

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S REPORT TO

Licensing and Public Protection Committee

8 October 2025

Report Title: **Environment Act 1995 – Part IV Local Air Quality Management – Annual Status Report 2025**

Submitted by: **Service Director - Regulatory Services**

Portfolios: **Sustainable Environment**

Ward(s) affected: **All**

<u>Purpose of the Report</u>	<u>Key Decision</u>	Yes ☐	No ☒
To advise on the findings of air quality in Newcastle Under-Lyme Borough Council (NULBC), and the annual status report submitted to the Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), which covers the 2024 calendar year in respect of air quality within the Borough.			
<u>Recommendation</u>			
That Members receive the Annual status report 2025.			
<u>Reasons</u>			
To inform committee of the state of local air quality within the Borough for the 2024 calendar year and action being taken to monitor and improve local air quality in respect of transport related Nitrogen Dioxide levels and also particulate matter exposure. The 2025 Annual Status Report (ASR), in fulfilment of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 Local Air Quality Management, as amended by the Environment Act 2021. DEFRA have accepted the report.			

1. Background

- 1.1 Air quality is the largest environmental health risk in the UK. It shortens lives and contributes to chronic illness. Health can be affected both by short-term, high-pollution episodes and by long-term exposure to lower levels of pollution.
- 1.2 Local authorities in the UK have a statutory duties for managing local air quality under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995. District Councils have been required to review and assess air quality within their areas since 1997 for compliance against a range of pollutant objectives.
- 1.3 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 have been put in place to protect people's health and the environment. 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

[Air Quality Objectives Update.pdf](#) will be achieved throughout the UK by the relevant deadlines. These objectives have been put in place to protect people's health and the environment. In relation to people, the objectives apply at the facades of relevant receptors, generally dwellings, hospitals, schools. Workplaces are excluded.

2. Issues

- 2.1 In accordance with its statutory duties, the Borough Council has submitted its Annual Status Reports for 2025 which is a retrospective review of air quality within the Borough for the preceding calendar year. A copy of this report can be found online at [Air quality management – Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council](#)
- 2.2 Previous assessments have identified nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) as the pollutant of concern, with a number of locations within the Borough exceeding the NO₂ annual mean objective. This is principally due to road traffic emissions
- 2.3 This ASR'S consider all new monitoring data and assesses the data against the Air Quality Strategy (AQS) objectives. It also considers any changes that may have an impact on air quality.
- 2.4 The review of nitrogen dioxide diffusion tube monitoring data has not identified any locations outside of the one remaining Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), declared in December 2014 within the Borough where the AQS annual NO₂ objective was exceeded in 2024.
- 2.5 Monitoring of NO₂ concentration in the AQMA's and at a variety of locations across the Borough during 2024 shows, that there has been a general decrease in NO₂, with the majority of areas now being under the annual mean objective.

Town Centre AQMA

- 2.6 Air Quality in this area is influenced by local road traffic and traffic utilising the major arterial routes, which converge on the town centre. There are a number of relevant receptors where the objective applies located at the back of pavement. The network is heavily congested at peak times of the day with high volumes of low-speed mixed stop start traffic. The location of this AMQA can be found online at https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/local-authorities?la_id=170
- 2.7 Part of the AQMA, the A53 corridor from Sandy Lane to Etruria Roundabout, is covered by two ministerial directions relating to exceedances of the EU NO₂ annual mean limit value. The related work and actions, although discussed in the ASR, do not form part of the of the statutory LAQM function because of the differing criteria for measurement locations.
- 2.8 The town centre is experiencing a period of regeneration with provision for developments to provide additional residential units in the coming years. In addition, a number of office spaces can covert to residential use, without requiring consideration of air quality. This has resulted in significant increases in the numbers of relevant receptors within the area where the Council is unable to influence development.
- 2.9 The rural areas of the Borough are facing increased demands for applications for residential development, with people in these areas heavily reliant on cars to access services and employment opportunities within the town centre and wider areas.
- 2.10 Whilst the air quality of some areas remains of concern, only one location, was identified as being in exceedance of any of the Air Quality Objectives in 2024 and only one location, was identified as being within 10% of the annual NO₂ mean objective in 2024. Both are located within AQMA 2 – Town Centre. This is shown in the figure below:



Figure A-2) Trends in annual mean NO₂ concentrations 2020 to 2024 – AQMA 2 Newcastle under Lyme (Town Centre and A53 Corridor)

