

SUBJECT:	Air Quality Update and Potential for Creating a Clean Air Zone in Iver
REPORT OF:	Cabinet Member for Healthy Communities – Councillor Paul Kelly
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Martin Holt – Head of Healthy Communities
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WARD/S AFFECTED	Iver Heath, Iver Village & Richings Park

1. Purpose of Report

To update Members on air quality in Iver including provisional results to date of the local diffusion tube network. In addition, to consider how the use of a Clean Air Zone (CAZ), could assist the Council in tackling air pollution in the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To note:

- 1 Nitrogen dioxide levels continue to be monitored in Iver using the extended diffusion tube network.

That subject to the advice of the PAG, the Portfolio Holder is recommended to agree that:

- 2 When a full year of data has been captured (January 2018) and if the annual mean is exceeded, proceed to the declaration of an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).
3. If an AQMA is declared, to also then proceed to create a voluntary "Clean Air Zone" in Iver, with an aim of reducing nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) levels and work with partner agencies to manage both local freight traffic and that associated with NIPs, (using funding from the HS2 contingency fund).

2. Executive Summary

In May 2016, Officers updated the PAG on the potential cumulative environmental impacts as a result of forthcoming national infrastructure projects in the Iver area. Major projects include HS2, Heathrow Expansion, WRLtH, Crossrail, M25 widening and the M4 smart Motorway.

The PAG endorsed the use of some of the allocated funding (HS2 contingency fund), for a Detailed Air Quality Assessment in Iver (see background papers). The results of the Detailed Assessment and proposals to meet EU objectives for NO₂ are addressed in this report, specifically an opportunity to create a voluntary Clean Air Zone (CAZ) in Iver.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

Local Authorities have limited powers to mitigate the cumulative impact of construction and operational traffic associated with national infrastructure projects. The creation of a local Clean Air Zone in Iver, would support any AQMA and provide a further broader framework to take

targeted action and would also strengthen the case for seeking additional mitigation on national projects.

4. Content of Report

The Detailed Assessment of Air Quality in Iver has demonstrated that there is likelihood that the nitrogen dioxide objective is being exceeded.

