

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

8 MARCH 2022

REPORT OF THE CHIEF OFFICER LEGAL, HR AND REGULATORY SERVICES

LOCAL AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT – PARK STREET AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN UPDATE

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with an update on the draft Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) for the Park Street Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). It follows receipt of the initial transportation and air quality modelling results undertaken on a number of the measures initially identified in the draft AQAP.
- 1.2 The report also provides an update to Cabinet on next steps towards implementation of the AQAP.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:-
 1. **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.
 2. **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.

3. Background

- 3.1 Under Section 82 of the Environment Act 1995 every local authority has an obligation to regularly review and assess air quality in their areas, and to determine whether or not air quality objectives to protect health are likely to be achieved. Where the air quality reviews indicate that the air quality objectives are not being achieved, or are not likely to be achieved, Section 83 of the 1995 Act requires local authorities to designate an Air Quality Management Area ('AQMA'). Section 84 of the Act ensures that where a Local Authority has designated an AQMA that a written plan in pursuit of the achievement of air quality standards is produced and that the plan sets out the actions to be taken at a local level to ensure that air quality in the identified area improves.

3.2 Welsh Government issues statutory policy guidance to Local Authorities under section 88 of the Environment Act 1995 to bring the local air quality management system in Wales into line with the sustainable development principle outlined in Welsh Government's Well-being for Future Generations Act, 2015. Local authorities must have regard to this guidance when carrying out their air quality functions under the Environment Act 1995.

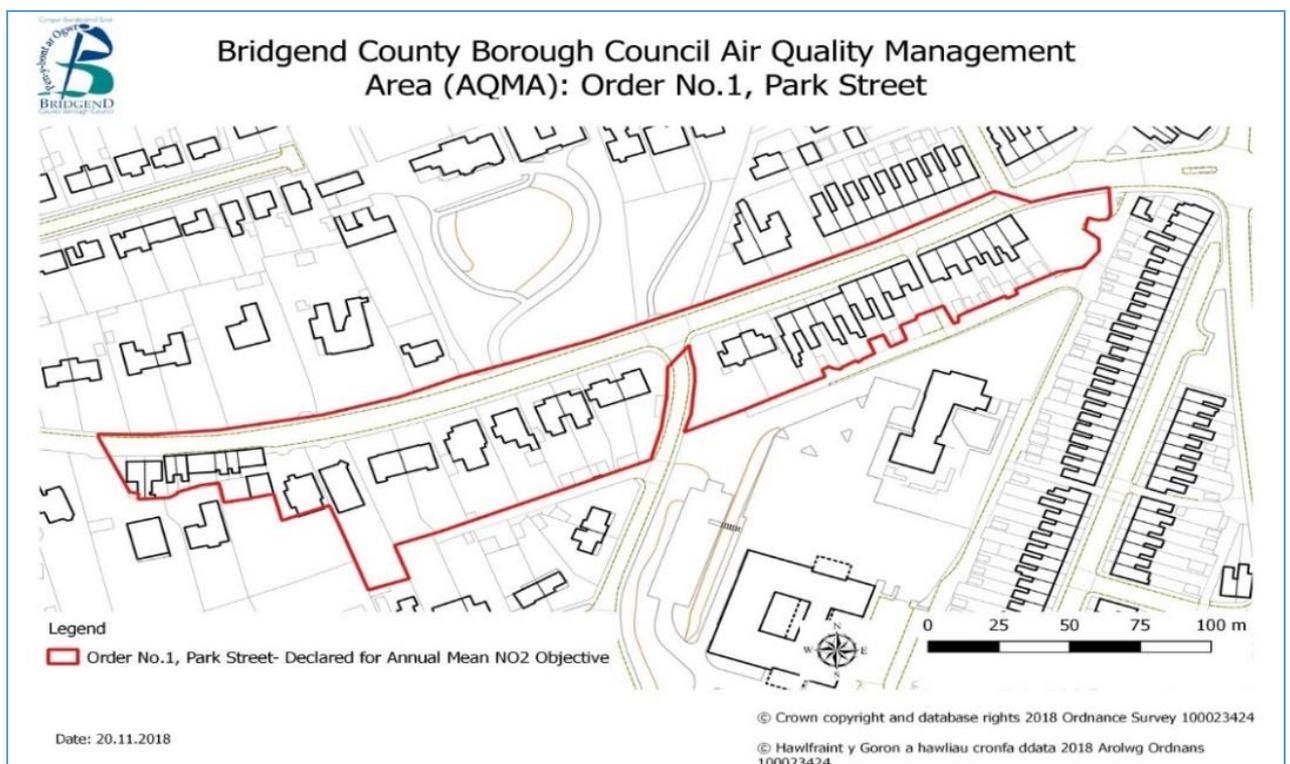
Section 4.2 of the Welsh Government's Statutory Guidance states that '*Local communities should be informed and engagedso they can then make a useful contribution to the development and implementation of any local air quality action plans or related strategies.*'

