

# **Air quality testing order revoked on two West Lothian sites**

**Unsightly air quality testing  
machinery is finally set to  
disappear from Linlithgow High  
Street.**

Environmental Health officers will ask the West Lothian Council's Executive to approve proposals to revoke long standing orders to test the air in the street and also in the village of Newton.

The air quality at both sites has improved continually since statutory monitoring began in 2016.

The sinister looking testing stations, which resemble ventilation shafts for underground bunkers, have occupied prominent sites in both communities.

In Linlithgow the apparatus sits just yards from the A-listed St Michael's Well – testament to the 21st century's effect on the ancient burgh's thoroughfare.

While many would like to see the apparatus gone for purely aesthetic reasons the council teams who have overseen the monitoring are happy at the potential savings.

Supplying parts for the machinery is an expensive process. The removal of the statutory testing stations will save the council thousands of pounds a year.

Statutory consultation within council departments and public

bodies including agencies such as SEPA has now been completed.

A report to the Public and Community Safety PDSP said: "It is positive to note that air quality in Linlithgow is meeting air quality objectives and has improved since 2016.

"It is important to now take steps to acknowledge that and complete the process to revoke the air quality management area."

The report added: "Air quality standards have been met in Linlithgow for well in excess of the three years expected for revocation."

Harmful Nitrogen Dioxide and particulate matter levels have fallen steadily since 2016. After plunging during lockdown, they have slowly started to climb but are still well below the levels of concern which led to the introduction of testing.

Heavy traffic in the High Street prompted the introduction of testing in Linlithgow whereas in Newton it was domestic heating, officials said this week.

Earlier this year local councillor Sally Pattle expressed concern that the high street had seen no reduction in traffic.

In earlier reports Environmental Health officers added: "There is no specifically identifiable reason for improvements in air quality over this time, but it is reasonable to assume that as vehicle pollution is the most significant factor causing poorer air quality, the "greening" of vehicles and newer, less polluting vehicles on our roads will have had a significant effect.

"This could also be considered alongside changes in driving behaviour, a move from diesel vehicles, less vehicle use and similar."

By Stuart Sommerville, Local Democracy Reporter