

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change**Annual Air Quality Status Report 2026****1. Purpose of Report**

To advise Members of the latest Air Quality Status Report which has been submitted to the Department of Food Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). This is in accordance with the Council's Corporate Priority of Environment – to protect the environment for the future and Community Safety – a safe place for everyone.

2. Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that the Air Quality Status Report 2026 be approved.

3. Detail

Each year, DEFRA requires all local authorities in England to produce and submit an Annual Status Report (ASR) in respect of air quality for the preceding calendar year by 30 June each year.

The key findings of the 2026 ASR are that:

- The nitrogen dioxide results show at the air quality levels are consistently below the objective of 40µg/m³ for all of the 38 monitoring sites.
- The Council has been cited as an example of good practice and on the Defra website [Good Practice Examples: Annual Reports | LAQM](#)
- Defra Modelling results show PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} below the AQO
- The Boroughwide smoke control order came into force in June 2025
- The new cremators and associated plant including abatement system at Bramcote Crematorium have been completed and a new permit issued.

The annual bias corrections used in the report are not usually available until at least April each year, and the required information from Nottinghamshire County Council is not available until June, which can create challenges in the timing and the submission of the ASR to DEFRA and bringing the ASR to Cabinet.

Once submitted, the ASR is appraised by technical experts appointed by DEFRA and an Appraisal Report is issued which either accepts or rejects the ASR and provides additional audit observations. The report as attached has been submitted to DEFRA and is currently awaiting appraisal feedback.

The Air Quality Action Plan relevant to the Council's direct actions is now included into the Air Quality project strand of the Climate Change and Green Futures Action Plan and updated there accordingly. The Council's ASR is approved by the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change and the Director of Public Health before submission. Cabinet will be advised of the feedback received from DEFRA later in the year.

The ASR outlines all the actions that the Council and other stakeholders have completed or are taking forward in pursuit of improving air quality. These actions have all helped deliver the observed improvements in air quality and should contribute to the continuation of improved air quality.

The actions contained in the ASR also link strategically with county and regional action to improve air quality contained in the Air Quality Strategy for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire 2020-2030.

The ASR will be published on the Council's website. As a public facing document, it also contains a summary of the ways in which members of the public can take their own action to help improve air quality.

4. Key Decision

This report is not a key decision as defined under Regulation 8 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

5. Updates from Scrutiny

There are no updates from scrutiny.

6. Financial Implications

The comments from the Interim Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer were as follows:

There are no additional financial implications at this stage, with operational costs being contained within existing budgets. There could be additional costs for the Council if real time air monitoring continues and/or action was taken to expand or increase monitoring. Any significant budget implications going forward, over and above virement limits, would require approval by Cabinet.

7. Legal Implications

The comments from the Head of Legal Services were as follows:

Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 sets out statutory provisions on air quality. Section 82 provides that Councils shall review the air quality within their area. Section 83 requires Councils to designate Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) where air quality objectives are not being achieved, or are not likely to

be achieved (i.e. where pollution levels exceed the air quality objectives) as set out in the Air Quality (England) Regulations 2000. Where an area has been designated as an AQMA, Section 84 requires councils to develop an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) setting out the remedial measures required to achieve the air quality standards for the area covered within the AQMA. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has provided statutory guidance in the form of the Local Air Quality Management Policy Guidance. The guidance gives particular focus to so-called 'priority pollutants' such as Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) and so-called 'Particulate Matter' (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) which are relevant to district councils. Councils are required to submit an Annual Status Report (ASR) to DEFRA in order to report the progress being made in achieving reductions in concentrations of emissions relating to relevant pollutants below air quality objective levels. The completed report is submitted to the Secretary of State (DEFRA) for consideration.

8. Human Resources Implications

There are no comments from the Human Resources Manager.

9. Union Comments

There are no Union comments.

10. Climate Change Implications

The comments from the Assistant Director (Environment) were as follows:

The actions outlined in the air quality status report, support and reinforce the programme of activities identified in the Climate Change and Green Futures Strategy and delivery programme. These actions have already contributed to favourable environmental outcomes, such as the improvement of air quality, the reduction of carbon emissions and a contribution towards mitigating the worst impacts of climate change. Moreover, future actions resulting from Local Air Quality Management in the Borough will continue to deliver beneficial results in the future.

11. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any OFFICIAL(SENSITIVE) information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

12. Equality Impact Assessment

As this is no change to policy, an equality impact assessment is not required.

13. Background Papers

Nil.