
Air Quality Update 2025

Committee considering report:	Joint Public Protection Committee
Date of Committee:	08 December 2025
Chair of Committee:	Councillor Tom McCann
Date JMB agreed report:	17 November 2025
Report Author:	Suzanne McLaughlin
Forward Plan Ref:	JPPC

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To inform the Joint Public Protection Committee (JPPC) of the submission and results of the annual air quality reports for Bracknell Forest (BFC), West Berkshire Council (WBC) and Wokingham Borough (WokBC). These reports are for the monitoring data calendar year 2024.
- 1.2 To inform the JPPC of the proposed consultation on the revocation of the Crowthorne Air Quality Management Area.

2. Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 2.1 **NOTES** the contents of the Air Quality Annual Status Reports as set out in Appendix **A** for Bracknell Forest , Appendix **C** for West Berkshire Council and Appendix **E** for Wokingham Borough Council.
- 2.2 **NOTES** the feedback from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) on the reports as set out in Appendix **B** for Bracknell Forest Council (BFC) Appendix **D** West Berkshire Council (WBC) and Appendix **F** for Wokingham Borough Council (WokBC).
- 2.3 **APPROVES** that consultation for the potential revocation of the BFC Crowthorne Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) be undertaken in accordance with the recommendations from DEFRA, in Appendix **G**.
- 2.4 **NOTES** the progress on the measures to improve air quality set out in each report.
- 2.5 **APPROVES** the ongoing and planned future measures to improve air quality set in each report.

3. Implications and Impact Assessment:

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	<p>Work relating to Air Quality monitoring and reporting is funded from the general revenue budget allocated to the Public Protection Service. Several proposals in the action plan continue to require additional funding to implement whilst others are relatively low cost and are covered from the PPP revenue budget.</p> <p>Grant funding from DEFRA has been available and PPP have applied annually up to 2023. Since 2024 this funding stream is no longer available.</p>
Human Resource:	<p>Staff who undertake this work are a shared resource with Wokingham BC under the new IAA with Wokingham.</p> <p>One benefit of the shared service is the ability to have staff that specialise in areas such as this and the service is fortunate to have several officers with significant expertise on environmental matters generally and air quality specifically.</p>
Legal:	<p>Under the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) system local authorities are legally required to assess air quality in their area and designate Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) if improvements are necessary.</p> <p>Where an AQMA is designated, one in Bracknell Forest (Crowthorne High Street) and one in Wokingham Borough (Wokingham Town Centre) local authorities are required to produce an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) describing the pollution reduction measures it will put in place. Where the pollutant levels no longer exceed the Objectives then the AQMA should be revoked.</p> <p>Where a Local Authority no longer has any AQMA then an Air Quality Strategy is to be produced. Where a Local Authority still has an AQMA these are to be regularly reviewed and must be revised no later than every five years.</p>
Risk Management:	<p>This is a legal requirement under the Environment Act 2005. Failure to comply with our statutory obligations could present the risk of challenge to the PPP partner authorities.</p>
Property:	<p>There are no direct property implications arising from this report.</p>
Policy:	<p>The Inter-Authority Agreement (IAA) identified Environmental Protection as one of the five Strategic Priorities for the Joint Public Protection Committee.</p>

	<p>Under this heading the Committee in turn identified air quality as a priority for 2021/22.</p> <p>West Berkshire has declared a climate emergency. They have embedded Air Quality improvements into their Environment Strategy and Climate Emergency Action Plans.</p> <p>Bracknell Forest Council's Climate Change Strategy was completed and published in January 2021 and has a target of net carbon zero by 2050.</p> <p>Wokingham Borough Council's Climate Emergency Strategy was dated September 2025 and has a target of carbon neutrality by 2030.</p>			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		x		No specific groups are affected by the contents of the proposals as there are no decisions being made. Air quality can be particularly harmful to the young, elderly, pregnant and those suffering ill health. Consideration to all these matters is given in this report and appendices and / or the national clean air strategy.
B Will the proposed decision has an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		No specific groups are affected by the contents of the proposals as there are no decisions being made. Air quality can be particularly harmful to the young, elderly, pregnant and those suffering ill health. Consideration to all these matters is given in this report and appendices and / or the national clean air strategy.
Environmental Impact:	x			<p>Under the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) system local authorities are legally required to assess air quality in their area and designate Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) if improvements are necessary. Where an AQMA is designated, local authorities are required to produce an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) describing the pollution reduction measures it will put in place.</p> <p>These reports are therefore designed to have a positive impact on the environment.</p>

