

Climate Change, Environment and Growth Executive Advisory Panel 23rd February 2022

Report Title	Air Quality Review – North Northamptonshire
Report Author	Amy Plank, Interim Strategic Lead for Private Sector Housing Contributions from area Environmental Protection Officers & Managers - Kerry Walke, Rowan Castle and Catherine Clooney
Executive Member	Cllr Harriet Pentland

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Air Quality Review Report from AECOM 2021 (covering 2020 data)

Appendix B – Revised map of diffusion tubes for North Northamptonshire for 2022

1. Purpose of Report

To provide a further position statement requested by the Climate Change, Environment and Growth Executive Advisory Panel on:

- 1.1 Air quality in North Northamptonshire from 2020 data (2021 Annual Status Review (ASR) Reports)
- 1.2 Recommendations from the external review that took place of the 2021 ASR's by external air quality consultants, AECOM .
- 1.3 An outline of the Public Health bid which was successful and what the funding will be used for to improve air quality.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Local Air Quality Management is a legal requirement under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995. There is a prescribed upper air quality limit value for Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulates, together with other air pollutants, that the general population should not be exposed to in order to protect public health. These limits are legally binding through EU and UK law.
- 2.2 There are currently no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA's) in North Northamptonshire and none have been recently recommended for

implementation following the 2021 ASR's.

- 2.3 During the 2020 reporting period (reported in 2021 ASR's), there were no annual exceedances of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) in North Northamptonshire. Maximum concentrations were 24.3µg/m³ in Corby, 28.8µg/m³ in Kettering, 26.9µg/m³ in East Northamptonshire and 30.2µg/m³ in Wellingborough. All reported results are well below the annual limit of 40.3µg/m³.

3. Recommendations

The Climate Change, Environment and Growth Executive Advisory Panel (EAP) is asked to support the following considerations:

- 3.1 To continue with the current arrangements of monitoring air quality in line with the National Air Quality Objectives.
- 3.2 Endorse the report from the external consultant's review.
- 3.3 Endorse the project outline plan for the Public Health funding to recruit two Air Quality Project Officers, to implement wider air quality programmes of work.

Reasons for recommendation

The endorsement of these recommendations will ensure the Council continues to maintain its commitment to monitoring, reviewing and taking measures to improve local air quality, whilst at the same time using funding to implement extra projects to assist with further measures.

4. Report Background

- 4.1 Each sovereign area continues to monitor NO₂ concentrations by a network of diffusion tubes which are replaced each month and sent off to the lab for analysis. The network currently consists of 17 tubes in Corby, 33 in East Northants, 39 in Kettering and 11 in Wellingborough and a consolidated network has been agreed for 22/23 monitoring for North Northamptonshire. See Appendix B.
- 4.2 Each area currently monitors air quality levels through analysis of compliance against the NO₂ annual mean air quality objective of 40µg/m³. There are no AQMA's across North Northamptonshire, due to a history of non-exceedances.
- 4.3 A decision was made to get the sovereign area 2021 ASR's reviewed and evaluated by an external air quality consultant and AECOM undertook this work. Their findings are in Appendix A and will be presented separately after this report to EAP.

5. Issues and Choices

5.1 Review of Air Quality Work

A summary of the findings of this report are as follows:

- 5.1.1 The report provides a review of Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) within the former administrative areas of Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering and Wellingborough, now part of the newly formed North Northamptonshire Council. The report focuses on the work conducted during 2020 as well as in previous years, provides a review of the current diffusion tube monitoring network to assess whether this is fit for purpose and gives recommendations for further actions or monitoring network changes.
- 5.1.2 The review has identified that the four authorities have been meeting their statutory obligations under LAQM. None have declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and all conduct diffusion tube monitoring for nitrogen dioxide across their borough whilst following correct quality assurance and control procedures. Measured concentrations have shown a decreasing trend over the last five years.
- 5.1.3 The review has provided a number of recommendations that could be taken forward to improve air quality management in 2022. These include:
 - Submitting the 2022 annual report ahead of the submission deadline, to allow for a timely appraisal and the potential to address any comments that may arise;
 - Extending the diffusion tube monitoring network to include selected identified areas and to consider particulates;
 - Working in closer collaboration with the relevant public health body and with county working groups; and;
 - Reviewing existing local air quality actions, updating and identifying new measures

