

Forest Heath District Council

(This report is not a key decision. This report has been subject to appropriate notice of publication under the Council's Access to Information Rules)

Report of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste

CABINET

5 MARCH 2013

CAB13/076

AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT REVIEW OF BRANDON (Key Decision Reference: MAR13/01)

1. Summary and reasons for recommendation

- 1.1 Extensive monitoring of Nitrogen Dioxide levels has been carried out in Brandon to establish whether the national air quality objective under Local Air Quality Management legislation for Nitrogen Dioxide is being or likely to be achieved. Nitrogen Dioxide is caused primarily by road traffic emissions.
- 1.2 The monitoring showed that the objective is currently being achieved and is likely to continue to be so in the future and that no further action is required under the Legislation.

2. Recommendation

2.1 Cabinet to note the contents of the report.

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3. How will the recommendations help us meet our strategic priorities?

3.1 By reviewing local air quality in Brandon, the Council is fulfilling its statutory responsibilities and meeting the National Air Quality Objectives across the District. The review and the findings are compatible with the Council's role in addressing health and wellbeing issues across the District.

4. Key Issues

4.1 The Council is the lead regulator in the management of local air quality and Officers within the Environment Team carry out various activities to fulfil the Council's responsibilities. Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 outlines the Council's main statutory duties and discretionary powers with regard to local air quality management. The Act and the supporting Local Air Quality Regulations require local authorities to identify any areas where air quality objectives will not be met, undertake further air quality investigations and where the objectives are not likely to be achieved put in to place an action plan to maintain air quality to meet the objective.

4.2 Of the seven prescribed pollutants under the Local Air Quality Regulations Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) is typically the key pollutant of concern in the District since it is linked with road transport emissions and at certain levels in air can aggravate pre-existing health problems, for example asthma. The air quality objective for NO₂ of 40µg/m³ (microgrammes per cubic metre of air) has been applied, measured as an annual mean.

4.3 Initial monitoring of NO₂ by the Environment Team in 2011 indicated that levels could lead to the air quality objective not being achieved in Brandon (Figure 1) in particular along High Street and London Road, Brandon.