4. Current situation/proposal

4.1 The 2021 Annual Progress Report (APR) confirmed that in 2020 air quality continued to be a concern along Park Street coinciding with the geographical boundary of the Park Street, Bridgend AQMA Order raised on the 1st January 2019. The area comprising the Bridgend County Borough Council Air Quality Management Area Order Number 1, Park Street is outlined in

4.2 **Figure 1** below.

Figure 1- Extent of the Park Street Air Quality Management Area



4.3 **Figure 2** below depicts the non-automated monitoring sites located in and around the Park Street Air Quality Management Area.

Figure 2 - 2020 NO₂ Diffusion Tube Monitoring Locations, Park Street/ Tondu Road



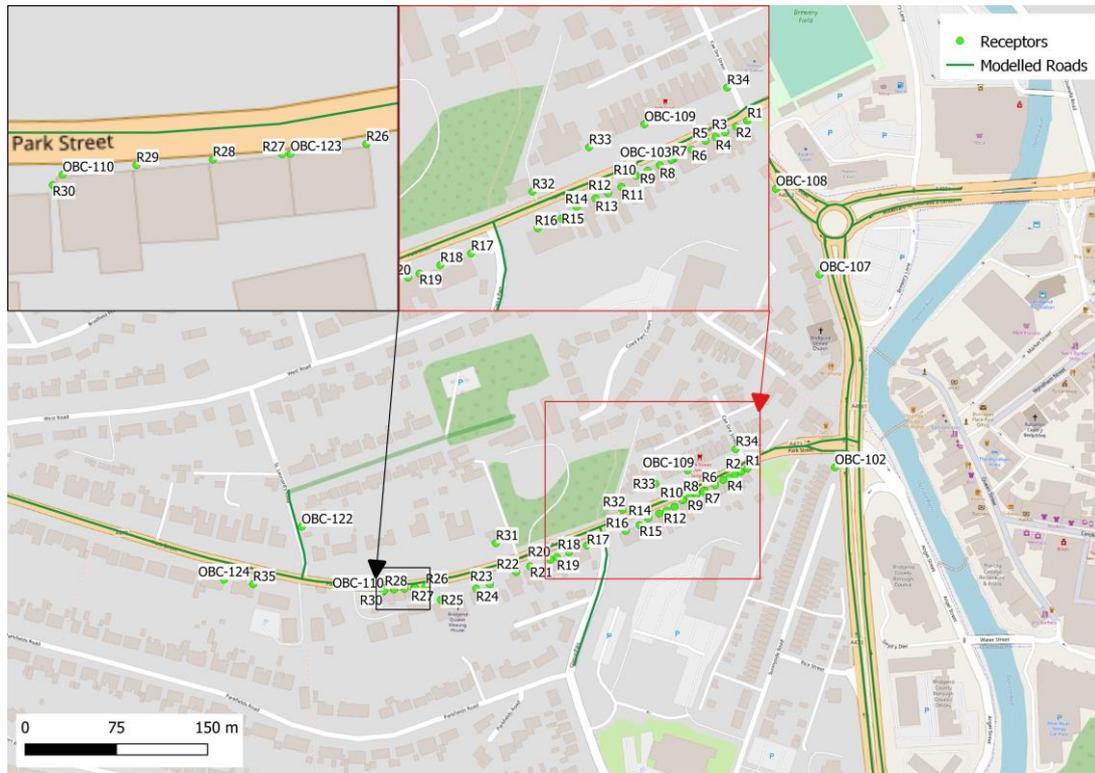
- 4.4 It was noted in the APR that monitoring undertaken in 2020 at monitoring sites **OBC-110 & OBC-123**, located on Park Street residential facades, still demonstrated annual average levels in exceedance of the annual average air quality objective (set at $40 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ for NO_2), despite the generally lower NO_2 levels experienced in the monitoring period. The annual mean NO_2 concentration for **OBC-110** was calculated at **$43.6 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$** while the annual mean NO_2 concentration for **OBC-123** was calculated at **$42.4 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$** respectively.