5.2 Public Health Funding

- 5.2.1 A successful bid was submitted for Public Health funding and £80k has been awarded for two Air Quality Project Officers to undertake project work to improve air quality across North Northamptonshire, by carrying out a package of different measures/innovations, including:
 - Working with partners such as Voi, to publicise more sustainable methods of travel including walking, cycling, e-scooters/bikes.
 - Sourcing and utilising any grants available to work with the local taxi trade to switch to electric vehicles and encourage other stakeholders to look at early replacement of diesel taxis with electric and hybrid alternatives.

- Working more closely with Highways to collect better monitoring data from traffic flows and wider air quality monitoring beyond current NOx tube network to allow better targeting of activity. Looking at strategies such as those pertaining to buses.
- Producing future bids for DEFRA air quality grant work.
- Conducting work on The Air Quality (Domestic Solid Fuel Standards) (England) Regulations in association with colleagues in Trading Standards.
- Working on any new PM2.5 objectives as a result of legislative introductions.
- Raising more awareness via national campaigns and working with education to campaign against idling at schools and through events such as National Clean Air Day.
- Engaging with SchoolStreets campaign, to promote traffic/emission free zones around schools, healthy school streets and promoting walking children to school, especially in built up areas.
- Working with local GP's on mitigation and chair of respiratory health board set up in the ICS around COPD, asthma and health inequalities which have been highlighted as a target in some of our towns.
- Investigating local use of air text, social media and website updates around local air quality.
- Encouraging employers/businesses to adopt Cycle2Work schemes, promote cycling through Cycling Northants, improve cycling signage and networks.
- Looking into enhanced street cleaning practices to reduce particulate matter present on busy streets.
- Surveying of all industrial sites to identify any new or existing units that may require an Environmental Permit under the Environmental permitting regime, e.g., paint sprayers & waste burners.
- Reviewing of any existing Smoke Control Areas (SCA's) and considering implementing further SCA's in light of an increased use of solid fuel burners. Assessing poorer economic areas to determine if there is an increase in solid fuel burning in light of increases in energy/gas prices.
- Liaising with Planning regarding the adoption of the East Midlands Air Quality Network EMAQN document as an NNC Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).
- Taking part in the electrifying Northamptonshire working group, on street charging, and assisting with the introduction of charging points on council land.

6 Implications (including financial implications)

6.1 Resources and Financial

6.1.1 A small number of officers within the Environmental Protection teams across Regulatory Services, are trained and equipped to carry out air quality monitoring assessments by way of installing and removing diffusion tubes each month off specific lamp posts and sending them off to a laboratory for analysis. An Air Quality consultant is paid annually to analyse all the data from each sovereign area and to write and produce the Annual Air Quality Status Reports. Accordingly, no additional

resources or finances are required for the work that we do, but additional staffing resources would assist with the collective improvements to be properly implemented and maintained.

6.2 Legal

6.2.1 The Council must continue to meet its requirements under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995.

6.3 Risk

6.3.1 There are no significant risks to note arising from the proposed recommendations in this report, but to do nothing places the Council at risk of not meeting the requirements of the Environment Act 1995, increasing poor air quality and therefore increasing the likelihood of an AQMA being declared.

6.4 Consultation

6.4.1 Internal Officer consultation has taken place to inform the drafting of this report and its recommendations. There is no legal requirement upon the Council to undertake any form of formal consultation in respect of air quality but instead at a later date, wider engagement in terms of awareness and education will take place, through activities such as those to be undertaken on national Clean Air Day.

6.5 Climate Impact

6.5.1 It is considered that the implementation of the recommendations would only have a positive impact on climate change. Also, to ensure the Council have no potential AQMA's in the future, it is recommended that monitoring is continued on the basis that concentrations may be elevated in 2021 and beyond in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic when there was less traffic on the roads.

6.6 Community Impact

6.6.1 It is considered that there are no community impacts associated with this report.

7 Background Papers

7.1 Annual Status Reports for each area

