

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **21st July 2021**

Report Subject: **Local Air Quality Progress Report**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr J. Wilkins – Executive Member Environment**

Report Submitted by: **David Thompson – Service Manager, Public Protection**

Report Written by: **Tim Griffin – Specialist Environmental Health Officer**

Reporting Pathway									
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)	
25/5/21		06.07.21			June 21	July 21			

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To inform members of the findings of the Local Air Quality Progress Report produced in fulfilment of the statutory requirements of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 for the calendar year of 2019.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The Environmental Health Section carries out air quality monitoring at 27 locations within the borough for Nitrogen Dioxide. The results indicated that the Nitrogen Dioxide levels at each of the monitoring locations were considerably below the national air quality objective for Nitrogen Dioxide in 2019.
- 2.2 The 2019 Air Quality Progress Report for Blaenau Gwent CBC was submitted to Welsh Government in December 2020. The submission date for the annual air quality progress report is normally September each year but an extension for submission of the report was agreed with Welsh Government due to the increased work volumes as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic. The report contains the latest air quality data for the calendar year of 2019 applicable to the County Borough and provides current information relating to any new local developments or issues that may have an impact on air quality.
- 2.3 Air Quality in Blaenau Gwent continues to be generally good. As in previous years, the report concludes that it is unlikely that any of the air quality objectives that the Council are required to have regard to, are being exceeded or will be exceeded within the Borough and therefore there is no need for any further Detailed Assessment for any pollutant nor a need to declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).
- 2.4 The report was accepted by Welsh Government in February 2021.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 That Executive Committee notes the content of the 2019 Air Quality Progress Report for Blaenau Gwent CBC in relation to the continued monitoring and ongoing review of air quality within Blaenau Gwent by the Environmental Health Section in fulfilment of the Authority's statutory duties in compliance with Part IV of the Environment Act 1995.

4. Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan

4.1 This is a statutory duty in accordance with Part IV of the Environment Act 1995.

4.2 This topic supports the achievement of the Blaenau Gwent Well-being plan to look after and protect the environment by ensuring the air quality in our area remains at a good standard.

5. Implications Against Each Option

5.1 Impact on Budget

All costs relating to undertaking this work and producing the report are met from existing Environmental Health budgets.

5.2 Risk

This is a statutory duty in accordance with Part IV of the Environment Act 1995. Local authorities are required to review and assess air quality within their areas. Failure to do so will result in both significant legal and reputational risks.

5.3 Legal

This air quality work is carried out to ensure the Authority complies with its statutory duties.

5.4 Human Resources

All work relating to the fulfilment of the Authority's statutory obligations with regards to Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 will continue to be undertaken by existing Officers within the Environmental Health Section.

6. Supporting Evidence

6.1 Performance Information and Data

The 2020 Air Quality Progress Report is the latest in the series of reports produced in fulfilment of the Authority's statutory duty with respects to Local Air Quality Management. The full report is available on the Authority's website by way of the link at the end of this report.

- 6.1.1 The current National Air Quality Standards to which the Authority must have regard to relate to the following pollutants: Benzene, 1,3 Butadiene, Carbon Monoxide, Particulate Matter (PM₁₀) & (PM 2.5), Lead, Sulphur Dioxide and Nitrogen Dioxide. Each pollutant has an evidenced adverse health impact above certain levels, the standards reflect levels at which the risk of such adverse health impacts are minimised.
- 6.1.2 The current 2020 report contains the latest air quality monitoring data for the calendar year of 2019 applicable to the County Borough, and provides current information relating to any new local developments or issues that may have an impact upon air quality.
- 6.1.3 Examples of new local developments which were considered as part of the review and assessment process and which are highlighted in the 2020 report include the ongoing works at the A465 (Heads of the Valleys Road) duelling scheme and new commercial developments which have required an environmental permit within the Borough.
- 6.1.4 The main potential air quality impacts, based on the information available at the time of the 2020 report, which were arising from developments such as the A465 duelling scheme, were associated with increased road traffic emissions. Nitrogen dioxide is one of the main pollutants associated with vehicle movements and is also a good surrogate indicator for levels of other pollutants, such as Sulphur Dioxide, which is also associated with road traffic emissions. As a result of the review and assessment of the new local developments, additional Nitrogen Dioxide monitoring sites were put in place at sites of relevant public exposure. To-date monitoring results from these locations indicate that the pollution levels at all sites are well below the prescribed Air Quality Standard for Nitrogen Dioxide. Information relating to the location of all the active Nitrogen Dioxide monitoring sites within the Borough together with the monitoring results for the calendar year of 2019 and previous years can be found, in detail, in the 2020 Air Quality Progress Report.
- 6.1.5 The revised guidance issued by Welsh Government in 2017 identified schools as having a unique role to play in local air quality management for two particular reasons. The first is the contribution made by the “school run” to the levels of air pollution and traffic congestion on roads within school catchment areas during term time rush hours. The second is the potential for schools to help educate children and parents on the issues around air quality.
- 6.1.6 In January 2020, Environmental Health began air quality monitoring at a further 2 schools within the borough which are-
 - Deighton Primary School, Tredegar.
 - Abertillery Learning Community, Six Bells Campus, (Primary School), Abertillery.

The other schools that air quality monitoring is currently being carried out at are-

- Bryn Bach Primary School, Tredegar.
- Georgetown Primary School, Tredegar.
- Ebbw Fawr Learning Community, Primary Phase, Ebbw Vale.
- St Mary's RC Primary School, Brynmawr.
- Abertillery Learning Community, Tillery Street Campus, (Primary School), Abertillery.

The results of the monitoring at all of the schools have so far been all below the air quality objective for nitrogen dioxide.

6.2 *Expected outcome for the public*

This report will reassure the public that the air quality within our borough is of a good standard.

6.3 *Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)*

The air quality monitoring is carried out at a variety of locations including domestic properties, schools and community buildings and all of the monitoring results and air quality reports are available on the council's website.

6.4 *Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)*

By ensuring we maintain good air quality within the borough we are protecting the public health of future generations.

6.5 *Preventative focus*

The Environmental Health Section take proactive steps to prevent the deterioration of our air quality by working closely with the Authority's planning section to identify developments and industrial processes prior to their introduction.

6.6 *Collaboration / partnership working*

The Planning section and the Environmental Health section work closely together to monitor developments in the area that may have an impact on air quality.

6.7 *Integration (across service areas)*

This report does not impact on other service areas.

6.8 *EqIA (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)*

No negative effects for protected characteristics.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

- 7.1 This work will continue to be monitored by the environmental health section and routinely reported to scrutiny and executive committee.

Background Documents / Electronic Links

The full report, and all previous air quality reports, are available on the Authority's website by way of the following link:

<http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/en/resident/environmental-health/pollution/air-quality/>