Health Impact:	x			<p>The Air Quality Objectives have been put in place to protect people's health and the environment.</p> <p>Although there has been a reduction in air pollution since the 1970s, poor air quality is still the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK. It shortens lives and reduces quality of life, particularly amongst the most vulnerable, the young and old, and those living with health conditions.</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring and where appropriate the creation of action plans is designed to improve the quality of lives of our residents.</p>
ICT or Digital Services Impact:		x		<p>None</p> <p>The Air Quality Status Reports are published on the PPP website.</p>
PPP Priorities:	x			<p>The Inter-Authority Agreement (IAA) identified Protecting and Improving Health as one of the five overarching themes with Environmental Protection one of the Strategic priorities for the Joint Public Protection Committee. Under this heading the Committee in turn identified improved air quality as a priority for 2021- 2024 and in the current Strategic Assessment 2024-2027.</p>
Data Impact:		X		None
Consultation and Engagement:	Each local authority within PPP is required to submit an Annual Status Report (ASR) to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) each year and a template is provided.			
Other Options Considered:	None – The production of the reports is a statutory requirement.			

4. Executive Summary

- 4.1 Local authorities are required to submit an Annual Status Report (ASR) to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) each year and a template is provided. The overall aim of this document is to report on progress in achieving reductions in concentrations of emissions relating to relevant pollutants below air quality objective levels. It is also where local authorities identify new or changing sources of emissions.
- 4.2 On completion, local authorities should submit their report to the Secretary of State (DEFRA) for consideration, who will provide comments back in a timely manner and to which the local authorities are expected to have regard.
- 4.3 The core requirements of the ASR:
- To report progress on the implementation of measures in the local air quality action plan and other measures and their impact in reducing concentrations below air quality objectives.
 - To provide a summary of monitoring/modelling data (either locally retrieved and/or from the national network) to assess the air quality situation in the area and the likelihood of air quality breaches, and to provide the necessary evidence base for the impact of air quality measures.
 - To report on significant new developments that might affect local air quality.
 - To encourage joint working with other agencies, such as Public Health, and the Highway Authorities.
 - To present information in a public-facing executive summary for the lay reader so that the local public can more easily engage with local air quality issues and measures taken to improve it.
- 4.4 Annually DEFRA set a deadline for submission and there are implications of late submission in respect of whether air quality grant bids will be favourably received. The Service has again completed and submitted the reports for all three authorities within the appropriate timescales.
- 4.5 The PPP understands the importance of DEFRA approving the reports as the data is used by third parties in planning applications, as well as in-house decisions by Highways and Transport Planning colleagues. In addition, the increased significance is recognised as identified actions are now intrinsically linked with Climate Emergency Plans and Environmental Strategies.

5. Report Submission

- 5.1 Air quality monitoring and improvement contributes to a number of principal priorities of the PPP and continues to be identified as such in 2024-2025 with synergies directly with climate change and environmental protection. In Summer 2019 all PPP local authorities made commitments with respect to climate change, and air quality continues to be regularly in the news, alongside, the cross-cutting climate change theme.

5.2 Although Wokingham Borough Council has withdrawn from elements of the Partnership the PPP continues to undertake air quality work for the local authority under an agreement. The three Annual Status Reports were completed in-house by the deadline of the 30 June 2025. The reports were submitted as follows:

- Bracknell Forest 17 June and resubmitted 26 August
- West Berkshire 20 June and resubmitted 24 July
- Wokingham 17 June

5.3 Due to a clerical error the well written and informative reports for West Berkshire and Bracknell Forest were not accepted first time around as the bias adjustment factor used was incorrect (0.83 instead of 0.84 for WBC and 0.91 instead of 0.84 for BFC). Whilst this was marginal error and did not affect the overall downward trend of the NO₂ and thus the increase of the local air quality, DEFRA required the reports to be resubmitted with the correct bias correction and altered NO₂ values within 1 month and this was achieved.

6. Bracknell Forest

6.1 There is one Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) declared across the Borough: The Bracknell Road (B3348) and Crowthorne High Street, known as the Crowthorne AQMA.

6.2 The major source of air quality pollutants in Bracknell Forest is emissions from road transport. In particular, the contribution from the B3348/High Street and Sandhurst Road Crowthorne have been identified as significant. The main pollutant of concern is Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) and to a lesser extent the increased levels of particulate matter.