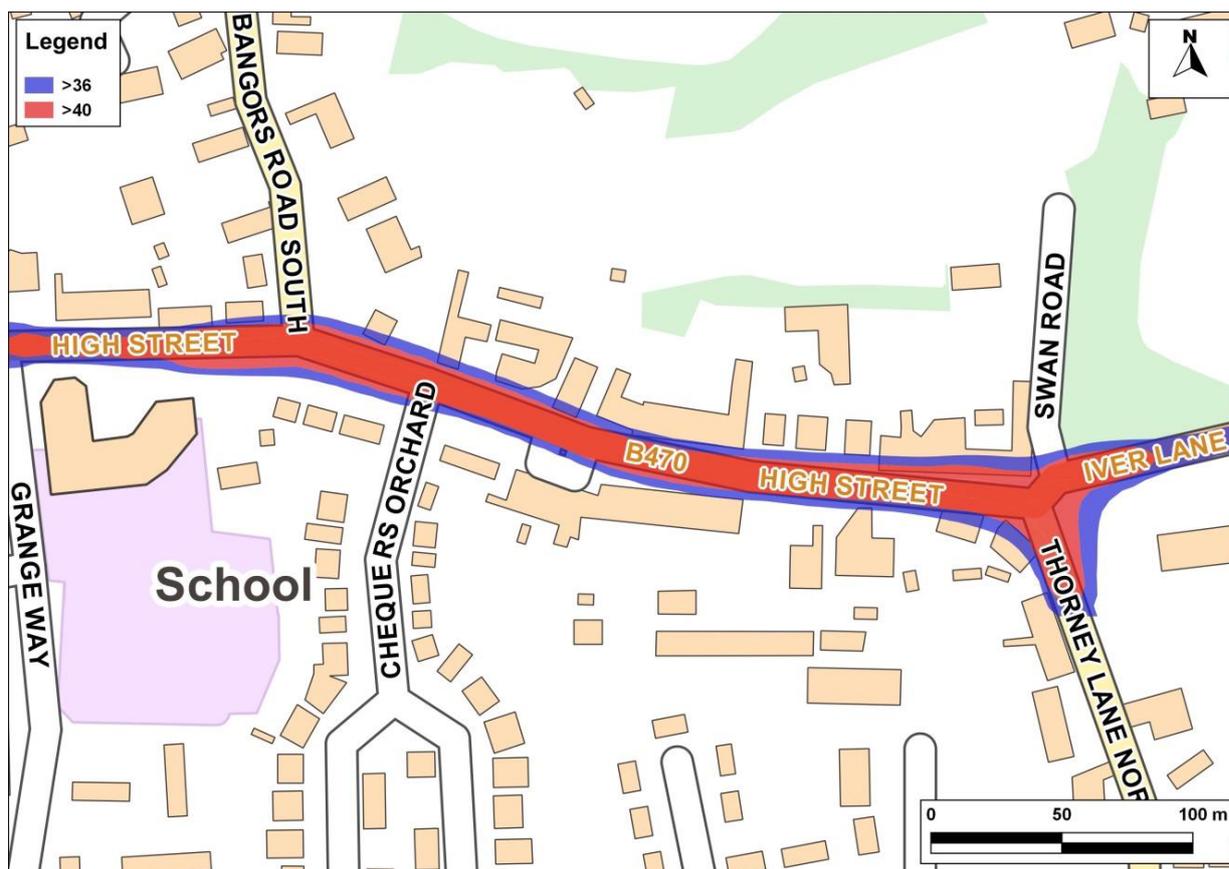
This area was first identified as being at risk of exceeding the annual mean air quality objective for NO₂ in the 2016 Annual Status Report prepared by the Council.

The assessment used a combination of monitoring data and modelled concentrations. The model has been verified against measurements made at two NO₂ diffusion tube locations which lie adjacent to the road network. A sensitivity test has also been carried out, where modelling results have been verified against a diffusion tube location adjacent to Iver High Street, where the highest concentrations were predicted.

The assessment has identified a number of relevant locations alongside the High Street in Iver where the limit of 40µg/m³ is being exceeded.

No exceedences of the 60µg/m³ as an annual mean nitrogen dioxide concentration have been identified at locations of relevant exposure, and thus exceedences of the 1-hour objective remain unlikely.

However, there remained some uncertainty surrounding both the measured and modelled concentrations. It was therefore recommended that further monitoring is carried out at the worst-case relevant locations identified by the modelling. If this modelling identifies exceedences of the objective at any of these locations, (there will be sufficient data by December 2017), the assessment recommends that an AQMA should then be declared.



Extent of Modelled 40 µg/m³ Contour (red line) and 36 µg/m³ Contour (blue line) of Annual Mean Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations in 2015 (modelled at 1.5 m).

A summary of the most up to date diffusion tube data (including preliminary 2017 data) can be found in appendix 1 and to date shows likely exceedences. However, the data should be treated with caution, as a bias adjustment figure will need to be applied, and the first three months of the year generally record higher levels (due to reduced dispersion in winter weather).

Following the formal declaration of an Air Quality Management Area, the Council would then be in a position to consider implementing a Clean Air Zone.

Summary of CAZ implementation:

A Clean Air Zone (CAZ) is a defined area where *“targeted action is taken to improve air quality, delivering improved health benefits whilst continuing to support economic growth”*. There are two types of CAZ, charging and non-charging.

It is recommended that the Council implement a non-charging CAZ in Iver.

A charging CAZ would be similar to the congestion charging zone in London and more suited to larger towns and cities. A non-charging zone is an incentive based approach where local businesses and residents are encouraged to take up lower emissions alternatives by being rewarded in some way as opposed to being punished if they don't, for example encouraging

the uptake of business recognition schemes such as Go Ultra Low Company status and ECO stars.