Park Street, AQMA Action Plan Update

- 4.5 As part of the Local Air Quality Management statutory duties, from the date of raising the AQMA Order (in this instance 1st January 2019) SRS and BCBC had 18 months in which to prepare a DRAFT Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) to improve air quality in the area, and once agreed, this plan was to be formally adopted before two years had elapsed.
- 4.6 While SRS and BCBC have made good headway in developing this AQAP in accordance with Welsh Government's Policy Guidance, inevitably the impacts and associated difficulties of the COVID-19 pandemic have meant that the timeline has had to be extended in consultation with Welsh Government, as detailed in 4.15 below.
- 4.7 In order to develop ideas and ensure an effective AQAP which considers all aspects, and prioritising public health, an AQAP Work Steering Group was established, comprising specialists from the various departments of Bridgend County Borough Council, as well as from partner agencies. Collating the ideas and suggestions generated by the AQAP Work Steering Group, a list of proposed mitigation measures has previously been created.

- 4.8 Following the indicative Cost Benefit Analysis on these proposals, detailed air quality and transportation modelling was commissioned on those mitigation options that would manage and improve traffic flows through the Park Street AQMA, and in so doing, likely deliver air quality improvements in the **shortest time possible**, and in line with the ambitions of Welsh Government and BCBC; reduce levels to **as low as reasonably practicable**.
- 4.9 These options have now been modelled under the following *Do Minimum* and *Do Something* scenarios:
- **Do Minimum - DM**
 - Introduction of a right turn holding lane at the Junction of Park Street with Heol y Nant (measure 21);
 - **Do Something - DS (inclusive of the above)**
 - Deny all access onto St Leonards Road (Measure 18);
 - Optimise the Park Street/Angel Street/Tondu Road Junction (Measure 20).
- 4.10 Under the requirement of Condition 27 of Planning consent P/18/1006/FUL, of the former Ysgol Bryn Castell site (Llangewydd Road, Cefn Glas) there was a requirement to introduce a right turn holding lane at the Junction of Park Street with Heol y Nant. This has been modelled as the **Do Minimum (DM)** scenario in the modelling exercises, as this change has now been implemented. Modelling of the right turning lane demonstrated congestion reduction on Park Street from vehicles turning right onto Heol-y-nant.
- 4.11 In order to fully assess the impacts on air quality, the dispersion model has identified 35 receptor points (R1 – R35) along Park Street and surrounding streets in addition to modelling concentrations at the existing monitoring locations on Park Street (designated by the OBC- prefix). These locations allow an assessment of relevant exposure across a wider area to assess the impact of the interventions. The results of analysis are summarised in **Table 1** and the locations of the modelling points are shown in **Figure 3**

Figure 3 - Air Quality Modelling Locations



- 4.12 As detailed in **Table 1** below, the implementation of the right turn holding lane at the Junction of Park Street with Heol y Nant provides an improvement in NO₂ concentrations along Park Street, when compared to the Base year of 2019. However a number of the modelled receptor locations demonstrate continued exceedances of the air quality objective for NO₂.
- 4.13 The results indicate that under the **Do Something (DS)** scenario, NO₂ concentrations at the majority of modelled receptor locations would achieve compliance with the annual average air quality objective for NO₂ of 40 µg/m³ by the end of 2023, if implemented in 2022. This includes all currently monitored locations within the AQMA. Only two of the modelled locations indicate marginal exceedance of the air quality object namely locations R27 and R28 where the NO₂ results are currently forecasted to be 41.5 µg/m³ and 41.7 µg/m³ respectively.

Table 1 - Air Quality Results NO₂ µg/m³ Park Street AQMA

Modelling Location Reference	Base 2019	DM 2023	DS 2023
R1	41.6	32.7	31.4
R2	42.0	33.1	31.7
R3	41.1	32.3	31.0
R4	39.9	31.3	30.0
R5	41.5	32.6	31.1
R6	39.0	30.6	29.2
R7	37.0	29.1	27.7
R8	36.2	28.4	27.0
R9	36.2	28.4	27.0
R10	36.2	28.4	27.0
R11	36.3	28.3	27.0
R12	35.2	27.4	26.3
R13	22.1	17.5	16.9
R14	21.6	17.2	16.6
R15	20.3	16.2	15.7
R16	21.4	17.0	16.5
R17	27.5	21.8	20.9
R18	27.5	21.8	20.7
R19	27.1	21.5	20.3
R20	26.9	21.4	20.1
R21	25.4	20.1	18.6
R22	24.1	19.1	17.6
R23	21.8	17.3	16.0
R24	21.5	17.0	15.8
R25	20.0	15.9	14.8
R26	56.8	44.6	39.2
R27	60.2	47.2	41.5

