



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL
MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council 2019 Air Quality Progress Report – Executive Summary

In fulfillment of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995
Local Air Quality Management

Date (August, 2019)

Air Quality in Merthyr Tydfil County Borough

The main source of air pollution within Merthyr Tydfil is road traffic. As such MTCBC are concerned about NO₂. A network of diffusion tubes operates throughout the district. In the past 6 years NO₂ peaked throughout the district in 2013 and has declined since. This decline has levelled out in recent years. Most sites within Merthyr Tydfil have NO₂ concentrations within the annual mean air quality objective.

A small number of sites (No. 3) exceed the annual mean air quality objective, and since 2017 there has been an AQMA in place along Twynyrodyn Road. More information is available at https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/local-authorities?la_id=402 and www.merthyr.gov.uk. Following public consultation and Council approval, the Welsh Government approved the action plan to reverse traffic flow along Pontmorlais High Street and Church Street as initial action to address the AQMA.

On 28th May 2019 traffic flow was reversed along Pontmorlais High Street and Church Street. This provided alternative routes away from Tesco and the Town Centre than Twynyrodyn Road. Traffic build-up appears to have shifted with fewer queues developing on Twynyrodyn Road.

MTCBC also consider the impact on air quality of new developments, and where necessary planning conditions are used to mitigate any negative effects. The Local Transport Plan supports active travel and use of public transport to reduce reliance on cars.

Actions to Improve Air Quality

With regards to the Twynyrodyn Road AQMA, in 2018 a 12-week public consultation took place. The public were consulted on 3 options to reduce traffic use of Twynyrodyn Road. Most respondents (94%) expressed a preference for the option of reversing traffic flow along Pontmorlais High Street and Church Street. Council approved an action plan to this effect being submitted to Welsh Government, who subsequently approved it.

In November 2018 the Highways and Engineering Department issued Traffic Regulation Orders. On 28th May 2019 traffic flow was reversed in accordance with the approved action plan. Although no traffic counts are available yet, Environmental Health Officers during the

course of their district work and daily commutes have observed less traffic build-up on Twynyrodyn Road (the AQMA), with some traffic build-up around Avenue de Clichy. This is not considered likely to pose a public health risk as residential properties are set back from the road and there are no areas along it where people are likely to spend 1 hour+. On the West side of Avenue de Clichy is the River Taff, so there are no possible street canyons. It is hoped the change in traffic distribution will result in a significant improvement in air quality within the AQMA.

Local Priorities and Challenges

The priority for 2019 was the implementation of the approved action plan, and on ongoing monitoring of its effectiveness. To that end additional diffusion tubes have been installed along the traffic reversal route and surrounding streets, and the ECC monitor has been relocated to Pontmorlais High Street. If the traffic reversal is successful in improving air quality on Twynyrodyn Road, this will enable the AQMA to be revoked by 2021. If unsuccessful additional works will be considered in updated action plans.

Monitoring has also been extended to include additional diffusion tubes in areas identified by the Welsh Government Noise and Soundscape survey, where heavy traffic may also affect air quality.

Additionally in 2018 some individual months of diffusion tube data from 6/7 Ladysmith Place indicated if unaddressed the annual mean of NO₂ could have exceeded 36µg/m³, within 10% of the annual mean air quality objective. Observations showed bottle necks caused car access/egress from a car park to the rear of Troedyrhiw Community Primary School. To determine the impact of the car park, in December 2018 it was temporarily accessible via a one way system. Results for period 11 and period 12 were both 48µg/m³, whereas other sites throughout the district showed a noticeable increase in period 12, indicating the one-way system was effective at improving air quality. This may be by improving traffic flow or by putting people off using the car park. After bias adjustment the annual mean was 34.6µg/m³, below the level for concern. The car park has been reopened. Based on our observations of bottle necks additional tubes have been installed in this area to gain a fuller picture.

How to Get Involved

Further information on air pollution including access to previous air quality reports is available from www.merthyr.gov.uk. Specific questions can be addressed by emailing PublicHealth@merthyr.gov.uk or by telephoning 01685 725000.