

Blaby District Council

Cabinet Executive

Date of Meeting	23 June 2025
Title of Report	Air Quality Annual Status Report 2025 This is a Key Decision and is on the Forward Plan.
Lead Member	Cllr. Les Phillimore - Housing, Community Safety and Environmental Services
Report Author	Environmental Services Manager
Strategic Themes	All Themes: Enabling communities and supporting vulnerable residents; Enhancing and maintaining our natural and built environment; Growing and supporting our economy; Keeping you safe and healthy; Ambitious and well managed Council, valuing our people

1. What is this report about?

- 1.1 To seek approval of the Annual Status Report 2025 for submission to Defra and publication.

2. Recommendations to Cabinet Executive

- 2.1 To approve the Annual Status Report 2025 for appropriate consultation and submission to the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) and publication.
- 2.2 To delegate authority to the Environmental Health, Housing & Community Services Group Manager, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder, to make minor amendments to the Annual Status Report 2025 prior to submission and publication.

3. Reason for Decisions Recommended

- 3.1 It is appropriate for Members to be informed of the air quality monitoring data for the district in 2024.
- 3.2 This is to ensure any final amendments to the ASR report can be made in time for the statutory deadline for submission to Defra by 30th June 2025.

4. Matters to consider

4.1 Background

4.1.1 Air Quality Management

The Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) regime is established by the Environment Act 1995, as amended by the Environment Act 2021, and requires local authorities to assess air quality in their area. Where nationally set Air Quality Objectives (AQOs) are not achieved, local authorities are required to declare Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). For each AQMA, an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) must be produced, describing the measures aimed to reduce pollutant concentrations.

At the beginning of 2024, there were 5 AQMAs in the district. In November 2024, BDC were able to revoke 4 of these areas due to 5 or more years compliance with the AQOs set out by Defra. This decision was approved by both Cabinet and Defra. The areas that were revoked were:

- AQMA 1 – A5460 Narborough Road South
- AQMA 2 – M1 corridor in Enderby and Narborough
- AQMA 3 – M1 corridor between Thorpe Astley and Leicester Forest East
- AQMA 4B – Enderby Road, Whetstone

AQMA 6 in Mill Hill, Enderby remains in place due to an exceedance recorded in 2023 above the AQOs. Continuous monitoring in 2024 has shown a small increase in Nitrogen Dioxide levels in some locations within the AQMA. These increased levels remain compliant with the Air Quality Objectives and are likely to be as a result of increased development in the area.

In November 2024, following public consultation, a new AQMA was declared in Braunstone Town as approved by both Cabinet and Defra. This AQMA was declared due to an exceedance of the AQOs in 2022 and is known as:

- AQMA 7- Lubbesthorpe Road, Braunstone Town.

Air quality monitoring is the main method for assessment of the current levels of air pollutants, against nationally set AQO. Each year an Annual Status Report (ASR) is completed and submitted to Defra, summarising the air quality monitoring results for the district.

The ASR is prepared using a template, published by Defra, to be submitted by 30th June each year. It has a public facing executive summary followed by a more technical main report. There are appendices which include detailed air quality monitoring results, quality assurance techniques and maps presenting data, for areas where monitoring takes place.

Monitoring of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) and Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀) has continued throughout 2024. The Council currently have 5 Continuous Monitoring stations, 28 Diffusion Tubes, and 15 low-cost monitors (Zephyrs®). Scheduled calibrations on the five Continuous Monitoring stations were maintained throughout the year, the Diffusion Tubes were changed in accordance with the national Diffusion Tube Calendar, and the Zephyrs® were also correctly maintained.

4.1.2 Overview of Results

The results of all monitoring undertaken in 2024 are shown in Appendix D of the ASR. The maps include all data obtained over the last five years, where relevant, to enable comparison and allow for assessment of the future of an AQMA.

All data has been ratified and subject to the relevant corrections in accordance with Defra guidance. The results indicate that there are no exceedances of the AQOs for any of the monitoring locations in 2024 once distance corrected.

The table below shows the highest observed NO₂ concentrations (once distance corrected) in the two AQMAs over the last five years. Results indicated an overall decrease across the Blaby district compared to 2022 and 2023. The AQOs set out by Defra state the annual mean objective is not to exceed 40µg/m³.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
AQMA 6	29	29	40	36	35
AQMA 7	21	20	43	36	30

All results in the table are NO₂ levels in units µg/m³

All monitoring locations across the district are reviewed annually to ensure that best use is being made of our monitoring resources.

The Council is committed to continually monitoring air quality throughout the district, with particular emphasis on the current and recently revoked AQMAs. In addition to the statutory duties set out by Defra, BDC will continue to work on projects funded by air quality grants, such as Let's Go Electric and Particulates Matter.

Let's Go Electric enabled the Council to purchase its first electric vehicles in its commitment to Net Zero and cleaner air. The Particulates Matter Project will see a public portal launched in the summer enabling residents to view air quality in real time. The Council will continue to seek out new opportunities to help improve air quality across the district.

The Environmental Act 2021 states that the Council is required to produce an Air Quality Action Plan to address the issues in the AQMAs. This document will

outline actions that the Council and stakeholders will take to improve the air quality within the AQMAs and the district as a whole. The document has been produced in draft format, and once approved by Cabinet and Defra, will be released for consultation. The final version is expected to be approved and published in late 2025/early 2026.

4.2 Proposals

Members to approve the Annual Status Report 2025 for submission to the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) and publication.

That delegated authority is given to the Group Manager of Environmental Health, Housing & Community Services, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder, to make minor amendments to the ASR 2025 prior to submission and publication.

4.3 Relevant Consultations

The ASR has been sent to Public Health and Highways colleagues at Leicestershire County Council.

4.4 Significant Issues

No significant issues have been identified relating to Human Rights, legal Implications, Human Resources, Equalities, or Public Health Inequalities. The data in this report demonstrates that the council is committed to monitoring and undertaking action to improve air quality in its area, which has a positive impact on climate change.

5. Environmental impact

- 5.1 A positive environmental impact can be noted from the monitoring of air quality across the district affording an understanding of how different areas are impacted and action plan measures which can be implemented. Additionally, there are benefits from increasing knowledge and raising awareness for the general public.

6. What will it cost and are there opportunities for savings?

- 6.1 The direct costs associated with the ASR are met from existing approved budgets. There have been small savings from the reduction of monitoring as part of a review. The direct costs of declaring an AQMA are included in the approved budgets.

7. What are the risks and how can they be reduced?

7.1

Current Risk	Actions to reduce the risks
Not to submit the ASR to Defra for appraisal by 30 June 2025	Submission of the ASR is a statutory requirement. It has been completed in a timely fashion to enable it to be submitted to Defra on time, following consideration by Cabinet.
Not to submit the AQAP within the required 18 months from declaration of an AQMA- May 2026	Submission of the AQAP is a statutory requirement. The draft version has been completed in a timely fashion to allow adequate time for relevant consultation period and approvals.

8. Other options considered

- 8.1 Completion and submission of the ASR is a statutory requirement and therefore there are no other options.
- 8.2 Revocations and declarations of AQMAs have to comply with the provisions of the Environment Act 1995 (as amended) and associated Defra guidance, therefore there are no other options.

9. Appendix

- 9.1 Appendix A – Annual Status Report 2025

10. Background paper(s)

- 10.1 There are no relevant background papers for this report.

11. Report author's contact details

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