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Date: 01/02/2017

To whom it may concern,

**RE: Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee – 18th January 2017
(Air Quality)**

With regard to the recent Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee 18th January 2017, aspects of air quality were discussed in great depth, in which Newport, and in particular Caerleon was mentioned. As such, being the officer that deals with air quality within Newport, I would like to provide you with some additional information to consider.

From the information you have gathered thus far, you are aware that Newport has nine AQMAs. Additional monitoring data (yet to be published) suggests exceedances of the air quality standards outside of the existing AQMAs. This means the number of AQMAs in Newport is likely to rise over the next 12/18 months.

During the committee meeting, comments were made by Public Health Wales on their consultation with Newport concerning our detailed assessment, and appraisal of the existing Caerleon AQMA.

Public Health Wales expressed the view that the Caerleon AQMA should be expanded to cover the whole of the area, not just the area of exceedance. The reasoning behind this view is that the AQMA is due to the traffic flowing through it from the wider area.

Whilst this is a valid view, the guidance on designating an AQMA allows for flexibility to suit the strategy of the local authority. The only criterion that must be met is that the AQMA must include the area of Technical Exceedance. It is Newport's view there is little other guidance or link with other policies (planning, highways, health etc) to define an AQMA or its use.

To provide some defined reasoning behind the boundary of an AQMA and embed air quality within the planning process, Newport is in the process of developing supplementary planning policy guidance for air quality. Within the draft guidance two zones have been defined:

1 – AQMA: An area of technical exceedance for which a detailed air quality assessment will be required to support a planning application. The focus of the assessment is to ensure the health of new receptors is not put at risk due to areas of existing (known) poor air quality.

2 – Air Quality Planning Buffer: The local network of roads that are intrinsically linked to the AQMA. A simple air quality assessment will be required in which the net change in traffic will need to be provided along with an air quality traffic mitigation plan.

The air quality SPG also attempts to capture the full range of possibilities that lie outside of existing AQMAs and major developments.

It is the view of Newport City Council that AQMAs should be limited to the areas of technical exceedance. Else if they are expanded to encapsulate the wider area they lose their focus and definition which can be open to challenge through the planning system.

With this in mind, I hope the committee can understand the rationale behind keeping the AQMA limited in extent, and not declaring the whole of Caerleon as an AQMA as suggested by Public Health Wales.

Air Quality Progress in Newport

Furthermore, it may not be publically apparent at this point in time, but Newport City Council has been working on a number of actions and initiatives for air quality. These will become clear in the following months with the consultation of a revised air quality action plan. The action plan will have strong links to schools/education and active travel. It will also cover actions for every vehicle type that makes up the road fleet in Newport, along with proactive measures to explore low emission zones and various other air quality control mechanisms at the council's disposal.

However, there are proposals in the medium to long term that will significantly alter the traffic flow within the regional and local area. Newport City Council has provided comments with regard to air quality on some of these schemes, for both construction and operation.

If you would like to discover more about the actions that Newport City Council are developing and implementing, along with our views on air quality management I would be more than happy to attend a committee meeting, if you so desire. In the mean time I hope you find these comments of some use.

Yours Sincerely

Peter Mackintosh
Senior Scientific Officer