

SUBJECT:	Designation of an Air Quality Management Area in Iver
REPORT OF:	<i>Healthy Communities, Cllr Paul Kelly</i>
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WARD/S AFFECTED	Iver Parish

1. Purpose of Report

In June 2017, the Healthy Communities Policy Advisory Group received an update on air quality where it was noted that further additional monitoring in the Iver area was required to robustly confirm the requirement for an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

The additional monitoring has now concluded, the assessment has been updated and the Cabinet Member is now recommended to proceed to a formal consultation and subsequent declaration of an AQMA through the drafting of an official order and approval by Cabinet.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To note the completion of the additional monitoring and production of the updated air quality assessment for Iver with recommendation to proceed to the formal declaration of a new Air Quality Management Area in accordance with Part IV of the Environment Act 1995.
2. That in consultation with the PAG, the Cabinet Member decides whether consultation should proceed on the basis of either the 36ugm3 contour boundary or a wider boundary such as the Parish boundary (both shown in appendix 1)
3. That the Head of Healthy Communities be authorised to undertake consultation with the statutory and other consultees referred to in paragraph 4 of the report between 1st March and 31st March 2018
4. That associated reports and maps be placed on South Bucks District Council's website and its publication advertised to relevant stakeholders
5. That responses to the consultation be reported to Cabinet for consideration and formal designation of an Air Quality Management Area under section 83 (1) of the Environment Act 1995

2. Reasons for Recommendations

Under Section 83 (1) of the Environment Act 1995, where it is identified that an objective will not be met, and members of the public are exposed to the elevated levels of pollutants, the local authority is required to declare an AQMA for the specific pollutants that are exceeding. The main source of the exceedences is motor vehicles, and associated congestion.

The monitoring data confirms the requirement for an AQMA to be declared along the High Street in Iver. It also suggests that the boundary of the AQMA should be extended beyond the modelled area above 36µg/m³ to include properties located along the northern section of Thorney Lane North, to the junction with Delaford Close. This would represent the smallest area that could be declared.

If it is considered that a wider area would provide greater scope for making improvements to air quality then statutory guidance allows for a wider area to be declared.

The Council is expected to carry out consultation with relevant statutory consultees and key stakeholders before designating an AQMA.

3. Content of Report

At a District level, the Environment Act 1995 requires Local Authorities to undertake air quality reviews. In areas where an air quality objective is not anticipated to be met, Local Authorities are required to establish Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) and implement targeted action plans to improve air quality.

SBDC carried out a Detailed Assessment of Iver High Street in 2016 (appendix 2). The data indicated that the national air quality strategy objective for nitrogen dioxide may not be met at locations close to the kerbside. The report recommended a further years data and increased diffusion tube locations.

The Detailed Assessment was updated with the 2017 data (appendix 3), and this confirms earlier predictions and indicates that the air quality along Iver High Street is unlikely to meet the Government target for Nitrogen Dioxide.

To enable SBDC to support the delivery of improving air quality along Iver High Street and Iver more generally, it is now necessary to formally declare an AQMA. The effect of an AQMA designation is that public bodies such as the transport authority (Bucks CC) are required to work with SBDC to identify and formulate actions to improve an area that is not meeting the standards.

When determining the boundary of an AQMA the authority should make an appropriate judgement based on the extent of predicted areas of exceedance, the locations of relevant receptors, the nature and location of relevant sources, and other local factors.

The starting point for setting the extent of the AQMA is the 36ugm³ contour boundary as shown in appendix 1.

It must be accepted that predicting air pollutant concentrations in future years is not an exact science, and it is anticipated that authorities will need to apply a degree of professional judgment in drawing the boundary line for the designated area. In many cases, the precise description of the geographical exceedance of an objective is unlikely to be critically important from the air quality management perspective - in this respect it is more important to determine the approximate extent of the exceedance, together with which sources are predominant, so that an effective and well-targeted action plan can be formulated.

In areas where trans-boundary pollution is an issue, the authority may decide to designate the entire ward/parish/district as an AQMA; this kind of declaration provides greater flexibility for air quality officers to respond to pollution issues as and when they arise. This does not prevent officers from then focussing on key areas within an AQMA for taking action.

Although Local Authorities have 12 months to develop an action plan from the time of designation, Officers have already started to consider what opportunities there are for action. These are likely to include opportunities to engage with local schools and residents, work with partners to try and improve the flow of traffic, options for limiting polluting vehicles, the routing of freight, associated signage improvements, the influence of parking enforcement, the promotion of green travel plans and working with local schools.

Monitoring will be used to measure any changes in air quality as a result of improvement actions.

The action plan development, like the designation process, has a statutory process that requires stakeholder engagement and approval from the Secretary of State. This will be subject of a further report to the PAG following declaration.

4. Consultation

The 1995 Act provides the statutory basis for consultation and liaison in respect of LAQM. Defra (for England authorities, outside of London) is the key statutory consultee under LAQM. Schedule 11 of the 1995 Act also requires local authorities to consult the following:

- Environment Agency
- Highways England
- All local authorities neighbouring the local authority in question
- The County Council (if a District Council)
- Any National Park authority as appropriate
- Other public authorities as appropriate
- Bodies representing local business interests and other organisations as appropriate

This will include the designation and the geographical extent of the AQMA.

5. Corporate Implications

5.1 Financial

No specific financial implications. Action plan measures will be the subject of a further report.

5.2 Legal

SBDC has a statutory duty to declare an AQMA as and when nitrogen dioxide pollution exceeds the Government target of 40 micrograms per cubic metre annual mean. Defra is the key statutory consultee under LAQM. Schedule 11 of the 1995 Act.

6. Links to Council Policy Objectives

Two of our three shared headline objectives are:

- Working towards safe and healthier local communities
- Striving to conserve the environment and promote sustainability

7. Next Step

Following public consultation and taking into account all relevant information, Cabinet will be asked to approve the designation of the Air Quality Management Area by official Order. Following this, an Air Quality Action Plan will then be produced with relevant stakeholders.

Appendix 1: Proposed boundary options for AQMA consultation

Appendix 2: Detailed Assessment of Iver 2016

Appendix 3: Updated Detailed Assessment of Iver December 2017