The Government carried out a consultation on the implementation of CAZ in England in December 2016. The result of the consultation and the latest Air Quality Plan has not yet been published and it has now been delayed until the end of June. Until then we have to rely on the consultation document and bear in mind that the final publication may have been amended during the process.

The guidance states that to implement a CAZ the following requirements must be fulfilled as a minimum.

- a. **It must be in response to a clearly defined air quality problem and ensure that it is understood locally.** In Iver it is envisaged to be as a result of high percentage of HGVs using the local roads. A study would be required to confirm that the main source of pollution is coming from HGVs. As a minimum a source apportionment study will have to be done. This can be done internally using traffic data from TfB/BCC.
- b. **There must be signs in place along major access routes to clearly delineate the zone.** Any traffic sign designs will need to be consistent across the country, and approved by the Department for Transport.
- c. **Be identified in local strategies including but not limited to local plans and policies, local transport plan at the earliest opportunity.** The local plan should contain policies to promote air quality. Such policies have been recommended by the Strategic Environment Team for inclusion in the emerging local plan, through the incorporation of the Air Quality Action Plan as a planning policy document.
- d. **Provide active support for uptake of ultra-low vehicle emission uptake through facilitating their use.**
- e. **Include a programme of awareness raising and data sharing.**
- f. **Include local authorities taking a lead in terms of their own and contractor vehicle operations and procurement in line with the framework.**
- g. **Ensure bus, taxi and private hire vehicle emission standards are improved to meet Clean Air Zone standards using licensing, franchising or partnership approaches as appropriate.** It is anticipated that the opening of Crossrail by the end of 2019 would attract more passengers to Iver. Currently the bus service to Iver is poor. This may need improving without resulting in an increase in air pollution in the area.
- h. **Support Healthy and Active Travel.** A cycle skills network audit may be required to ensure that cycling to Iver train station is feasible to most passengers within a certain distance and to identify which improvements need to be made. The Iver feasibility study has already identified poor cycling provision in Iver especially cycle routes to the station.

Further information on implementing a CAZ can be found at:

https://consult.defra.gov.uk/airquality/implementation-of-cazs/supporting_documents/161012%20Draft%20Clean%20Air%20Zone%20Framework%20%20consultation.pdf

5. Consultation

Not applicable at this point, however the introduction of a CAZ would require engagement with local communities and businesses to explain the aims, the potential health and economic benefits and to understand their concerns.

6. Options

The duty to monitor and report Local Air Quality and to declare Air Quality Management Areas is clearly defined within the Environmental Protection Act 1990. There is no requirement to create a Clean Air Zone, but the authority would be required to create an Air Quality Action Plan demonstrating actions to reduce pollution levels.

There is therefore the option to follow the statutory requirements alone, and not implement a Clean Air Zone.

7. Corporate Implications

Financial

The cost of implementing a CAZ will need to be further explored, but the most significant cost will be road signs and educational information. As a voluntary zone is proposed, there will be no need for CCTV or expensive enforcement costs.

Legal

Local authorities have a duty under section 83(1) of the 1995 Act to designate those areas where the air quality objectives are unlikely to be, or are not being met as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). These areas have to be designated officially by means of an 'Order'.

Environmental Issues, Sustainability

Air pollution is both an environmental and health issue and the report considers the most effective way of following statutory guidance in order to highlight the air quality issues in the Iver area and provide evidence on the need to mitigate.

8. Links to Council Policy Objectives

We will strive to conserve the environment and promote sustainability

- *Conserve the environment*
- *Promote sustainability*

9. Next Step

If approved, a detailed plan for implementing Clean Air Zone will be prepared and submitted to the Policy Advisory Group.

Background Papers:	Environment Act 1995 South Bucks Progress Report 2015 Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance (16) Defra Local Air Quality Management Policy Guidance (16) Defra May 2016 PAG report Detailed Assessment of Air Quality in Iver September 2016.
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	Clean Air Zone Consultation Document
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