Report to the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Communities Scrutiny Committee

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Air Quality Management & Air Quality at Newcastle Bus Station

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Introduction

Local authorities in the UK have statutory duties for managing local air quality under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995.

Further information was requested by members regarding management of air quality, in particular relating to air quality at the bus station, this report aims to provide detail on the current and future work required regarding local air quality management throughout the Borough.

Background

The Council has been carrying out reviews of air quality since December 1997; these involve measuring air pollution and trying to predict how it will change over the next few years. The review process aims to make sure that the national air quality objectives prescribed in the Air Quality Regulations will be achieved throughout the UK by the relevant deadlines. These objectives, as shown in Appendix 1, have been put in place to protect people's health and the environment.

In 2015 four Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) were declared in the Borough where exceedances of the pollutant nitrogen dioxide were identified. The statutory limit for nitrogen dioxide is 40µgm^3 and the pollution is created from vehicles. The four identified exceedance areas were:

- Madeley – an area encompassing one property, Collingwood, Newcastle Road close to the M6 motorway.
- Kidsgrove – one area along Liverpool Road and Hardingswood Road from the junction with Heathcote Street and Gloucester Road.
- Town centre – areas within the ring road, namely London Road, Barracks Road and King Street.
- Porthill/May Bank –adjacent to the southern approach from the Queensway to Porthill Bank and the High Street up to the junction with Basford Park Road.

The bus station is contained within the Town AQMAs and this is shown in Appendix 2.

Questions to be Addressed

What is currently being done in respect of air quality?

The annual status report is currently being collated, this considered air quality for the whole Borough, once completed this will be reviewed by Public Protection Committee and submitted to DEFRA for validation and approval. It is considered that the findings support the previous reviews of air quality and confirms the need for continuing with the AQMAs.

Following the declaration of the air quality management areas, the Council will need to develop and adopt an Air Quality Action Plan with key stakeholders for each of the affected areas. The local authority is then required to produce an 'action plan' to demonstrate how the Authority intends to work towards meeting the air quality objectives within its Air Quality Management Area. By necessity a number of partners will need to be involved in developing the Air Quality Action Plan and identifying agreed measures and timescales for implementation. As the pollution is vehicle related, significant input from the highway authorities will be necessary.

Work to prepare Air Quality Action Plans (AQAP) for the four AQMAs is nearing completion, these detail the plans to improve the air quality in these areas and also details the ongoing monitoring arrangements. Again once completed these plans will be considered by Public Protection Committee and will be verified and approved by DEFRA.

What about Air Quality at the bus station?

The Environment Act and associated technical guidance considers Air Quality at 'relevant locations' this is primarily residential properties. Therefore in relation to air quality monitoring this is completed at the nearest residential premises to the bus station, which is on Barracks Road. This will take into account the air pollution created at the bus station, but also the pollution created from vehicles along Barracks Road.

During the assessment work for the AQMAs the operation of the bus station and the number of buses travelling around the Town was taken into account as part of the vehicle review for all of the emissions within the town centre.

Operation and Controls at the bus Station?

Like a number of cars, many buses are fitted with automatic start stop features which automatically stop the vehicle after 4 minutes of idling. The bus companies have confirmed that drivers are reminded to complete this manually where the bus does not have the automatic stop start feature.

What else can be done to improve air quality at bus station?

Eco-stars – The Staffordshire Local Authorities have partnered together to deliver the ECOSTARS scheme via it appointed consultant. This scheme is aimed at improving fuel efficient driving and recognising good practice through a star rating scheme awarded to vehicle fleet operators. Local bus operators are eligible to apply for the free scheme. http://www.ecostars-uk.com/

Anti Idling campaign – An education campaign to encourage drivers to turn their engines off when parked.

Reporting a smoky bus – Excessively smoky busses can be reported to the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) who will investigate and take action against persistently poor operators https://www.gov.uk/report-smoky-vehicle

Conclusions

We propose to continue to actively monitor and promote controls to improve air quality in accordance with our statutory requirements.

