

Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Newid Hinsawdd a Materion
Gwledig
Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref WQ92296

Andrew R.T Davies MS
Welsh Parliament
AndrewRT.Davies@senedd.wales

23 April 2024

Dear Andrew R.T. Davies,

I write in response to WQ92296: What discussions is the Welsh Government having with local providers of air quality measures to ensure residents across Wales have confidence in the measures put in place?

The Environment Act 1995 provides the framework for Local Air Quality Management (LAQM), this requires Local Authorities (LAs) to work with others to assess and manage public health risks from air pollution.

In delivering this requirement LAs must carry out regular reviews and assessments of air quality in their area against air quality objectives. Where these are unlikely to be met, LAs must designate Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) and implement Air Quality Action Plans (AQAPs) to reduce pollution levels within these AQMAs. LAs undertake collaborate engagement with local communities and other stakeholders to inform the AQAPs. Welsh Ministers have responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Environment Act 1995 and have issued statutory guidance setting out what is expected of LAs in fulfilling their duties.

LAs also have a duty to report on the AQAPs, and completion of an Annual Progress Report on Local Air Quality to ensure they meet their statutory obligations as well as aligning with Well-being of Future Generations Act principles. The AQAPs are appraised by independent contractors with their subsequent recommendations being considered by the Welsh Government for implementation by the relevant LA.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

We have recently made some enhancements to the LAQM framework through the Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Act 2024, which gained Royal Assent in February 2024. LAs now have a statutory duty to annually review air quality within their LA area. In addition when LAs prepare AQAPs they must provide projected compliance dates against actions identified.

These enhancements in legislative requirement places a clear focus on driving forward effective and timely action to lower air pollution levels below statutory limits and, consequently, supports the revocation of AQMAs.

My officials are currently working closely with LAs to update the Statutory LAQM Guidance to reflect these legislative changes and ensure a collective understanding of the new responsibilities. We intend for this guidance to be published in spring 2025.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Huw Irranca-Davies', with a stylized, cursive script.

Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS

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