

Harborough District Council



Report to the Cabinet Meeting of 14th November 2022

Report Number:	1
Title:	Air Quality Update – Annual Status Report 2022
Status:	Public
Key Decision:	No
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Portfolio :	Planning, Environment and Waste Cllr Jonathan Bateman
Appendices:	Appendix A Annual Status Report 2022

Executive Summary

Air pollution is associated with a number of adverse health impacts. It is recognised as a contributing factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer. Additionally, air pollution particularly affects the most vulnerable in society: children, the elderly and those with existing heart and lung conditions.

The Council has a duty to review local air quality and to take action through the declaration of an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) where the national air quality objectives for certain pollutants are not met.

The Council currently has two AQMAs:

- **Lutterworth** - declared for exceedances of the annual mean Air Quality Objective (AQO) for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂). The Air Quality Management Orders and a map of the area covered are available from the Council website:

https://www.harborough.gov.uk/info/20025/environmental_health/101/air_quality/3

- **Kibworths** - declared for exceedances of the annual mean Air Quality Objective (AQO) for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂). The Air Quality Management Orders and a map of the area are available from the Council website:

https://www.harborough.gov.uk/info/20025/environmental_health/101/air_quality/2

Each year the Council must submit a report to the Department of Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) on the status of air quality locally. In 2021 there were no exceedances of the national air quality objectives recorded and there are no new areas in the district which are considered to breach air quality standards.

Recommendation
That Cabinet note the 2022 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) to be submitted to DEFRA as set out in Appendix A.
Reasons for Recommendations
The Local Authority has a statutory duty to submit an Air Quality Annual Status report to DEFRA and publish it in accordance with Part IV of the Environment Act 1995

Purpose of Report

1. This report updates members on the outcome of the annual review of local air quality across the district and confirms with the 2021 Annual Status Report (ASR) to be submitted to Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), attached as Appendix A to this report.

Background

2. Air pollution is associated with several adverse health impacts. It is recognised as a contributing factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer. Additionally, air pollution particularly affects the most vulnerable in society: children and older people, and those with heart and lung conditions.
3. Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 (the Act) established a national framework for air quality management and requires all Local Authorities in the United Kingdom to conduct local air quality reviews. Section 82(1) of the Act requires reviews to include an assessment of the current air quality in the district and the predicted air quality in future years. In the event that the review indicates that the objectives prescribed in the UK Air Quality Strategy (Defra, 2007) and the Air Quality (England) Regulations (Defra, 2010) will not be met, the Local Authority is required to designate an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). Action must then be taken at a local level to ensure that air quality in the area improves.
4. The UK Air Quality Strategy (AQS) identifies nine ambient air pollutants that have the potential to cause harm to human health. These pollutants are associated with local air quality problems, with the exception of ozone, which is instead considered to be a regional problem. The Air Quality Regulations set objectives (i.e. limits) for the seven pollutants that are associated with local air quality with a view to reducing the health impacts of the pollutants to negligible levels.
5. It is the Council's responsibility to review air quality in accordance with technical guidance. This is done by both air quality monitoring and screening and modelling.
6. Under the Environment Act 1995 there is a duty on local authorities to assess local air quality and to submit an annual report to DEFRA. The ASR provides a detailed assessment of any monitoring results carried out in the district for the previous year along with any action undertaken to work towards improving air quality. It is based on the calendar year 2021.

Details

7. Generally the air quality throughout the district is good. However, there are known issues in both Lutterworth and areas of Kibworth Beauchamp and Kibworth Harcourt along the A6 highway which cuts both villages, where exceedances of the annual average objective level for Nitrogen Dioxide have been identified. Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) have been declared in both areas. The Lutterworth AQMA was first declared in 2001 and The Kibworths AQMA in November 2017.
8. The Council has been monitoring local air quality across the district using a network of diffusion tubes for a number of years. The annual average results are collated and moderated in accordance with the nationally published annual correction factors. The annual average national objective level for Nitrogen Dioxide is $40\mu\text{g.m}^{-3}$.

In 2021 no locations exceeded this objective level. The average annual levels of Nitrogen Dioxide at relevant receptors ranged from $11.8\mu\text{g.m}^{-3}$ to $36.6\mu\text{g.m}^{-3}$.

Lutterworth

9. The Council has been monitoring air quality in Lutterworth since 1997. For the fourth year running since the declaration of the AQMA in 2001, the annual Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2) results did not exceed the annual mean air quality standard.
10. Notwithstanding the encouraging improved air quality, pollutant concentrations may vary significantly from one year to the next, due to the influence of meteorological and environment conditions. Further, the national lockdowns in 2020 and 2021 will have contributed to the improved air quality position, but the extent to which this improvement will be sustained is unknown.
11. Before revoking an AQMA on the basis of measured pollutant concentrations, the Council needs to be reasonably certain that any future exceedances are unlikely. For this reason, whilst the 2018 to 2021 annual average results in Lutterworth are very encouraging, the monitoring of air pollution should be continued until the Council can be confident that there is sufficient evidence to consider the revocation of the AQMA.

Kibworths

12. There has been an automatic air quality monitor installed along the A6 in the Kibworths since 2019. During 2021 the monitor did not record any exceedances of air quality objectives for Nitrogen Dioxide.
13. In 2020 the Council purchased a portable indicative air quality monitor called a Zephyr. During 2021 the Zephyr was installed in The Kibworths to monitor Nitrogen Dioxide and Particulate Matter ($\text{PM}_{2.5}$ and PM_{10}). The monitor did not record any exceedance of the air quality objectives for NO_2 , $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ or PM_{10} during the year.
14. During 2021 the Council:
 - a. worked with the Council's Development Control Team and Leicestershire County Council Highways to determine what funding is available to implement the junction improvements for the A6 in Kibworth, which were modelled in 2019;
 - b. worked in partnership with North West Leicestershire District Council and air quality consultants to apply for an air quality grant to monitor the impact of $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ from solid

fuel burning and to encourage behaviour change to improve local air quality. The application was successful and the work will be implemented in 2022-23;

- c. took part in Clean Air Day.

Implications of Decisions

Corporate Priorities

15. The air quality work supports the Council's priority for Environment and Sustainability and the key activity KA.03.04: Provide Effective Local Air Quality Management.

Financial

16. There are no resource implications in relation to the development of the Annual Status Report as this will be undertaken within the current staffing arrangements. A budget for ongoing air quality monitoring has been created.

Legal

17. There is a legal duty on local authorities to assess air quality and to take necessary steps to improve local issues.

Policy

18. There are no policy implications for this report.

Environmental Implications including contributions to achieving a net zero carbon Council by 2030

19. There are no environmental implications in relation to the completion of the Annual Status Report as the report outlines the work undertaken in the previous calendar year.

Risk Management

20. Failure to meet Government targets on Air Quality may have a direct health impact on the local community.

21. Within the Environment Act 1995, the Secretary of State may give directions to a local authority if it is not meeting air quality standards, if it is failing to discharge its duties under the LAQM system, or if its actions under LAQM are inappropriate.

Equalities Impact

22. There are no equalities implications with the development of the Annual Status Report.

Data Protection

23. There are no data protection implications with the development of the Annual Status Report.

Summary of Consultation and Outcome

24. There is no consultation requirement in the development of the Annual Status Report

Alternative Options Considered

25. There is a duty on the Council to complete and submit an Annual Status Report to DEFRA. Not to submit an Annual Status Report would mean that the Council has not fulfilled its obligations under the Environment Act 1995.

Background papers

Previous Air Quality Reports can be found on the council's website:

https://www.harborough.gov.uk/directory_record/2268/air_quality_review_and_assessment