

Report on	Air Quality Report 2022
Date of Meeting	13 th October 2022
Reporting Officer	Kieran Gordon, Assistant Director Health, Leisure & Wellbeing
Contact Officer	Conor Breslin, Principal Environmental Health Officer

Is this report restricted for confidential business? If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	
	No	x

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To update members on the current air quality in the Mid Ulster District Council area, and of the ongoing monitoring currently being undertaken in relation to this.
2.0	Background
2.1	Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) provides the framework within which air quality is managed by Northern Ireland's local authorities. The LAQM process places an obligation on all local authorities to regularly review and assess air quality in their areas, and to determine whether air quality objectives are likely to be achieved.
2.2	In Northern Ireland, Local Authorities report annually on air quality within their districts via Progress Reports (enclosed within Appendix A for the 21/22 year).
2.3	Air Quality Progress Reports have been submitted by the former Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council, Cookstown District Council, and Magherafelt District Council since 2002 and more recently since 2015 via Mid Ulster District Council.
2.4	These initially looked at a number of pollutants listed under European Directives and examined whether air quality objectives were likely to be met in each of the three districts. A list of the pollutants and the relevant air quality objectives are set out in Appendix B of this report.
2.5	After the initial assessment it was determined that air quality objectives for four of these seven pollutants would be comfortably met within each of the three Districts. However, it was felt that further examination would need to be undertaken for the remaining three pollutants.
2.6	These pollutants were Nitrogen Dioxide (NO ₂), Sulphur Dioxide (SO ₂) and PM10. For a number of years, the levels of SO ₂ and PM10 were monitored at areas identified as worst-case scenarios in each of the Districts. These areas were chosen due to the relatively high number of solid fuel burning properties near by the monitoring sites. After several years of monitoring, it was found that all the areas chosen were well within the air quality objectives and were extremely unlikely to exceed the objectives in the future. As a result, monitoring was discontinued for these two pollutants. The only remaining pollutant that is routinely monitored in the Mid Ulster District is Nitrogen dioxide.

2.7	If a local authority finds any places where the objectives are not likely to be achieved, it must declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) at this location. This area could be just one or two streets, or it could be much bigger.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Monitoring for NO₂ takes place along the roads that are more heavily congested throughout the District. This generally occurs along the main North-South transport route identified in the Local Development Plan 2030 – Draft Plan Strategy. The roads in question link the three main towns of Magherafelt, Cookstown and Dungannon. Two of the smaller villages that this traffic passes through are also monitoring sites, namely Moneymore and Moy. The chosen sites tend to be located close to residential dwellings at points where the traffic is slowing down or idling at busy junctions or traffic lights.</p> <p>3.2 There were previously five AQMA's declared for NO₂ in this District, two of which have been revoked due to improvements in the air quality at these locations. Ongoing monitoring has shown continued exceedances of the air quality objective for NO₂ at two of the AQMA's.</p> <p>3.3 The third AQMA in Magherafelt Town Centre has now shown no exceedances at any of the six monitoring sites for four straight years with all results being below 36µg/m³. It was anticipated that the Magherafelt AQMA could be revoked if the air quality monitoring showed improved results within air quality objectives for the third consecutive year. While the results continue to show compliance at this location, the impacts of Covid-19 mean that a further year's results will need to be considered before any decision is taken.</p> <p>3.4 It could be argued that the improvement in the air quality at Magherafelt is most likely linked to the construction of the A31 Magherafelt by-pass. The by-pass consists of a 5.9km single carriageway to the east of Magherafelt town, and now diverts a lot of the through traffic that previously passed through the town centre around the outskirts of the town.</p> <p>3.5 Diffusion Tube monitoring at locations within the AQMA's in Dungannon and Moy has demonstrated that there are 2 sites where NO₂ levels continue to exceed the objective limit of 40ug/m³, namely Newell Road, Dungannon and Charlemont Street in Moy.</p> <p>3.6 Diffusion tube monitoring at eight locations along the main thoroughfare in Cookstown and Moneymore did not demonstrate any exceedances of the air quality objective. This is probably due to the wide-open nature of the streets in question. Routine monitoring will continue at these locations.</p> <p>3.7 The report also considers the likely impacts of any new developments on air quality within the District. These are dealt with through the planning process where applicant for particular processes will be asked to forward an air quality appraisal for their proposal detailing its potential impact on air quality in the district.</p> <p>3.8 Further information and access to the reports are also publicly accessible via the following website: https://www.airqualityni.co.uk/</p> <p>3.9 A meeting to review the air quality issues in the District will be coordinated in the coming months. Invites will be issued out to stakeholders from other agencies and elected Members.</p>

4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: £10,250 (of which 50% grant funded) – included within existing 22/23 revenue budgets.
	Human: Officer time – approx. 255 staff hours per annum.
	Risk Management: Considered in line with relevant policies and procedures.
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	To note the contents of this report.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix A: Air Quality Progress Report 2022
6.2	Appendix B: Air Quality Objectives for Local Air Quality Monitoring in Northern Ireland