Background Materials

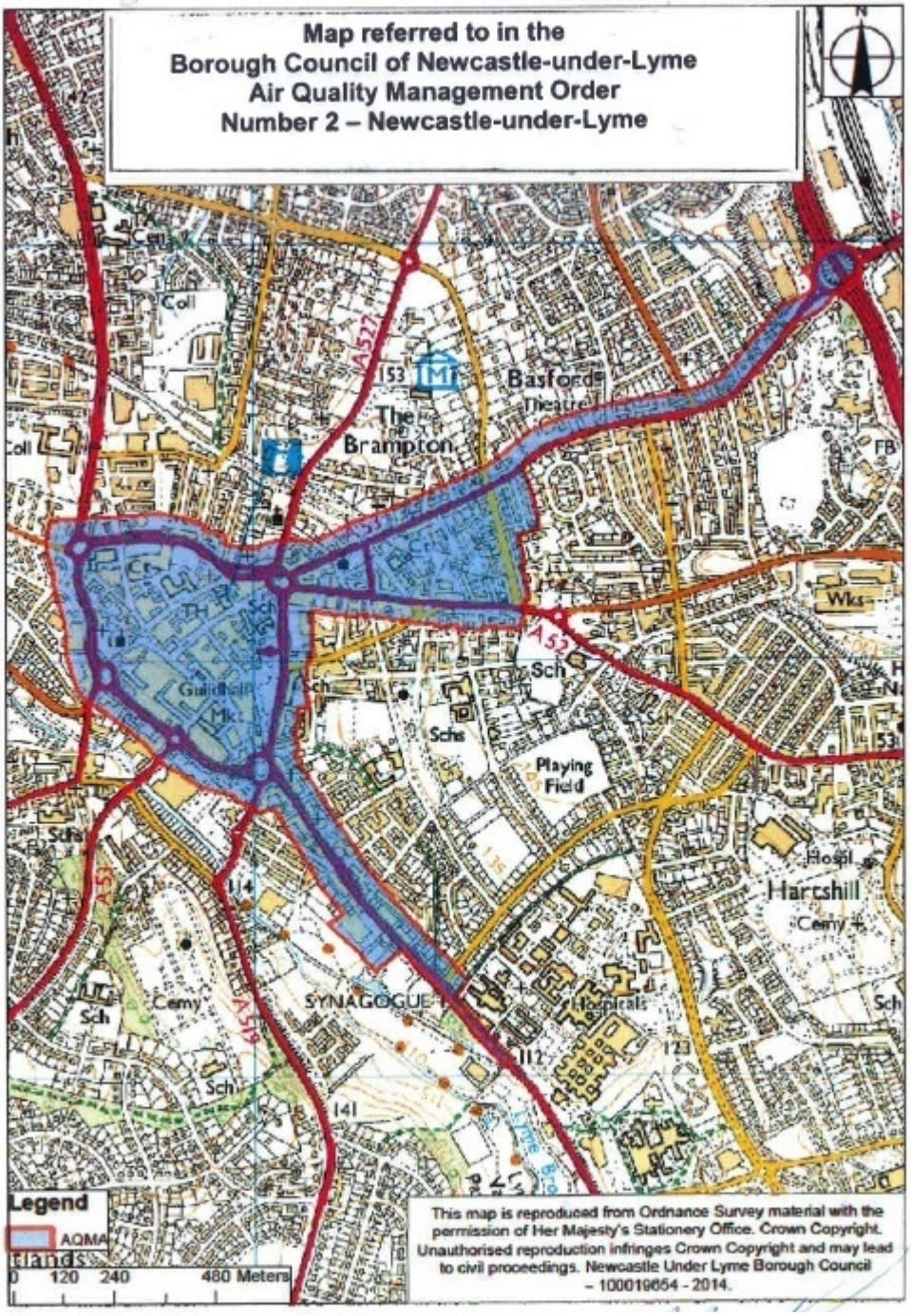
Newcastle-under-Lyme Air quality reports available at Air Quality in Newcastle-under-Lyme | Newcastle-Under-Lyme Borough Council

DEFRA Technical guidance TG09

Appendix 1- **Statutory air quality objectives**

Pollutant	Air Quality Objective		Date to be achieved by
	Concentration	Measured as	
Benzene	16.25 μg/m^3	Running annual mean	31.12.2003
	5.00 μg/m^3	Running annual mean	31.12.2010
1,3-Butadiene	2.25 μg/m^3	Running annual mean	31.12.2003
Carbon monoxide	10.0 mg/m^3	Running 8-hour mean	31.12.2003
Lead	0.5 μg/m^3	Annual mean	31.12.2004
	0.25 μg/m^3	Annual mean	31.12.2008
Nitrogen dioxide	200 μg/m^3 not to be exceeded more than 18 times a year	1-hour mean	31.12.2005
	40 μg/m^3	Annual mean	31.12.2005
Particles (PM_{10}) (gravimetric)	50 μg/m^3, not to be exceeded more than 35 times a year	24-hour mean	31.12.2004
	40 μg/m^3	Annual mean	31.12.2004
Sulphur dioxide	350 μg/m^3, not to be exceeded more than 24 times a year	1-hour mean	31.12.2004
	125 μg/m^3, not to be exceeded more than 3 times a year	24-hour mean	31.12.2004
	266 μg/m^3, not to be exceeded more than 35 times a year	15-minute mean	31.12.2005

Appendix 2 - Town



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