

Cheltenham Borough Council

Cabinet – 18 October 2011

Cheltenham Borough Air Quality Management Area & Revocation of (lower) Bath Road Air Quality Management Area Report of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Safety

Accountable member	Cabinet Member Housing and Safety, Councillor Klara Sudbury
Accountable officer	Head of Public Protection, Barbara Exley
Accountable scrutiny committee	Social & Community
Ward(s) affected	All
Key Decision	No
Executive summary	<p>The Environment Act 1995 and associated regulations require that local authorities assess outdoor air pollution against national objectives. Monitoring of nitrogen dioxide in Cheltenham has identified a number of new locations where the annual mean objective limit of 40ug/m³ has been exceeded. The existing AQMA (Air Quality Management Area) on (lower) Bath Road continues to exceed the national objective for nitrogen dioxide and will be revoked and included within a new Borough-wide AQMA.</p> <p>A Detailed Assessment for the nitrogen dioxide at six locations has been carried out, and there is expected to be continuing breaches of annual nitrogen dioxide at these locations until significant traffic control measures are implemented. The Detailed Assessment is attached to this report as Appendix 1.</p>
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Cheltenham Borough Council declares a new Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) to cover the whole of Cheltenham Borough and revokes the current AQMA located in the portion of (lower) Bath Road and High Street.2. Cheltenham Borough Council endorses the joint working with the County Council as the Transport Authority in the development and implementation of the required Further Assessment and Air Quality Action Plan to address this issue.

Financial implications	<p>Declaring the AQMA will commit the Council to producing a Further Assessment Report within 12 months and an Action Plan within 18 months which will involve some expenditure. The monitoring of the whole of Cheltenham AQMA will be met from existing Air Pollution budgets. Further resources, estimated between £7,500 and £10,000 will be required to carry out an Assessment Report of the results and the need for further exposure modelling. This expenditure will either be met by a request for a growth bid in 2012/13 or a virement from another public protection budget.</p> <p>Contact officer: Sarah Didcote E-mail: sarah.didcote@cheltenham.gov.uk Tel no: 01242 264125</p>
Legal implications	<p>The Environment Act 1995 Section 83(1) places a duty on Local Authorities to designate those areas where the air quality objectives are unlikely to be met as Air Quality Management Areas.</p> <p>Contact officer: Sarah Farooqi E-mail: sarah.farooqi@cheltenham.gov.uk Tel no: 01242 775074</p>
HR implications (including learning and organisational development)	<p>It is anticipated that the declaration of the AQMA will be delivered within existing resources.</p> <p>Contact officer: Amanda Attfield E-mail: amanda.attfield@cheltenham.gov.uk Tel no: 01242 264186</p>
Key risks	<p>If the report is not approved, the Council will be in breach of its statutory obligations under the Environment Act 1995.</p>
Corporate and community plan Implications	<p>Declaring an AQMA will ensure that Cheltenham Borough Council, together with Gloucestershire County Council, being the Transport Authority, are working towards the corporate strategy objectives of :</p> <p><u>Enhancing & Protecting our Environment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheltenham’s natural & built environment is enhanced and protected • Carbon emissions are reduced and Cheltenham is able to adapt to the impacts of climate change <p><u>Strengthening our Economy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We attract more visitors and investors to Cheltenham <p><u>Strengthening our communities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities feel safe and are safe • People are able to lead healthy lifestyles
Environmental and climate change implications	<p>The environmental benefit of reducing nitrogen dioxide levels in Cheltenham should also cause a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions.</p>

1. Background

- 1.1 The National Air Quality Strategy has required local authorities since 1997 to assess the quality of the outdoor air in their district that residents are exposed to. Assessments are made for seven pollutants and there are separate national objectives for each pollutant. Six pollutants are gases and the seventh is fine dust; only one of these pollutants, nitrogen dioxide, is a concern.

- 1.2** Nitrogen dioxide is a brown gas produced as a by-product when fossil fuel is burnt. Man-made sources are combustion, such as burning coal and oil for electricity supply or heating, motor vehicles and industry. The main national sources are power stations, industry and road transport. As an urban area, Cheltenham's nitrogen dioxide will mainly come from road transport.
- 1.3** The main effect of breathing in raised levels of nitrogen dioxide is the increased likelihood of respiratory problems and increased levels of nitrogen dioxide are more likely to affect people with asthma.
- 1.4** Nitrogen dioxide has been measured in Cheltenham since 1996. Small test tube-like devices (diffusion tubes) are clipped to lampposts or building facades at 40 locations around the town; most sites are by busy roads ("roadside") and some in residential areas ("urban background"). The diffusion tubes are changed monthly and give reliable annual average data. The authority has also leased an air quality monitoring station located on Swindon Road for a period of 12 months. This is a unit containing a nitrogen dioxide analyser which operates continuously and provides real-time data on nitrogen dioxide pollution levels.
- 1.5** There are two national objectives for nitrogen dioxide; averaged over one hour and averaged over one year. The one hour objective is 200 µg/m³ (micrograms per cubic metre of air), but this is never exceeded so it not considered further. The year-long objective is 40µg/m³ and is exceeded at six locations in Cheltenham where there is potential human exposure. These locations are identified in the Detailed Assessment Report. It was considered appropriate to declare one AQMA to cover the whole of the Borough rather than six individual AQMA's for ease of management and subsequent Action Planning.

2. Reasons for recommendations

- 2.1** The Environment Act 1995 and associated regulations require that local authorities assess outdoor air pollution against national objectives. Monitoring of nitrogen dioxide in Cheltenham has identified a number of new locations where the annual mean objective limit of 40ug/m³ has been exceeded. The existing AQMA (Air Quality Management Area) on (lower) Bath Road continues to exceed the national objective for nitrogen dioxide and will be revoked and included within a new Borough-wide AQMA.

3. Alternative options considered

- 3.1** No other options have been considered.

4. Consultation and feedback

- 4.1** The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has been consulted and has accepted Cheltenham Borough Council's Detailed Assessment Report.

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Appendices	Detailed Assessment for new Air Quality Management Area 2011
Background information	DEFRA is consulting on updated draft air quality plans that set out the action taken and being planned at national, regional and local levels to meet the annual and hourly EU NO ₂ limit values in England as soon as possible. For further details please see the consultation documents at http://www.defra.gov.uk/consult/2011/06/09/air-quality/