6.3 The levels of Nitrogen Dioxide in 2024 have shown a decreasing trend since 2018.

6.4 There were no exceedances of the ratified, bias corrected, annualised and distance corrected diffusion tubes within the Crowthorne AQMA. There were no locations greater than 60 µg/m³ which further indicates that there are unlikely to be any exceedance of the 1-hour Objective. All of the 2024 sites showed a decrease from the 2023 data. The levels have been reducing in the five years since the lock down year of 2020.

6.5 The Particulate Matter PM₁₀, is no longer monitored in the Bracknell. When annualised the last measured data for 2022 was 18.5 µg/m³ and did not exceed the Annual Mean Objective of 40 µg/m³. The results also showed no exceedances of the 24-hour Annual Mean Objective of 50 µg/m³, which is not to be exceeded more than 35 times a year. The PM₁₀ level demonstrates a decreasing trend since 2018 when the level was 19.0 µg/m³.

6.6 Bracknell Forest produced an Air Quality Action Plan in 2014 which was updated in 2016. In 2024 a new AQAP covering the period 2024 – 2029 was approved. The AQAP outlines local measures to improve pollution levels within the AQMAs and more widely across the borough. The AQAP is integrated with the delivery of the adopted Local Transport Plan (LTP 4) to improve local air quality and climate change, through joint working with the Council's Environmental Health, Transport Planning and Planning Divisions.

Actions to Improve Air Quality

- 6.7 Smoothing the traffic flow and reducing journey times and major highway improvements along the A329/A322 corridor have resulted in the reduction of NO₂ levels. Works to reduce the bottleneck on Downshire Way have now been completed as have other works on the A322 roundabouts.
- 6.8 Since the speed humps along the High Street in Crowthorne have been upgraded and replaced with speed cushions to reduce stop start driving the NO₂ levels have dropped from 41.7 µg/m³ in 2011 to 16.9 µg/m³ in 2024.
- 6.9 Further upgrades to traffic signals, complementing capacity and junction improvements along the A322, A329 and A3095 corridors have improved journey times, reduced congestion and had a positive overall impact on air quality.
- 6.10 Electric Vehicle Charge point expansion has seen 38 fast chargers installed across 12 council car parks; rapid chargers added at Great Hollands and Birch Hill; planning is underway for 400+ on-street chargers using LEVI funding; and the Berkshire EV Working Group has been formed.
- 6.11 Sustainable Travel Initiatives have seen the launch of a shuttle bus linking Bracknell rail station with the BID area; a cycle hire scheme introduced for BID employees; and refreshed pedestrian/cycle path markings and new signage installed.
- 6.10 Pedestrian crossing enhancements on Temple Way to provide safer links to the new Blue Mountain development, new schools and community facility. Also at Broad Lane, Cambridge Road and Birch Hill Road to enhance pedestrian safety and connectivity.
- 6.11 1212 school pupils have received Bikeability training.
- 6.12 Led Walks and Rides – Sustrans continues to run popular led walks with plans to expand to guided cycle rides.
- 6.13 Nearly 3000 residents and 20 schools/colleges have been involved with the Eco Rewards scheme, with over 145,000 sustainable miles logged.
- 6.14 The Love to Ride online cycling community has expanded and runs challenges, e.g. 2024 Cycle September saw 11 workplaces join in with over 2000 trips recorded of which nearly half were new or occasional riders.
- 6.15 2 staff and 2 community 'Dr Bike' events took place in 2024, which include free bike checks, minor repairs, and maintenance advice.
- 6.16 In September 2024 a cycling festival, in partnership with Trek, Avanti, Sustrans, and The Lexicon, was held to promote cycling in the Borough.
- 6.17 For Walk to School week in May 2024 the council offered free resources to all schools. 19 schools participated in the national walking campaign.
- 6.18 On Clean Air Day (20th June 2024), all schools were invited to sign up to the "Clean Air Pledge". By doing this they were agreeing to distribute educational materials on air quality and anti-idling, and to increase awareness participate in related activities.