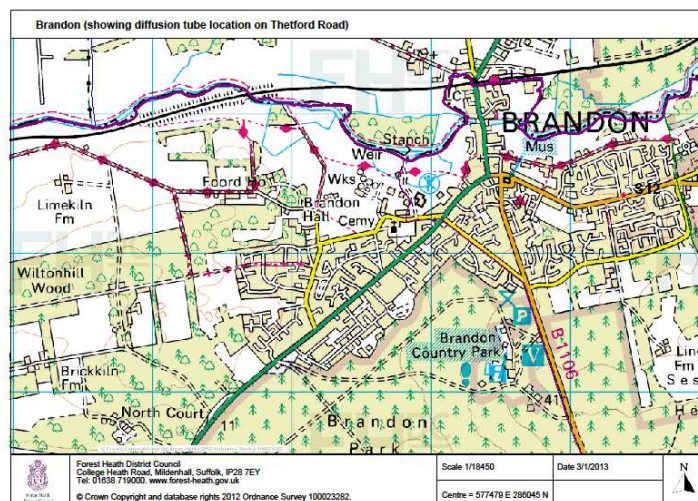


Figure 1 – Location plan of Brandon

4.4 An extensive monitoring programme using diffusion tubes was undertaken in 2012 at locations shown in Figure 2 below.

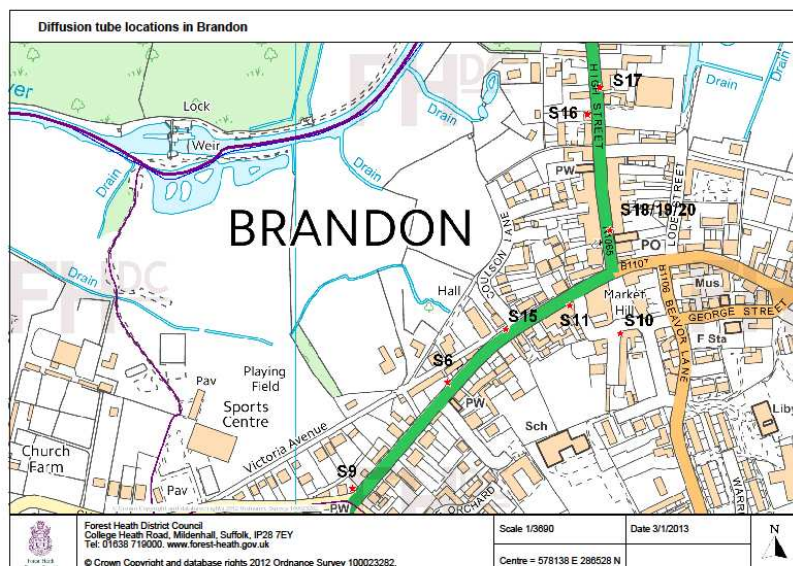


Figure 2 – Location of Nitrogen Dioxide monitoring

- 4.5 The results of the monitoring showed NO₂ levels ranging from 12.0 to 38.1µg/m³, compared to the objective of 40µg/m³. Further modelling has been undertaken by officers using current Defra guidance¹ to establish likely human health exposure levels. The modelling indicates that the levels at locations where receptors are likely to be present achieve the air quality objective and are likely to do so in the future. Furthermore, a downward trend in NO₂ levels is predicted as a result of improved road vehicle engine combustion efficiency.
- 4.6 Your Officers are therefore satisfied that no formal action under the Regulations is required at this time and furthermore propose to suspend monitoring whilst the A11 improvements progress. The roadworks are likely to have a short term disruptive impact on pollutant levels which are unlikely to reflect the long term trend.
- 4.7 However, it would be prudent to resume monitoring at key locations identified by your officers for a period of one year after completion of the A11 road improvements to confirm that the trend is consistent with our current modelling.

5. Other options considered

- 5.1 The review of air quality is a prescribed activity under the Air Quality Regulations. Since the objective is being achieved and based on the evidence is likely to be so in the future, under the Regulations no other options are available.
- 5.2 It is optional whether or not further NO₂ monitoring is undertaken after the completion of the A11 improvements. However, this work would give further confidence that the long term downward trend in NO₂ levels which is predicted is, in fact, occurring. Should this not be the case, the Council can then decide on how it should proceed based on the evidence, the regulatory regime in force at that time and the resources available to it.

¹ Defra (Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) Technical Guidance LAQM.TG(09) February 2009

6. Community Impact

6.1 Crime and Disorder Impact *(including Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998)*

6.1.1 There are no crime and disorder impacts emanating from this review.

6.2 Diversity and Equality Impact *(including the findings of the Equality Impact Assessment)*

6.2.1 There are no human rights or diversity implications emanating from this review.

6.3 Sustainability Impact *(including completing a Sustainability Impact Assessment)*

6.3.1 Air quality is interlinked with climate change and sustainability. The Air Quality Regulations recognises these relationships and aims to ensure that air pollution remains below nationally objectives.

6.4 Other Impact *(any other impacts affecting this report)*

6.4.1 This work supports the Council’s public health and wellbeing responsibilities.

7. Consultation *(what consultation has been undertaken, and what were the outcomes?)*

7.1 Not applicable.

8. Financial and resource implications *(including asset management implications)*

8.1 The outcome of the review does not have any financial or policy implications for the Council. The proposal to suspend, or resume at a later date, NO₂ monitoring in Brandon will have little financial or resource impact based on the cost of undertaking air quality sampling and the associated laboratory costs.

9. Risk/Opportunity Assessment *(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)*

Risk area	Inherent level of Risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual Risk (after controls)
Public Health	Low	No significant adverse health impact is likely at the observed levels	Low
Statutory Responsibilities	High	The Council has a statutory responsibility to review air quality and put forward management plans where statutory objectives are not being achieved	Low
Reputational	High	It is important that the Council delivers on its strategic responsibilities to maintain and enhance health and wellbeing in the district.	Low
Financial	Low	The outcome of the review has no	Medium/low

Risk area	Inherent level of Risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual Risk (after controls)
		significant financial impact	

10. Legal and policy implications

10.1 There is detailed legislation that regulates air quality and places duties and responsibilities on the Council to manage air quality in its area.

11. Wards affected

11.1 The local air quality within Forest Heath is generally good. The review and its findings confirm that the impact of NO₂ emissions arising principally from road transport in Brandon is unlikely to have a significant adverse impact on health.

12. Background papers

12.1 None

13. Documents attached

13.1 Appendix 1 - A Review of Nitrogen Dioxide Levels in Brandon, Suffolk.