

Hannah Blythyn AC/AM
Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd
Minister for Environment



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-825
Ein cyf/Our ref HB/00577/18

David John Rowlands AM
Chair - Petitions committee.
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

government.committee.business@wales.gsi.gov.uk

18 July 2018

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter of 5 June providing me with details of petition P-05-825 concerning the protection of children's lungs from harmful pollution whilst at school.

This is a matter in which I have a close interest, and I am fully supportive of the case for action in this area.

Local authorities have an existing duty, under the Environment Act 1995, to review air quality in their areas to assess whether air quality standards and objectives are being achieved or are likely to be achieved. Where they are not, local authorities must designate an Air Quality Management Area and develop an action plan, setting out the measures they will take to address the identified issues.

To inform this process, we issued new Local Air Quality Management guidance in June last which ensures that the ways of working enshrined in the Well-being of Future Generations Act are applied fully in local authorities' air quality management work.

In working towards the well-being of future generations, the guidance requires local authorities to give special consideration to the long-term risks posed to babies and children by exposure to air pollution, whether in their homes, at school or nursery, or travelling between the two.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Gohebiaeth.Hannah.Blythyn@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Hannah.Blythyn@gov.wales

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.

The guidance recognises schools and active travel routes, amongst others, as “sensitive receptor locations”. Two key points are made relating to schools and air quality. The first is the significant contribution made by the ‘school run’ to levels of air pollution and traffic congestion on roads within many school catchment areas during term-time rush-hours. The second is the potential for schools to help educate children and parents on the issues around air quality and explore potential solutions.

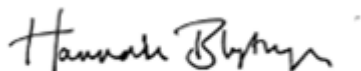
In addition to the Guidance, I have agreed funding for the Young Dragons initiative which will engage children and young people in understanding air quality and the factors which impact on it. Through this project pupils in 140 schools are being introduced to the causes and impacts of air pollution and encouraged to explore how changes in behaviour by children, parents and staff can make a difference in reducing pollution levels.

On 25 April I announced the publication of the draft Clean Air Zone Framework for Wales. Clean Air Zones, where they are introduced in Wales, will be expected to deliver a reduction in the overall volume of traffic on the roads, and lower emissions from remaining road vehicles. Our draft Clean Air Zone Framework for Wales references travel to school, setting out that local authorities should engage with schools within (or near) a Clean Air Zone to support education around pollution and active travel options, and to explore ways of reducing emissions from motor vehicles. The presence of sensitive receptor locations such as schools should be considered when determining the boundaries of a proposed Clean Air Zone, and monitoring of potential engine idling hotspots should be undertaken at these locations in particular.

Officials are currently analysing responses to the consultation on the draft Framework, which closed on 19 June, and I intend to announce publication of the final document later this month.

Early next year I intend to launch a consultation on proposals for a Clean Air Plan for Wales. This Plan will set out key pollutants and their effects on public health and the natural environment in Wales. This will include measures to achieve compliance with European and domestic legislative requirements. It will also identify cross-Government and sectoral actions required to achieve clean air in Wales. In the development of the Plan, further consideration will be given to the particular issue of poor air at sensitive receptor locations, and what more can be done to address this.

Yours Sincerely,



Hannah Blythyn AC/AM
Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd
Minister for Environment