

Licensing and Regulatory Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

Title of Report:	Local Air Quality – Progress Report 2016/2017	
Report No:	LIC/FH/17/011	
Report to and date/s:	Licensing and Regulatory Committee	30 October 2017
Portfolio holder:	Lance Stanbury Portfolio Holder for Planning & Growth Tel: 0nnnn nnnnn Email: lance.stanbury@forest-heath.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Matthew Axton Environment Officer Tel: 01284 757041 Email: matthew.axton@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	To report the work undertaken during 2016 to meet Local Air Quality regulations across the District.	
Recommendation:	It is recommended that the Committee is asked to NOTE the work undertaken in order to improve local air quality in West Suffolk.	
Key Decision:	<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Consultation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation required with the Department of Environment (Defra) to approve technical elements of the Annual Status Report. 	
Alternative option(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not undertaking our statutory duties - This would leave the Council at risk of being challenged by the Defra and the general public. 	
Implications:		
<i>Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Are there any staffing implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any ICT implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any legal and/or policy implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any equality implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
Statutory Responsibilities	Medium	Delivering the statutory responsibilities will help reduce the inherent level of risk.	Low
Reputational	Medium	The Councils' work will help achieve a credible pathway to improving air quality.	Low
Financial	Low	Cost-benefit of key work will continue to be reviewed and adjusted.	Low
Ward(s) affected:		All Wards	
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		None	
Documents attached:		Appendix 1 - 2017 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR).	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)

- 1.1 Air quality has direct implications for human health. Research shows that poor air quality can reduce the quality of life by causing health problems, especially in those who are more vulnerable such as children, the elderly and those with pre-existing health conditions. There is considerable research showing a link between exposure to air pollution and effects on health.
- 1.2 Improving the air quality will help to improve the long term health of our local communities, makes our towns more attractive places to visit and therefore improves the local economy.
- 1.3 The Air Quality Regulations 2000 require all local authorities in the UK to review and assess air quality within their area. The West Suffolk Councils are the lead regulators within their administrative areas with respect to the management of local air quality. Officers in Planning and Regulatory Services carry out various activities to fulfil these responsibilities. This includes monitoring local air quality, implementing any statutory and non-statutory actions for the purpose of improving air quality, providing advice on air quality and development.
- 1.4 The key pollutant of concern locally is Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), which is primarily caused by emissions from vehicle exhausts, for which the national annual mean objective (threshold) is 40 microgrammes per metre cubed to be applied at the façade of residential properties. An hourly objective also exists for NO₂, to be applied along busy shopping streets, and should be considered where the annual mean level is 60 microgrammes per metre cubed or greater. Currently there are 35 monitoring sites within Forest Heath.
- 1.5 Road transport is a major source of air pollution both nationally and locally. The Councils in West Suffolk work with other organisations to maintain and monitor the quality of air in the locality. Suffolk County Council and the Highways Agency are key partners and work with Council Officers to secure good air quality.
- 1.7 Defra have continued to develop a national strategy "UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations", published July 2017. Twenty-eight Local Authorities with significant ongoing air quality problems are identified by Defra in this report and are required to develop local assessments and plans to achieve the statutory nitrogen dioxide limits in the shortest time possible. Forest Heath District Council is not one of the named authorities.

2. Outcomes for 2016-17

- 2.1 For the majority of the District, air quality remains good and continues to show a long term trend of slight year on year improvement. However, we continue to undertake detailed monitoring and have increased monitoring in some urban areas during 2016 to ensure that our monitoring covers all areas of possible concern.
- 2.2 All monitored locations in Forest Heath District Council were below the

national objectives for nitrogen dioxide in 2016, with the highest recorded value being in Newmarket High Street, where an annual average value of 39.4 microgrammes per metre cubed was recorded, which should be compared to the hourly objective for busy shopping streets, which needs to be considered when the annual average exceeds 60 microgrammes per metre cubed.

- 2.3 This committee approved the amendment of the Newmarket Air Quality Management Area (Report No: LIC/FH/17/004, April 2017). This amendment reduced the designated area and has now been enacted through an official order and the details accepted by Defra.
- 2.3 Based on the amended order, your officers installed a further monitoring in 2016 and again in 2017 along a section of the Newmarket Air Quality Management Area, which is centred on Old Station Road due to the presence of sensitive ground floor residential dwellings. The results from this increased monitoring indicate that the remaining designated area may be able to be revoked in the near future.
- 2.4 Although levels of measured pollutants in Forest Heath remain in compliance with the national objectives, your officers are aware that there are negative health impacts related to lower concentrations of certain pollutants, especially particulates. Therefore, work will continue to improve air quality further, as detailed in Section 3 below.
- 2.5 Engagement with key local stakeholders in Brandon is ongoing due to local concerns regarding the volume of traffic travelling through the town. This has included cross boundary discussions relating to historic and current planning decisions.
- 2.6 We are still awaiting publication by Highways England of the A11 Fiveways to Thetford dual carriageway Post Opening Performance Evaluation. This will help us to understand how the traffic movements have changed in the area, especially relating to the A1065 and B1106 to Brandon. Once this information is available, your Officers will continue their work in partnership with Suffolk County Council and key local stakeholders to minimise unnecessary traffic movements through Brandon.
- 2.7 Other actions taken by your Officers over the past year included:
- Commenting on and influencing planning applications to ensure that they have minimum impact on Local Air Quality.
 - Requesting new developments are suitably equipped with electric vehicle charge points to encourage the faster uptake of zero emission vehicles and to ensure developments in the area are suitably futureproofed for the proposed ban of petrol and diesel only vehicles in 2040.
 - Writing to all Forest Heath Hackney Carriage Licence holders reminding them of their legal and social responsibilities around unnecessary idling and undertaking on-the-ground enforcement visits by the Licensing Team to monitor and ensure compliance.
 - Promotion of internal and external grants to assist companies (including taxi companies) in converting their fleet to low and zero

emission vehicles.

- Promotion of zero emission electric vehicles to the general public.

3. Next Steps

3.1 Your officers will continue to undertake the following activities:

- Continue monitoring levels of nitrogen dioxide throughout the District.
- Complete the revised Action Plan for the revised Newmarket Air Quality Management Area.
- Work with air quality and planning colleagues across Suffolk to ensure standardised requirements for electric vehicle charging for new planning applications across the County.
- Continue to promote grants for business fleet improvements.
- Produce business cases for further investment in electric vehicle charging infrastructure
- Engage with stakeholders in areas where there may be concern to explore the need for further action.

4. Additional supporting information

4.1 Appendix 1 - 2017 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) In fulfilment of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 Local Air Quality Management. Provided separately.