- 6.19 In 2025 implementation begins for schemes outlined in the new LTP4 and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.
- 6.20 Further updates to the EV Strategy and web content refreshed to include guidance on cable gullies and provide clear and relevant local EV information.
- 6.21 Held the second Cycling Festival on 8th June 2025, in partnership with Trek, Avanti, Sustrans, and The Lexicon, to promote cycling.
- 6.22 Clean Air Day on 19th June 2025, all schools received anti-idling packs to support assemblies and awareness.
- 6.23 To investigate new solutions for traffic flow along Crowthorne High Street, in the centre of the Crowthorne AQMA.
- 6.24 Work with the Climate Change Team and Transport Working Group to address issues on our extensive walking and cycling network, including encroaching vegetation, and improve community engagement.

Commentary from DEFRA

- 6.25 DEFRA commented that the resubmitted report had sufficiently rectified the issues previously raised. They accepted the conclusions reached for all sources and pollutants.
- 6.26 DEFRA stated there was good quality discussion on the trends of the results for all pollutants as well as good quality graphs showing the trends over the last 5 years.
- 6.27 DEFRA stated good practice in discussion of the effects of PM_{2.5} and good quality discussion on trends of results.
- 6.28 DEFRA stated based on the evidence provided there is justification to revoke the Crowthorne AQMA as compliance achieved for the last 3 years.

7. West Berkshire

- 7.1 The two AQMAs in West Berkshire, Thatcham (on the A4) and Newbury (A339, St John's Roundabout), were revoked in 2024.
- 7.1 The major source of air quality pollutants in West Berkshire is road transport and in particular the contribution from the A339 and A4. The main pollutant is NO₂ in Newbury and Thatcham.
- 7.2 The NO₂ levels in 2024 have showed a decrease on the pre-pandemic levels since 2019 and only 1 of the 23 diffusion tube sites have increased since 2023, and none of the monitoring locations within West Berkshire exceeded the Annual Objective of 40µg/m³. The site which increased was 75 Chapel Street, Thatcham, which increased from 18.0 µg/m³ in 2023 to 19.1 µg/m³ in 2024. However, it is still lower than the lockdown year of 2020 which was 19.3 µg/m³. The highest recorded concentration was 21.6 µg/m³ at the A339 964) Greenham Road Newbury. The 1 Hourly Objective Nitrogen Dioxide was not exceeded in 2024 (permitted level of 18 exceedances of 200µg/m³ per year).

- 7.3 Over the past five years there has been a general decrease of NO₂, across the district. Overall the levels in West Berkshire have been reducing over the 5 years up to 2024.

Actions to Improve Air Quality

- 7.4 The Service continues to work with the Development Control team to review the air quality impact of planning applications and has completed all Pollution Prevention and Control inspections as required for the control of emission to air from industrial processes.
- 7.5 Upcoming initiatives are for electric vehicle charging points to be installed (58 on street and 97 car park); continued development of cycle routes; and enhancements to cycle training and bike storage at schools. WBC is pioneering a through-pavement EV charging scheme; the Kerbo Charge system is being expanded district-wide which will enable 5 – 10 times cheaper at home costs compared to public chargers.
- 7.6 The School Streets Schemes near 3 primary schools in Calcot, Thatcham and Tilehurst aim to reduce traffic and encourage walking and cycling, as well as enhancing child safety and creating a healthier environment. These schemes are supported by education programmes and ongoing community engagement.
- 7.7 Bio-Gas Buses operate between Newbury from Reading helping improve air quality. The Government's Single Fare Cap Scheme encourages public transport use.
- 7.8 The West Berkshire Car Club is run by Enterprise cars, as a hire pay as you go scheme.
- 7.9 Work on the reducing HGVs passing through Newbury by using Positive Signage since 2019/20 encouraged freight vehicles to use the A34 bypass.
- 7.10 Further walking, running and cycling groups such as Let's Ride, Run Together and Walking for Health (led walks across West Berkshire) have been set up to provide activities for beginners, mental health groups and other interested parties.
- 7.11 National Cycle Network 422 expansion – A4 Newbury to Thatcham and on to Calcot was completed in 2019 and continues to be popular, particularly since lockdown. This provision of improved cycle way through the area which as the Thatcham AQMA. Further development of A4 cycle route, this has incremental progress and being created as resources allow.
- 7.12 Pedestrian and cyclist directional signage project commenced in 2018/19 and continued throughout 2024 to promote and improve walking and cycling facilities.
- 7.13 WBC is working with stakeholders to provide cycle parking at other destinations, following on from the Active Travel 'Heat Map' consultation. There is investment in cycle parking at schools.
- 7.14 Our social media pages are also very active with air quality hints and tips on anti-idling, monitoring and competitions.
- 7.15 The Kings Road Link Road was complete and opened to traffic in August 2024.

