The committee would like further information on the following:

- what the next steps and time scales to have the **permanent solution** in place on **Castle Street**?

One formal recommendation was made by the committee:

Recommendation	Accepted, Partially Accepted or Not Accepted	Cabinet Response	Responsible Officer	Action Date
Future monitoring reports include easy to read table that reference, site numbers, locations and results				

Once again thank you once more for attending Committee and for considering our comments and observations.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely / Yn gywir



Councillor Owen Jones

Chairperson Environmental Scrutiny Committee

cc: *Members of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee*

Andrew Gregory, Director for Planning, Transport & Environment

Helen Picton, Head of Shared Regulatory Services

Jason Bale, SRS, Operational Manager

Cllr John Lancaster, Group Leader, Conservatives

Cllr Andrea Gibson, Group Leader, Common Ground

Cllr Rodney Berman, Group Leader, Liberal Democrats

Chris Pyke, Audit Manager

Tim Gordon, Head of Communications and External Relations

Louise Mead, Cabinet Support Officer

Jenny Goss, Cabinet Support Officer