

## Blaby District Council

### Cabinet Executive

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	11 May 2026
<b>Title of Report</b>	<b>Annual Status Report 2026</b> This is a Key Decision and is on the Forward Plan.
<b>Lead Member</b>	<b>Cllr. Susan Findlay - Housing, Community Safety and Environmental Services</b>
<b>Report Author</b>	Environmental Services Manager
<b>Strategic Themes</b>	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 Air Quality Annual Status Report 2026 for submission to Defra and publication

#### 2. Recommendation(s) to Cabinet Executive

- 2.1 To approve the Annual Status Report 2026 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 consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to make minor amendments to the 2026 Annual Status Report prior to its submission and publication, and to make any further necessary updates should DEFRA revise the relevant guidance or bias parameters.

#### 3. Reason for Decisions Recommended

- 3.1 It is appropriate for Members to be involved and to approve the report for air quality monitoring data for the district in 2025.
- 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 30<sup>th</sup> June 2026.

## 4. Matters to consider

### 4.1.1 Background

#### 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 2025, there were two designated AQMAs within the Blaby District:

- AQMA 6: Mill Hill, Enderby
- AQMA 7: Lubbesthorpe Road, Braunstone Town

AQMA 6: Mill Hill, Enderby, is located in a high-traffic area, with a historic wall lining a significant portion of the site and several industrial installations in close proximity to the north-west. Continuous monitoring indicates that pollutant levels have fallen and are now below the AQO limits, with the area remaining compliant for the past three years. However, due to large-scale planned developments to the north and east of Enderby, it is considered prudent to retain the AQMA designation at this time.

AQMA 7: Lubbesthorpe Road, Braunstone Town, is a residential area situated in a busy location opposite a major retail park and adjacent to key transport routes, including the M1 and the A5460, a main route into the city of Leicester. The most recent exceedance of the AQOs was recorded in 2022. However, due to delays in the Council's Annual Status Report (ASR) in 2023, the AQMA was not formally declared until November 2024, following the required consultation period. Since its declaration, no further exceedances have been recorded, and monitoring data indicates a continuing trend of improving air quality and sustained compliance. On this basis, the Council anticipates that the AQMA may be suitable for revocation in late 2026, subject to the achievement of three consecutive years of compliant monitoring data.

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 30<sup>th</sup> 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 (NO<sub>2</sub>) and Particulate Matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) continued across the district throughout 2025. The Council operated four

continuous monitoring stations, twenty-eight diffusion tube locations, and a small network of low-cost monitors (Zephyrs®) to review and record air quality data. Scheduled calibrations for the continuous monitoring stations were conducted consistently throughout the year, diffusion tubes were changed in line with the national monitoring calendar, and the Zephyr® units were also appropriately maintained to ensure data reliability.

#### 4.1.2 Overview of results

The results of all monitoring undertaken in 2025 are shown in the maps in Appendix D of the ASR. The maps include all data obtained over the last 5 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 there are no exceedances of the AQOs for any of the monitoring locations for 2025.

The table below shows the highest observed NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations (once distance and bias corrected) in the two AQMAs over the last five years. Results indicated an overall decrease across the Blaby district since the last recorded exceedances in 2022. The AQOs set out by Defra state the annual mean objective is not to exceed 40µg/m<sup>3</sup>.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
AQMA 6	29	29	<b>40</b>	36	35	33
AQMA 7	21	20	<b>43</b>	36	30	23

All results in the table are NO<sub>2</sub> levels in units µg/m<sup>3</sup>

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

The Council remains committed to continuous air quality monitoring across the district, with particular focus on current and recently revoked AQMAs. In 2025, the Council produced a new Air Quality Action Plan for 2025–2029, which was approved by Cabinet in November and by Defra in December. The plan sets out a series of measurable actions for both the Council and its partners to support ongoing improvements in air quality across the district over the next five years.

## 4.2 Proposal(s)

- 4.2.1 To approve the Annual Status Report 2026 for appropriate consultation and submission to the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), and publication.

4.2.2 To delegate authority to the Environmental Health, Housing & Community Services Group Manager, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to make minor amendments to the 2026 Annual Status Report prior to its submission and publication, and to make any further necessary updates should DEFRA revise the relevant guidance or bias parameters.

4.3 Relevant Consultations

The ASR has been sent to Public Health Leicestershire

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**

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.

No Net Zero and Climate Impact Assessment (NZCIA) is required for this report.

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

6.1 The direct costs associated with the ASR relate to existing officer time and are met from within approved budgets. There are no additional financial commitments arising from this report. A review of the air quality monitoring network has resulted in minor cost efficiencies, although these are not significant enough to quantify separately.

**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 2026	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.

**8. Other options considered**

8.1 Completion and submission of the ASR is a statutory requirement and therefore there are no other options.

**9. Appendix**

9.1 Appendix A – Annual Status Report 2026

**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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