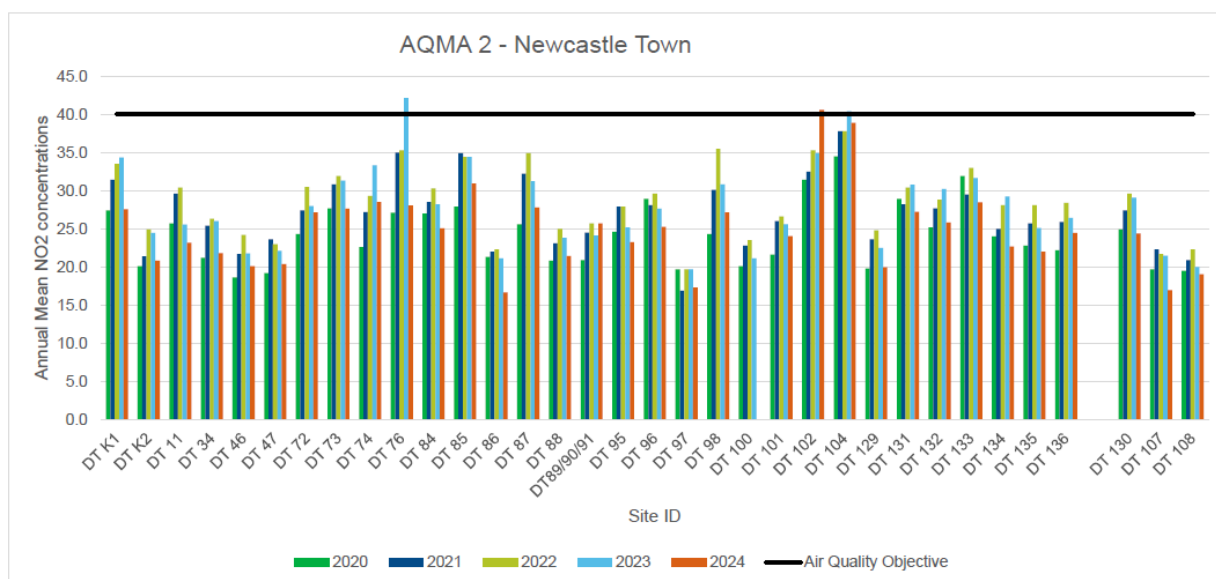


Figure A.2 presents NO₂ annual mean concentrations for sites within AQMA 2 – Newcastle Town between years 2020 to 2024. The monitoring locations are shown within figure D9 and figure D10. Note: DT107, DT108 and DT130 are not located within the AQMA but are in close proximity to it.

- 2.11 Accordingly, this AQMA is required to remain in place until all sites measure an annual mean NO₂ concentration that is consistently below the NO₂ annual mean legal objective for five years running, we will also maintain our monitoring network and undertake a review of the measures within the associated air quality action plan.

Porthill-Wolstanton-Maybank AQMA

- 2.12 Based on the monitoring results, Committee approved the revocation of this AQMA, this will be reflected in the 2026 Annual Status Report.

Kidsgrove AQMA

- 2.13 Based on the monitoring results, Committee approved the revocation of this AQMA, this will be reflected in the 2026 Annual Status Report.

Little Madeley AQMA

- 2.14 Based on the monitoring results, Committee approved the revocation of this AQMA, which has been accepted by DEFRA.

Wider Borough – Outside AQMA's

- 2.15 There has been a general decrease in the annual NO₂ concentrations across the Borough over the past five years and no new areas of actual or at risk of exceedance have been identified.
- 2.16 We will continue to undertake monitoring and screening of activities across the wider Borough.

Particulate Matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5})

2.17 Particulate matter, or PM, is the term used to describe particles found in the air, including dust, dirt and liquid droplets. PM comes from both natural and man-made sources including traffic emissions, burning and Saharan-Sahel dust. These particles can be suspended in the air for long periods of time and can travel across large distances. PM can aggravate lungs, with the finer fractions, PM_{2.5} and below being able to pass from the lungs into the blood stream, potentially leading to a wide range of health effects including premature mortality, allergic reactions, and cardiovascular diseases.

2.18 The 2021 Environment Act saw the UK Government formally declare a PM_{2.5} limit based on WHO recommendations and which is more stringent than current EU requirements. Analysis of data from DEFRA and monitoring undertaken for Walleys Quarry does not show any background exceedances or monitored actual exceedances within the Borough.

3. Recommendation

3.1 That Members receive the Annual status report 2025.

4. Reasons

4.1 The Council is required to take the action outlined in this report in order to fulfil its statutory duties under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995.

5. Options Considered

5.1 To receive the annual status report 2025 **(RECOMMENDED)**

5.2 To make amendments to the proposed report and resubmit to DEFRA for further review.

6. Legal and Statutory Implications

6.1 The Environment Act 1995, Part IV places an obligation on Local Authorities to assess and manage local air quality with the intention of ensuring compliance with relevant regulations. Technical and Policy Guidance made under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995.

7. Equality Impact Assessment

7.1 There are no impacts identified arising from this report.

8. Financial and Resource Implications

8.1 There are no impacts identified arising from this report.

9. Major Risks & Mitigation

9.1 A specific GRACE risk assessment has been prepared for this line of work. Those considered to be the most significant are identified below. Appropriate controls are in place to reduce these risks from being realised.

9.2 Failure to have adequate controls in place to enable the council to comply with its legal obligations under Part IV of the Environment Act 1990 could see the Council

being formally Directed by the relevant minister to undertake any of the actions they see fit, in line with the Act.

10. UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)



11. One Council

Please confirm that consideration has been given to the following programmes of work:

One Commercial Council: ☐

We will make investment to diversify our income and think entrepreneurially.

One Sustainable Council: ☒

We will deliver on our commitments to a net zero future and make all decisions with sustainability as a driving principle

One Digital Council: ☒

We will develop and implement a digital approach which makes it easy for all residents and businesses to engage with the Council, with our customers at the heart of every interaction.

12. Key Decision Information

12.1 This is not a key decision.

13. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions

13.1 There are none relating to this item.

14. List of Appendices

14.1 The Annual Status Report 2022 and 2023 are available to view online at <https://www.newcastlestaffs.gov.uk/all-services/environment/environmental-protection/air-quality-newcastleunder-lyme>

14.2 Air quality Management Area Maps for Newcastle under Lyme can be found online at https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/local-authorities?la_id=170

15. Background Papers

15.1 Environment Act 1995 – Part IV <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1995/25/part/IV>

15.2 Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance (LAQM.TG.22) Available at <https://laqm.defra.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/LAQM-TG22-August-22-v1.0.pdf>

15.3 Air Quality Reports completed available from <https://www.newcastlestaffs.gov.uk/protection/air-quality-management/>