- 7.16 Clean Air Day in June 2025 to increase awareness and promote health, and anti-idling. We have provided all schools with an anti-idling assembly and asked them to share the anti-idling information with the children and their parents/carers who transport them to school.

Commentary from DEFRA

- 7.17 DEFRA commented that the resubmitted report had sufficiently rectified the issues previously raised. They accepted the conclusions reached for all sources and pollutants.
- 7.18 DEFRA commented that WBC is dedicated to maintaining good air quality through reviewal of the monitoring network and removing monitoring sites from areas where poor air quality is no longer expected to be an issue. As well as adhering to their monitoring calendar.
- 7.19 DEFRA commented that WBC have listed clear actions to improve air quality within their jurisdiction clearly stating how they are progressing and if there are any barriers to implementation.
- 7.20 It was commended that clear summaries of extensive measures and monitored concentrations are included.

8. Wokingham Borough

- 8.1 An Annual Mean NO₂ concentration of 28.06 µg/m³ was recorded by the Wokingham town centre automatic monitoring (CM2) unit in 2024. This shows that within the Wokingham Town Centre AQMA, NO₂ levels were not exceeding the Air Quality Objective limit. This is a decrease on the 2019 result (33.0 µg/m³) pre-pandemic year. It has also decreased from 32.6 µg/m³ in 2023, which is reduction of 2%.

Wokingham AQMA

- 8.2 The Annual Mean Objective of 40 µg/m³ was not exceeded at any of the monitoring sites within the Borough. The one site within Wokingham Town Centre AQMA, WOK838 Giggling Spring, Shute End, which exceeded in 2019, measured 29.6 µg/m³ in 2024, so has decreased from 30.1 µg/m³ in 2023 and continues to reduce from 41.8 µg/m³ in 2019.
- 8.3 The traffic queues at the traffic lights next to WOK838 before moving past WOK857; interestingly, both of these sites have reduced readings in 2024. Furthermore, at WOK838 NO₂ is slightly lower than WOK857 which suggests there may be fewer vehicles queuing at the junction, an increase of greener cars or that people have seen the anti-idling posters at this location and are switching off engines.

Twyford

- 8.4 All the sites within the revoked Twyford Crossroads AQMA were well below the objective 40 µg/m³ including, WOK850, 887, 888 - 19 High Street, which last exceeded in 2019 (42.8µg/m³) measured 31.5 µg/m³ in 2023 and decreased to 30.4µg/m³ in 2024. Two of the sites increased slightly in 2024, WOK 870 – Hunt & Nash Church Street which measured 19.7 µg/m³ in 2023 and increased to 20.6

µg/m³ in 2024; and WOK 871, 875, 876 - 15 London Road, Twyford which increased from 18.8 µg/m³ in 2023 to 19.5 µg/m³ in 2024. All mean concentrations were less than 60µg/m³ which therefore indicates no exceedances of the 1-hour NO₂ objective.

M4 area

- 8.5 There were no exceedances of the Annual Mean Objective within the revoked AQMA area, and all sites except two NO₂ levels decreased from 2023. The first site which increased was WOK 53 - Dunt Lane, Hurst from 13.2 µg/m³ to 13.8 µg/m³, and the second was WOK 836 - 349 Old Whitely Wood Lane, Whitley from 18.9 µg/m³ to 19.0 µg/m³.

Twyford AQMA Revocation

- 8.6 As Twyford's results from the diffusion tubes and continuous monitor continued to measure below 36 µg/m³ (and have been since 2020), WokBC actioned the revocation of the AQMA, as advised by DEFRA in January 2025.
- 8.7 It is positive to see that after four full years' worth of pandemic/lock down free monitoring that all the NO₂ levels remain below the 2019. Monitoring within and outside this AQMA will continue in 2025.

Actions to improve air quality

- 8.8 Please see below

- The Freight Management Plan to be produced in 2025, depending on resources.
- The new Local Transport Plan (LTP4) will be going out for public consultation 2025. It was developed in conjunction with a new Local Plan to 2038 which will define the locations of major development in the borough, to be adopted in March 2025.
- Continued promotion of Active Travel through the My Journey platforms.

- 8.9 South Wokingham Distributor Road, the construction is due to commence in 2025. Followed by a review traffic route in town centre and consider if any roads require restricted access, once the SWDR is completed in 2027.