Modelling Location Reference	Base 2019	DM 2023	DS 2023
R28	60.5	47.5	41.7
R29	57.4	44.8	39.1
R30	49.0	38.2	33.4
R31	17.6	14.1	13.3
R32	37.8	29.5	28.1
R33	19.6	15.6	15.1
R34	27.1	21.5	20.7
R35	22.0	14.9	14.8
OBC-103	35.3	27.7	26.4
OBC-123	56.4	44.2	38.8
OBC-124	19.9	13.4	13.3
OBC-110	50.7	39.5	34.6
OBC-122	16.9	12.9	10.9
OBC-107	35.3	29.3	29.1
OBC-108	29.5	23.7	24.8
OBC-104	39.8	31.3	30.0
OBC-109	23.2	18.4	17.7
OBC-102	29.3	23.5	23.1

- 4.14 Given that the **Do Something** scenario is forecasted to provide a significant improvement in terms of NO₂ concentrations, the draft AQAP will need to be amended to reflect the final validated outcomes of the modelling. The draft AQAP can then be subject to public consultation after the May 2022 local government elections.
- 4.15 Following completion of the public consultation BCBC/SRS will review the results of the consultation to enable the finalisation of the AQAP with a view that a final AQAP is reported to Cabinet for approval in advance of the revised submission deadline to Welsh Government of 30th September 2022. The final AQAP will provide a full implementation timeline of the preferred measures.

Welsh Government Update

- 4.16 The unprecedented circumstances of the COVID 19 pandemic have impacted on local air quality monitoring and the development of the action plan for the Park Street AQMA, both in terms of its scheduling and delivery. Welsh Government has been kept up to date with the position and inevitable delays in delivering the action plan. Welsh Government recognise the need to allow for a further extension period to facilitate the necessary consultation on AQAP, and it has been agreed that the revised deadline of 30th September 2022 represents a realistic time frame.

5 Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

- 5.1 The Report does not have any impacts on policy framework and procedure rules.

6 Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. This is an information report, therefore it is not necessary to carry out an EIA in the production of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

7 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

- 7.1 SRS & BCBC adopt the principles of The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WFGA). The act is a significant enabler to improve air quality as it calls for sustainable cross-sector action based on the principles of long-term, prevention-focused integration, collaboration and involvement. It intends to improve economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in Wales to ensure the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 7.2 The subsequent production of an Action Plan, will ensure that future decision making in terms of air quality complies with the WFGA, and the Council meets the five ways of working, as detailed below:
- Long term – the action plan will balance short-term needs of improving air quality, and will also look at measures to safeguard the ability of meeting long-term needs.
 - Prevention – by implementing measures which will be set out in the action plan, the Council should ensure improvements in air quality and will be able to prevent air quality deteriorating in the future.
 - Integration – SRS will look to ensure that the work undertaken as part of the Action Plan integrates with public body's environmental well-being objectives.

- Collaboration –the action plan will be developed in collaboration with many departments within the Council and other external organisations, i.e., Public Health Wales.
- Involvement – the action plan will be subject to public consultation, and will ensure that those who have a strong interest in improving air quality will be fully involved and their ideas considered.

8 Financial implications

- 8.1 SRS has an existing budget to complete a programme of air quality monitoring across Bridgend.
- 8.2 Transport and air quality monitoring within the Park Street AQMA have been progressing within the identified budget for this work. Should any further detailed assessments be required, then this would necessitate discussion with the Section 151 Officer as to how that additional work could be funded.
- 8.3 Given that measures 18 and 20 are key to achieving air quality compliance within the Park Street AQMA, it may be necessary for full business case assessments to be undertaken. This would ensure appropriate funding is secured to deliver these measures in accordance with the indicative timeframes that will be set out in the Final AQAP following completion of the consultation process.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1. To note the progress made in assessing key transportation interventions namely Measures 18 and 20 in the draft Air Quality Action Plan for Park Street; and
- 9.2. To note that public consultation on the Draft AQAP will need to take place after the 2022 local government elections.
- 9.3. To note that following completion of the public consultation, a final AQAP will be presented to Cabinet for approval prior to being submitted to Welsh Government by the 30th of September 2022.

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8th March 2022

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Background documents: None