

Report to Bradford On Avon Area Board.

Modification of the Air Quality Management Area Order.

Purpose of the report

This report seeks to inform the Area Board of:

- Trends in air quality in Masons Lane, Bradford On Avon.
- The achievement of the annual mean objective for fine particulates (PM₁₀)
- The intention to amend the Air Quality Management Area Order to remove reference to fine particulates as the objective has been achieved and surpassed in line with legal requirements and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) recommendation.

Introduction

Wiltshire, in general, enjoys very good air quality. However, there are some isolated hotspots of poor air quality related to road traffic.

Local authorities are required to review and assess local air quality in accordance with the provisions of the Environment Act 1995, and statutory guidance to assess compliance with air quality objectives contained in UK regulations. Where objectives are exceeded it is a legal requirement to declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

An AQMA was declared in Bradford on Avon in 2001 in respect of two objectives:

- Annual mean objective for nitrogen dioxide (40ug/m³)
- Annual mean objective for fine particulate matter, PM₁₀ (40ug/m³)

It should be noted that responsibility for achieving EU air quality limit values and standards lies with national governments and so we are concerned here with UK legislation. However, both pieces of legislation use the same objectives. How compliance with the objectives is calculated differs; in many ways the current UK legislation is tougher, as EU legislation uses levels modelled that are averaged over 1km squares and UK legislation focuses on local hot spots. UK legislation is subject to review at present, following Brexit. The Environment Bill is currently passing through parliament, which brings together Air Quality, Climate Change and carbon reduction legislation. It will also create a new body to be known as the Office of Environmental Protection with oversight of environmental matters.

Levels of PM₁₀

Long term monitoring of fine particulate matter has been undertaken in Bradford on Avon. Prior to the original order being made the levels of PM₁₀ were found to be in excess of the annual mean objective of 40ug/m³ prescribed by the Air Quality Regulations.

New high precision real time monitoring equipment approved by the DEFRA was first installed in Masons Lane to monitor levels of nitrogen dioxide and fine particulates in 2013 and this continues through to today. The levels of PM₁₀ have been below the objective throughout this time.

The real time data collected has reassured Wiltshire Council that levels are nearly 50% below the objective. In 2019 the level was 23ug/m³. We have continued to monitor fine particulate levels to ensure we can be certain about the trend and we are now at a point where DEFRA has requested that fine particulates are removed from the AQMA order.

Levels of Nitrogen Dioxide

Levels of nitrogen dioxide have remained above the objective level in Masons lane and Market Street. The trends are presented in the graphs in Appendix 1.

Submission of this agenda item to the Area Board has been delayed owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. As you are all aware over the last few months restrictions on movement have been in place and we can report in May 2020 we recorded the lowest levels of nitrogen dioxide we have found since monitoring began in the late 1990s. None of the 78 diffusion tubes across the county showed levels above 40mg/m³.

There are no plans to move the real time monitoring station from the town and we will continue to monitor both nitrogen dioxide and nitrogen oxides using it and our diffusion tube network.

Air Quality Strategy & Action Plan

In the pursuit of continuing improvements in air quality Wiltshire Council published a revised Air Quality Strategy for Wiltshire in 2019 which is available on the Wiltshire Air Quality Website.

Currently the Air Quality Action Plan for Wiltshire is being reviewed. Local communities with AQMAs will be consulted via their Area Board as part of the development and adoption of the updated plan. This is likely to be in the early part of 2021.

Action required

- This report updates and informs the Area Board of the achievement of a long-term trend of compliance with the annual mean objective for PM₁₀ and that the Air Quality Management Area Order is to be modified removing reference to PM₁₀.
This decision to amend the AQMA Order is delegated to Cabinet member for Public Protection Services, Cllr Simon Jacobs.

The revised order is attached at Appendix 2 and the existing order at Appendix 3.

G Tomsett
Team Manager
Environmental Control & Protection Team.

February 2020

List of appendices:

Appendix 1: Air Quality Data

Appendix 2: Modified Order

Appendix 3: Existing Order.