

Report to Licensing & Public Protection Committee

25 August 2026



Air Quality Action Plan 2026 - 2030

Lead Member:

Cllr Vanessa Renshaw – Housing and Public Protection

Lead Officer:

Andrew Hill – Environmental Protection Team Lead
Gareth Harvey – Environmental Health Manager

Key Decision: No

Ward(s): All

Appendices: Draft Air Quality Action Plan 2026-2030

Report Assurance:

	Name	Date
Lead Officer	Andrew Hill	31/07/2026
Committee Chair	Simon Kasperowicz	13/08/2026

Report Summary

The Air Quality Action Plan 2026–2030 has been prepared in accordance with the Council's statutory duties under the Local Air Quality Management framework. It sets out the actions the Council proposes to take to improve air quality within the Newcastle-under-Lyme Air Quality Management Area between 2026 and 2030.

Recommendations

That the Committee:

- a) Approve the report and provide comments as part of the consultation for the document.
- b) Approve that officers can commence the 28 day public consultation with delegated authority to chair and Portfolio Holder to approve submission to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) following consultation.
- c) Note that members will receive a final copy of the Action Plan in due course for information, following approval by Defra.

1. Background

- 1.1. Under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995, local authorities are required to assess air quality in their area against a range of statutory air quality objectives. Where exceedances are identified, air quality management areas (AQMA's) must be declared and air quality action plans (AQAPs) developed to improve air quality. The action plans must be formally consulted on, with relevant comments considered, before they are formally adopted. Plans are required to be produced every 5 years.
- 1.2. In January 2015, the Borough Council's Public Protection Committee declared four AQMA's in the Borough due to exceedances of the annual mean objective concerned with nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) at a number of "relevant locations". The health concerns associated with this pollutant include direct respiratory issues.
- 1.3. Following these declarations, the Council developed the 2019-2024 Air Quality Action Plan, which was approved by the Licensing and Public Protection Committee and Defra in 2019. The aim of the plan was to reduce levels of Nitrogen Dioxide below the statutory objective level within the four AQMAs specifically, and across the Borough generally. As nitrogen dioxide levels within the Borough are heavily influenced by road traffic emissions, traffic and congestion management supported by a range of complementary measures were the measures principally proposed.
- 1.4. In 2025, after it was evidenced that there was no longer a likely breach of the annual mean nitrogen dioxide national objective level of 40µg/m³ at all the relevant receptors within three of these AQMAs, they were revoked following agreement from both committee and Defra. The remaining AQMA (number 2) is the Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Centre AQMA and the location of this can be accessed via [AQMA Details - DEFRA UK Air - GOV.UK](#)

2. Purpose

- 2.1. To inform committee of the contents of the draft Air Quality Action Plan 2026-2030, prior to Public Consultation and to seek comments from members.

3. Strategic Approach

- 3.1. Given that the document now relates to only one AQMA, rather than the original four, it is specifically focussed on the Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Centre area. The AQAP has once again confirmed that traffic is the main source of nitrogen dioxide in this area.
- 3.2. One of the priorities is to support practical, voluntary travel choices where realistic and affordable, while prioritising reduced congestion, improved traffic flow and continued compliance with air quality objectives.
- 3.3. The original objectives for air quality were all based on the public health impacts of air pollution, so improving air quality in the Town Centre will assist with the overall health of residents.

4. Finance & Resources

- 4.1. Progress on delivering the action plan will be seen in the local results reported to Public Protection Committee and Defra in the annual Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR). This work will be carried out using existing staff and budgets within the Environmental Protection team.
- 4.2. The AQAP does not commit the Council to any new funding commitments. It is envisaged that ongoing projects (internal and external) will reduce nitrogen dioxide levels beneath the threshold, and in the near future the Council will be in a position to revoke the last AQMA.

5. Legal & Governance

- 5.1. Under the provisions of the Part IV of the Environment Act 1995, as the Borough Council has declared one AQMA it is required to produce and consult on the AQAP and to consider any representations prior to them being formally adopted.
- 5.2. Borough Council Officers will be responsible for monitoring the delivery of the identified action plan measures, with the responsibility for implementation resting with the relevant identified body.
- 5.3. By virtue of paragraph 123 of the National Planning Policy Framework, the action plan, once formally adopted, will become a material planning consideration in the determination of future planning applications by both the Borough Council as the Local Planning Authority and also the County Council in its dual roles as the Waste Planning Authority and the Mineral Planning Authority.

- 5.4. Both Highways Authorities for the Borough (Staffordshire County Council and Highways England) are expected to have regard to the AQAP in developing and updating their transport plans for the Borough.

6. Supporting Information

6.1.

Date	Committee	Issue
22/12/2014	Public Protection	Declaration of 4 AQMAs for Newcastle under Lyme
22/01/2019	Public Protection	Approval of AQAP 2019-2024
05/09/2023	Public Protection	Revocation of Madely AQMA
19/08/2025	Public Protection	• Revocation of Kidsgrove AQMA • Revocation of Maybank, Wolstanton and Porthill AQMA

6.2

Please refer to the draft Air Quality Action Plan in Appendix 1.