

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Environment and Highways Cabinet Board

10 December 2015

Report of the Head of Planning

Nicola Pearce

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All Wards

2015 Air Quality Updating and Screening Assessment

Purpose of Report

- 1 To inform members of the results of pollution monitoring carried out during the calendar year of 2014, and obtain approval to place a copy of the report on the Council's website and send copies to the Welsh Assembly Government.

Executive Summary

- 2 Appended to this report is the 2015 Updating and Screening Assessment Report (USA) for Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (see Appendix 1).
- 3 This Air Quality report fulfils the requirements of the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) process as set out in Part IV of the Environment Act (1995), the Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland 2007 and relevant Policy and Technical Guidance documents. The 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 the air quality objectives are likely to be achieved.

Background

- 4 Updating and Screening Assessment (USA) reports are produced by the Council every three years, with the most recent having been produced in 2012. Progress Reports are required in the intervening years. USA reports should cover: new monitoring data; new

objectives; new sources or significant changes to existing sources; other changes that might affect air quality.

- 5 The Council opts to include information on non-LAQM pollutants in addition to the more narrow LAQM range of pollutants required for inclusion in LAQM reports. LAQM USA reports are required to be provided to WAG as the devolved administration has responsibility for compliance with national air quality objectives.
- 6 The report presents the results of pollution monitoring data collected during the calendar year 2014. The data includes results from continuous and non-continuous equipment, some of which is supplied to national pollution monitoring networks. Conclusions are drawn about air quality based upon this information.
- 7 The report follows the format stipulated by the Welsh Government and is 144 pages long. The report will be available on the Council's website along with all previous air quality management reports. The report is summarised below.

Summary of the 2015 USA Report

- 8 The Updating and Screening Assessment covering the period up to the end of 2014 has identified the need to proceed to a Detailed Assessment for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) at Victoria Gardens, Neath.
- 9 Neither the long-term or short-term Air Quality Objectives for PM₁₀ were breached in Port Talbot.
- 10 There were no exceedances of Air Quality Objectives for sulphur dioxide (SO₂), lead (Pb) or carbon monoxide (CO).
- 11 Fine particulates of less than 2.5 microns in size (PM_{2.5}) easily complied with the EU Target which is to be complied with by 2015.
- 12 Ozone is not covered by Local Air Quality Management because trans-boundary pollution can have a significant effect upon local results. Neath Port Talbot, like other parts of the country, experiences significant numbers of exceedances of the UK air quality standard. The trend is one of gradual improvement over time.

- 13 Concentrations of polyaromatic hydrocarbons exceed the UK Air Quality Objective of 0.25 ng/m³, but are less than the EU Target value of 1 ng/m³. The trend line shows that concentrations are increasing over time. Emissions of polyaromatic hydrocarbons are mainly from the steelworks. Natural Resources Wales is the regulator and is aware of the results.
- 14 Arsenic and cadmium easily comply with the EU Target, both in Port Talbot and Pontardawe.
- 15 Nickel concentrations comply with the EU Target at all locations in Neath, Port Talbot and Pontardawe, except Tawe Terrace and Pontardawe Leisure Centre. Nickel levels increased at these locations during 2014. The Wall Colmonoy site in Pontardawe will continue to be the focus of investigations aimed at compliance with the EU Target.
- 16 The highest rates of fallout of large particles (nuisance dust) were once again measured in Port Talbot at Prince Street and Port Talbot Fire Station. The highest ever fallout rates were recorded at the latter location with near record levels at Prince Street. This information is shared with Natural Resources Wales, which regulates activities at the steelworks.
- 17 Unusually, the highest number of PM₁₀ exceedances was measured at the Little Warren site, which is outside the AQMA. Normally the number of exceedances is greatest at monitoring stations in the central part of the AQMA i.e. Prince Street and Port Talbot Fire Station. It is possible that this may be a consequence of unusual prevailing wind directions causing emissions from the steel works to impact at a different location. The acquisition of further data will shed more light on this.
- 18 There were no exceedances of the Air Quality Objective for PM₁₀ outside or within the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), however it is not considered to be appropriate to revoke or modify the AQMA at this time.
- 19 The next actions to be taken will be to:
 - Submit a LAQM Progress report.

- Submit a LAQM Detailed Assessment of NO₂ at the junction of Victoria Gardens and Cimla Road in Neath. This shall be carried out in respect of the long-term Air Quality Objective.

Financial Impact

20 There are no implications for financial impact on this item.

Equality Impact Assessment

21 A Screening Assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. After completing the assessment it has been determined that this proposal does not require an Equalities Impact Assessment.

Workforce Impact

22 There are no workforce impact implications with actions identified within the USA report to be undertaken by Officers within the existing Pollution Control team.

Legal Impact

23 There are no legal impact implications.

Risk Management

24 There are no implications for risk management on this item.

Consultation

25 There is no requirement for external consultation.

Recommendation(s)

- 26 That the contents of the 2015 2015 Updating and Screening Assessment Report are noted.
- 27 That the 2015 Updating and Screening Assessment report is made available to the public and other stakeholders via the Council website and a copy sent to the Welsh Assembly Government for information.

Reason for Proposed Decision(s)

28 To provide information about air quality in accordance with legislative requirements.

Implementation of Decision

29 The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices

30 There are no appendices

List of Background Papers

31 The 2015 Updating and Screening Assessment

Officer Contact

32 Nicola Pearce, Head of Planning. Tel: 01639 686680 or e-mail:n.pearce@npt.gov.uk