

Report to Licensing & Public Protection Committee

25 August 2026



2026 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR)

Lead Member:

Cllr Vanessa Renshaw – Housing and Public Protection

Lead Officer:

Gareth Harvey – Environmental Health Manager

Key Decision: No

Ward(s): All

Appendices: 2026 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR)

Report Assurance:

	Name	Date
Lead Officer	Gareth Harvey	6 th August 2026
Committee Chair	Cllr Simon Kasperowicz	
Leader	Cllr Jonathan Gullis	17 th August 2026

Report Summary

To update the Committee on the latest air quality data for Newcastle-under-Lyme and to summarise the Annual Air Quality Status Report that we propose to submit to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) in line with our statutory duties.

The Annual Status Report (ASR) covers the 2025 calendar year and sets out the Council's position in respect of local air quality across the Borough including the action being taken to monitor and improve air quality, particularly in relation to transport-related nitrogen dioxide levels and exposure to particulate matter.

Monitoring undertaken by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council during 2025 confirmed compliance with the annual mean nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) air quality objective across the Borough. Reflecting this sustained improvement, the Kidsgrove and May Bank, Wolstanton & Porthill Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) were revoked during 2025.

However, Air Quality Management Area 2 (Newcastle Town Centre) remains in place as there need to be sustained compliance over a number of years before it can be revoked. The Council will therefore continue monitoring and partnership working to maintain compliance and support future revocation of the remaining AQMA.

The 2025 Annual Status Report has been prepared in fulfilment of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995, Local Air Quality Management, as amended by the Environment Act 2021. The ASR will be submitted to Defra as soon as it is signed off by Committee.

Recommendations

That the Committee:

- a) Receives and notes the 2026 Air Quality Annual Status Report and authorise its submission to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

1. Background

- 1.1. Air pollution is recognised as the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK. Exposure to poor air quality can reduce life expectancy and contribute to a range of adverse health outcomes, including cardiovascular and respiratory diseases. Both short-term exposure to elevated pollution levels and long-term exposure to lower concentrations can have significant impacts on human health, particularly among vulnerable groups such as children, older people, and those with pre-existing health conditions.
- 1.2. Local authorities have statutory responsibilities for the management of local air quality under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995. Since 1997, district councils have been required to periodically review and assess air quality within their areas to check compliance with nationally prescribed air quality objectives for a range of pollutants.
- 1.3. Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council carries out regular air quality assessments across the Borough by monitoring pollutant concentrations and reviewing likely future trends to identify any areas where national air quality objectives may be at risk of being exceeded.

- 1.4. The Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) process seeks to ensure that the [air quality objectives](#) established under the Air Quality Regulations are achieved and maintained, thereby protecting public health. For the purposes of LAQM, the objectives apply at locations of relevant public exposure, including residential properties, schools and healthcare facilities. Workplace exposure is generally excluded from the assessment process.
- 1.5. Monitoring undertaken by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council during 2025 demonstrated overall compliance with the national annual mean nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) air quality objective across the Borough. As a result of sustained improvements in air quality, the former Kidsgrove and May Bank, Wolstanton & Porthill Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) were revoked during 2025.
- 1.6. However, AQMA 2, covering Newcastle Town Centre, remains in place. Although monitoring indicates that air quality within the AQMA is now compliant with the objective, national guidance requires a minimum period of sustained compliance, supported by robust evidence that compliance will continue in the future, before revocation can be considered. The Council will therefore continue to monitor air quality and work with its partners to maintain and build upon the improvements achieved to date.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. To inform committee of the contents of the draft Air Status Report for 2026 and seek permission to submit the final ASR report to Defra.

3. Strategic Approach

- 3.1. **The ASR demonstrates how the Council will:**
 - 3.1.1. **Maintain compliance with air quality objectives through proportionate, evidence-led monitoring and intervention.** Monitoring data for 2025 demonstrated compliance with the annual mean NO₂ objective across the Borough, with ongoing surveillance focused on ensuring improvements are sustained.
 - 3.2. **Secure long-term air quality improvements and support the eventual revocation of Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) 2 (Newcastle Town Centre).** The Council will continue to work with partners to achieve and demonstrate the sustained compliance required before AQMA revocation can be considered.
 - 3.2.1. **Address emissions at source through transport, planning and regulatory measures.** The Council continues to work with Staffordshire County Council and other partners to improve air quality, regulate industrial emissions and influence future development through local planning policies.
 - 3.2.2. **Deliver wider health and economic benefits for Newcastle-under-Lyme.** Improvements to air quality support better public health outcomes, reduce pollution exposure and contribute to creating a more attractive place to live, work, invest and visit.

4. Finance & Resources

- 4.1. Monthly monitoring of nitrogen oxides and preparation of the Annual Status Report (ASR) are undertaken using existing staff resources and budgets within the Environmental Protection team. The ASR does not create any additional funding commitments for the Council.

5. Legal & Governance

- 5.1. Local authorities have a statutory responsibility to review, assess and manage air quality within their areas, with the objective of achieving compliance with national air quality objectives and associated regulatory requirements. The **2026 Annual Status Report (ASR)** has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of **Part IV of the Environment Act 1995**, relating to Local Air Quality Management (LAQM), as amended by the **Environment Act 2021**. The ASR report is based on template provided by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

6. Supporting Information

6.1.

Date	Committee	Issue
22/12/2014	Public Protection	Declaration of 4 AQMAs for Newcastle under Lyme
22/1/2019	Public Protection	Approval of AQAP 2019-2024
5/9/2023	Public Protection	Revocation of Madely AQMA
19/8/2025	Public Protection	• Revocation of Kidsgrove AQMA • Revocation of Maybank, Wolstanton and Porthill AQMA

6.2

Please refer to the 2026 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) in Appendix 1.