

Licensing and Regulatory Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

Title of Report:	West Suffolk Local Air Quality – Progress Report 2017-2018	
Report No:	LIC/FH/18/003	
Report to and date/s:	Licensing and Regulatory Committee – 2 July 2018	
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Lance Stanbury Portfolio Holder for Planning & Growth Tel: 07970 947704 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 on the work undertaken during 2017 to meet Local Air Quality regulations across the District.	
Recommendation:	It is recommended that the Committee 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:	Consultation required with the Department of Environment (Defra) to approve technical elements of the Annual Status Report.	
Alternative option(s):	N/A – statutory duty	
Implications:		
<i>Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<i>Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

<i>Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<i>Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<i>Are there any equality implications? 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 - 2018 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR).	

1. Key issues and air quality background to 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, declaring Air Quality Management Areas (such as that within Newmarket) implementing any statutory and non-statutory actions for the purpose of improving air quality, providing advice on air quality and development.
- 1.4 As part of our statutory duties, the council prepares an annual report for submission to the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), a copy of which is attached (Appendix 1). The report follows the format required by Defra and is of a technical nature. However, the key issues covered in the report are set out below.
- 1.5 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 (µg/m³) 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 µg/m³ or greater. There were 34 monitoring sites within Forest Heath during 2017.
- 1.6 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 documents including the "UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations", published July 2017. Twenty-eight Local Authorities were originally named within the plan, with an additional thirty three being added after a High Court ruling in February 2018. These authorities have significant ongoing air quality problems as identified by Defra modelling and are required to develop local assessments and plans to achieve the statutory nitrogen dioxide limits in the shortest time possible. No Suffolk local authorities are named within the national strategy.

1.8 A further national document that is currently being consulted on is the "Draft Clean Air Strategy". This document aims to tackle a broad range of pollution sources, including domestic, industrial, farming and transport.

2. Outcomes for 2017-18

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 throughout the district.

2.2 All monitored locations in Forest Heath District Council were below the national objectives for nitrogen dioxide in 2017, with the highest recorded value being on London Road in Brandon, where an annual average value of 37.4 µg/m³ was recorded.

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.

2.4 Together with County Council Highways officers, your officers have attended a number of meetings regarding traffic in Brandon and will continue to explore any options that may help to address the concerns of local residents and their representatives with regards to traffic and pollution in the town.

2.5 Your officers installed additional monitoring in 2016 and 2017 within the Air Quality Management Area in Newmarket, 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, although officers recommend a further year of data collection in 2018 prior to any final decision.

2.6 An area of concern to residents and their representatives in Newmarket has been the taxi rank and unnecessary vehicle idling by taxi drivers. Your officers, in close partnership with officers from the Licensing Team have worked to reduce idling throughout 2017. This has resulted in the monitoring point adjacent to the taxi rank showing the largest decrease in pollution levels from 2016 to 2017 in Forest Heath, with a 9% drop in levels recorded.

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 monitor and improve air quality further, as detailed in Section 3 below.

2.7 Other actions taken by your Officers over the past year included:

- Producing an Air Quality Improvement Plan which clearly sets out the statutory and non-statutory work that your Officers are currently undertaking; plan to undertake and aspire to achieve in the medium

term. This is included as an Appendix to the Annual Status Report as provided.

- 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 phasing out of petrol and diesel only vehicles in 2040. We have achieved a number of successes in this regard securing charge points through conditions of planning consents. Examples include the provision of Rapid Electric Vehicle charge points at the proposed Aldi supermarket on Exning Road, Newmarket (DC/17/1597/FUL).
- Promotion of 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.
- 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 - 2018 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) In fulfilment of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 Local Air Quality Management. Provided separately.