



LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL

Promoting City, Coast & Countryside

Lancaster City Council

Air Quality Action Planning Update - Lancaster Air Quality
Management Area

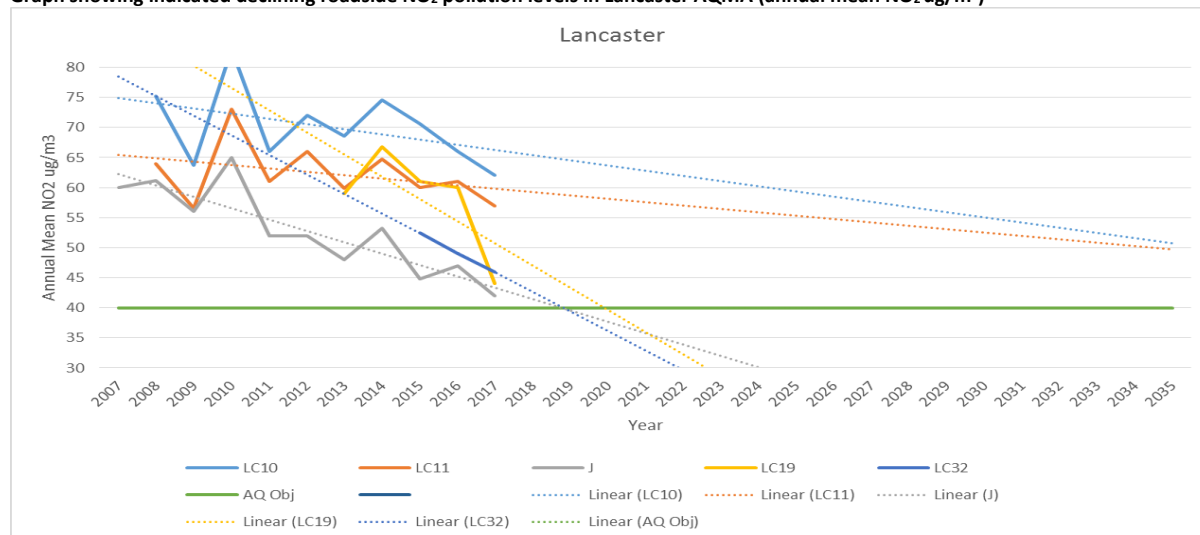
October 2018

Air Quality Action Planning Update - Lancaster AQMA

In 2013 Lancaster City Council produced and adopted a new Air Quality Strategy for Lancaster (available at: <https://www.lancaster.gov.uk/environmental-health/environmental-protection/air-quality/air-quality-reviews-and-assessments>). The Strategy was considered necessary as previous plans had proved insufficient to address the issues presented. More recently it has also become clear that a key failing has been that vehicle emissions regulated through Euro emission standards have not delivered expected pollution reductions. The Strategy sets the aims and objectives for local air quality and set a route and process to provide 'the best environment and structure to achieve an agreed successful outcome'.

Although air quality issues are changing e.g. there are arising concerns over the increased use of solid fuels, the current issue giving rise to the designation of the districts three Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA), are emissions from road traffic, specifically emissions of nitrogen oxides. The Lancaster AQMA presents a particular difficult situation, as the canyoned and often congested gyratory system, results in yearly exceedances of the annual mean Objective for nitrogen dioxide. The most recent results indicate that in parts of the gyratory levels are still significantly above the Objective level at around 60ug/m³ (the annual mean nitrogen dioxide Objective is 40ug/m³). To address this issue significant transport changes and actions are required, most of which are beyond the control of the City Council. Interaction with key partners (particularly County Council Highways and planning sections of both councils) was therefore also a key concern of the Strategy adopted in 2013.

Graph showing indicated declining roadside NO₂ pollution levels in Lancaster AQMA (annual mean NO₂ ug/m³)



Traffic on the Lancaster Gyratory



To deliver the Strategy the County Council proposed that the air quality delivery be incorporated into the then arising Transport Masterplan for Lancaster (available at: <http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/council/strategies-policies-plans/roads-parking-and-travel/highways-and-transport-masterplans/lancaster-district-highways-and-transport-masterplan/>). Through consultation on the detail of the plan, this approach was agreed and a schedule was put in place for the production of a new Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) for the Lancaster district based on the aims, objectives and process set out in the Air Quality Strategy for Lancaster. The Transport Masterplan was adopted in October 2016. The AQAP is scheduled to be evaluated in 2018/19 and adopted in 2019/20 (see p.52 of the Transport Masterplan). Progress has unfortunately been delayed due to the need to obtain representative baseline traffic count data following the opening of the Bay Gateway and the reopening of the Greyhound Bridge following required repair work.

Some elements of the Masterplan/AQAP have however already been delivered e.g. delivery of the Bay Gateway link road, adoption of new planning guidance, and this will continue to take place as matters in hand progress. Overall pollution levels are considered to be declining, however with levels still significantly above objective levels and potential for new development to impact on the AQMA, a new action plan offering a combination of approaches is clearly still needed to meet compliance with air quality objectives as soon as possible in the centre of Lancaster. Actions being currently considered (contained within the transport masterplan) will comprise of a number of approaches, including a by-pass for Galgate, the development of a bus rapid transit route across the district, traffic route/management changes (particularly changes to the gyratory system in Lancaster), measures to facilitate the use of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles, measures to reduce emissions from buses and measures to facilitate and promote cycling and walking. It may also be necessary to consider actions such as the introduction and operation of a Clean Air Zone, dependant on the collected impact assessed outcome of other actions. A meeting was held in April 2018 to set out a process to assess measures that will form the basis of Air Quality Action Plan proposals. It is likely that that key measures in the arising air quality action plan will relate to those put forward in the transport masterplan, however, wider formal consultation on measures that may form part of the plan will commence in 2018 and continue to be open during the first half of 2019. After actions have been gather, assessment will then take place to consider the likely impact of the measures and provide a recommended plan of actions which will be subject to consultation and finally adoption in

2020. The assessment process will work using the outputs of work carried out or commissioned by both Lancaster City and Lancashire County Councils.

Given the traffic emissions are the key pollution source giving rise to the designation of the districts three AQMA's and the County Council's role as Highways authority (and for public health), it is considered that the close alignment of the Transport Masterplan and AQAP provides the best approach and opportunity to provide an effective, properly assessed, solution to air quality issues within the district.

Please be aware that a progress report (Annual Status Report) on air quality is provided to Defra on an annual basis and is available at: <https://www.lancaster.gov.uk/environmental-health/environmental-protection/air-quality/air-quality-reviews-and-assessments>

As part of the process to produce a new air quality action plan for the Lancaster district we are currently consulting on actions that could be included within the plan. If you would like suggest any action the could be used to improve air quality in Lancaster or the wider district please send your suggestions to:

environmentalhealth@lancaster.gov.uk

(please present the email subject as ' Suggested Air Quality Action Plan measures for Lancaster District')

or send by post to:-

FAO Paul Cartmell,
Senior Environmental Health Officer,
Lancaster City Council,
Morecambe Town Hall,
Marine Road,
Morecambe
LA4 5AF

The consultation will remain open until the 30 June 2019.