- 8.10 Possible Twyford Railway Station enhancements following consideration of access for vehicles, taxis, cyclists, and pedestrians; integration of public transport.; and car parking and cycling provisions.

- 8.11 Plans for bus stop realignment to improve the access for bus passengers and pedestrians was designed in 2024 with delivery expected in 2025. GWR have produced a feasibility study to improve the forecourt and station however, future delivery is reliant on funding. Local Town and Parish Councils are working together to try and deliver a new cycle hub with secure storage at the station, again, this is funding dependant.

- 8.12 The MyJourney team installed air quality monitors, connected to Yunex digital signs in and around four schools in the Borough for a 12-month period commencing March 2025. The project faced heavy delays due to initial technical issues. This project

aims to provide real-time information and raise awareness of air quality issues for parents, children, and local commuters to impact travel habits and encourage active travel. All four primary schools that have been selected for the NO₂ roadside air quality monitoring project took part in the school Air Quality project. They all are encouraging their pupils and staff to use active travel (walk, wheel or cycle) to get to and from school. The signs work on 15-minute intervals and display either a happy or sad face dependant on the data received from the monitors. The results of this project will be reported in the 2026 ASR.

- 8.13 The launch of EV Charging Strategy. The document outlines the likely demand for EVs and charge points across our borough and the role of the Council in meeting this demand. (This is nearing completion, and a public consultation took place at the end of summer 2024). Further charge points are due to be delivered in 2025/26.
- 8.14 Residential travel planning. The MyJourney Team carries this out annually at one of the four strategic development locations (SDL's); those in the North and South Wokingham SDL's benefit from this; North Wokingham and Finchwood Park were completed in summer 2024.
- 8.15 Improvement of cycle routes to ensure continuous and integrated. The LCWIP prioritises schemes based on funding availability and impact of change. In 2024 a detailed design for Reading Road to Wokingham town centre was completed using Active Travel England funding.

Commentary from DEFRA

- 8.16 DEFRA commented that the report is well structured, detailed, and provides the information specified in the Guidance. They accepted the conclusions reached for all sources and pollutants.
- 8.17 DEFRA advised we no longer need to provide details on the revoked AQMA's for Twyford and the M4.
- 8.18 DEFRA stated that WokBC should now consider the revocation of the Wokingham Town Centre AQMA.
- 8.19 They commended the identification of new or changed sources of pollutants. The report includes detailed discussion of the measures the Council are taking to address PM2.5 which they considered robust.
- 8.20 They commended the efforts and commitment towards improving air quality, with the main objective being the new LTP. The detailed discussion on new schemes and policies showcases the commitment towards improving air quality.

9. Next Steps

Revocation Crowthorne AQMA

- 9.1 A local authority can, at any time, revoke an AQMA, and provide the justification for doing so. This is due to a change in interpretation of the guidance in the DEFRA LAQM Technical Guidance (TG22, August 2022) from DEFRA, as originally three consecutive years of data was necessary before revocation could be considered, they now state that as long as levels have remained 10% below the Objective level for 5 years then revocation is justified. Where 2020 and 2021, the pandemic years,

are a continuation of a downward trend and part of many consecutive years of compliance (e.g., where compliance has also been achieved in 2019, prior to COVID-19) the AQMA may be considered for revocation.

- 9.2 A Draft Revocation Report has been produced for Bracknell Forest for the Crowthorne AQMA. This is set out at Appendix **G**, which is to be subjected to consultation. As with consultation carried out for the declaration of the AQMAs, is it required with DEFRA; Environment Agency; National Highways; All local authorities neighbouring the local authority in question; Other public authorities as appropriate; and bodies representing local business interests and other organisations as appropriate, such as internal public health and transport colleagues, and town / parish councils.
- 9.3 No specific time period for consultation nor the method is stated in the Environment Act 1995, but a minimum period of 4 weeks is proposed. The only requirement is to publish the intention to revoke. Following which responses are fed back to decision making body for a determination.
- 9.4 A final Order for approval of intention is then sent to DEFRA and then finally the Revocation Order is made and sealed, which must also be published, which will be on the Bracknell Forest Council and the PPP websites.

Revocation Wokingham Town Centre AQMA

- 9.5 Once the 2025 monitoring data has been received, and bias corrected, a review can then take place in spring 2026 for the recommendation in the ASR 2026 to propose the revocation of this AQMA.

Air Quality Action Plans and Air Quality Strategy

- 9.5 For West Berkshire a review of the AQAP is now not required now that the AQMAs have been revoked. WBC is now required to develop and publish an Air Quality Strategy, to be produced in consultation with the Director of Public Health, in order to set out and progress the steps the local authority will take to improve air quality in their area. This work has commenced with the aim for a pre-consultation report on the draft be brought back to this Committee in March 2026 and then to the July Committee for post-consultation approval.
- 9.6 Progress with implementing actions within the Crowthorne AQAP continues.
- 9.7 The Review of the Wokingham AQAP continues. DEFRA has granted an extension to completing the AQAP to 31/03/2026. This is based on the findings of the ASR 2025 regarding the potential revocation of the Wokingham Town Centre AQMA within the next 12-18 months.

Future Monitoring

- 9.8 The monitoring programme for 2026 has been confirmed. Advice from DEFRA on the implication of the revocations was requested previously and they state it is recommended that where possible to ensure good air quality monitoring is maintained once the AQMA is removed. To this end the passive diffusion tube network will be continued across the borough / district both within and outside the

current AQMA and locations within the revoked AQMAs as well as other locations where there are known hotspot / congestion locations.

10. Other air quality related matters of note

- 10.1 In 2021 PPP was awarded £259,406 from DEFRA for a grant to carry out air quality projects across the 3 local authorities which aim to change the behaviour of those 448,000 residents who drive in the three boroughs by launching an anti-idling campaign as well as monitoring PM_{2.5} near schools within /near the AQMAs. These projects were completed in summer 2024. See Appendix H for the final report to DEFRA which includes the sharing of best practice and lessons learned.
- 10.2 PPP made a further grant application, on behalf of the 3 local authorities, as part of the DEFRA Air Quality Grant Applications 2023/24 programme in September 2023 for a focus on PM_{2.5} from domestic burning. The funding was to be awarded in order to improve public awareness in local communities about the risks of air pollution and projects that deal with Fine Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5}). We were awarded the grant of £183,000 in February 2024 but then the funding scheme was withdrawn in April 2024. No further grant funding scheme has since been introduced.

11. Concluding Observations

- 11.1 The improvements to Air Quality across the three local authority areas is to be welcomed. There are many factors that have contributed to this, but it is clear that the range of interventions made each Council has contributed to this improvement.
- 11.2 Air Quality continues to be high profile area of work and the links with the sources of pollutants and health impacts becoming more apparent during and after the Covid pandemic. The authorities must continue to not only monitor the levels of pollutants but ensure that we continue to progress actions set out within the action plan and continue to raise the profile of improvements in air quality is good for our resident's health.
- 11.3 The evaluations provided by DEFRA are positive and the Committee is asked to both note the reports and the DEFRA evaluation, endorse the proposals set out in the action plan and approve the consultation set out in this report.
- 11.4 The duty on local authorities to both assess and improve air quality is not just a legal requirement but a public demand. The effects on health of poor air quality are indisputable, and Councils have been given a range of tools to tackle the causes.
- 11.5 In simple terms the causes are known but the solutions are wide ranging. The proposals set out in the plans seek to address several approaches ranging from raising awareness, changing human behaviour and matters of infrastructure.

Appendices

Appendix A – 2025 Bracknell Forest ASR Report (available from the PPP website)

Appendix B - Bracknell Forest Appraisal Response from DEFRA (available from the PPP

website)

Appendix C – 2025 West Berkshire ASR Report (available from the PPP website)

Appendix D – West Berkshire Appraisal Response from DEFRA

Appendix E – 2025 Wokingham Borough ASR Report (available from the PPP website)

Appendix F - Wokingham Borough Appraisal Response from DEFRA

Appendix G – Crowthorne Draft Revocation Report

Appendix H - Final report to DEFRA regarding grant 2020/21

Background Papers:

Bracknell Forest Council's LTP4 and supporting documents which can be accessed via the Council's website, at: [Bracknell Forest Local Transport Plan 2025-2037](#)

West Berkshire Council's LTP4 and supporting documents which can be accessed via the Council's website, at: [Local Transport Plan 4 - West Berkshire Council](#)

Defra: National Clean Air Strategy 2019

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-air-strategy-2019>

Officer details:

Name:	Suzanne McLaughlin
Job Title:	Principal Officer
Tel No:	01635 519851
E-mail:	Suzanne.mclaughlin@westberks.gov.uk
