

Report to: *Cabinet*

Date of meeting: *08/07/24*

Report author: *Nicholas Egerton – Environmental Health Manager – Environment*

Report sponsor: *Justine Hoy – Associate Director – Health and Wellbeing*

Portfolio holder: *Cllr Aga Dychton*

Report title: *WBC Air Quality Action Plan 2024-2029*

Nature of report: *Discussion and recommendation for referral to PH/Cabinet or Council for decision*

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 Watford Borough Council has a legal requirement to work towards the Air Quality Strategy (AQS) objectives as detailed under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995, and to meet the requirements of the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) statutory process.

1.2 Where a local authority has an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) they shall produce an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP). Watford has 2 remaining AQMAs. WBC's AQAP however this was last reviewed in 2018 and has now due for replacement.

1.3 The Air Quality Action Plan report in Appendix A outlines the actions that Watford Borough Council will deliver between 2024 and 2029 in order to reduce concentrations of air pollutants and exposure to air pollution; thereby positively impacting on the health and quality of life of residents and visitors to the Borough.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Action Plan attached as Appendix A is approved.

3.0 Report pathway

3.1 Next review body: *Not applicable:*

3.1.1 Indicative date: Not applicable

3.2 Final review body: *Cabinet*

3.2.1 Indicative date: July 2024

3.3 Contact Officer:

For further info contact: Nicholas Egerton – Environmental Health
Manager - Environment

Email: nick.egerton@watford.gov.uk

Reviewed and signed off by: Justine Hoy- Associate Director – Health & Wellbeing.

- 4.0 Detailed proposal.
- 4.1 The Local Air Quality Management Framework underpinned by the Environment Act 1995 sets local limits put into place through the Air Quality (England) Regulations 2000 (as amended in 2002). The framework requires relevant local authorities to assess the quality of their air annually and submit reports to DEFRA. These Annual Status Reports (ASRs) can be seen at <https://www.airqualityengland.co.uk/local-authority/hnb-reports>
- 4.2 If the reported air quality is unlikely to comply then a detailed assessment is required, and if this shows the air quality is still unlikely to comply with relevant concentration limits, the Local Authority must designate an Air Quality Management Area. Where an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) is designated, local authorities must produce an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) describing the pollution reduction measures required and the dates by which each measure will be carried out. The expectation is that local authorities and their partners deliver air quality improvements within reasonable timeframes. Local authorities should consider prevention and reduction of polluting activities in preference to only taking steps to improve air quality once exceedances have been identified. The AQAP is a plan over a set period which is normally 5 years. Our previous Action Plan was revised in 2018 and therefore needs to be updated.
- 4.3 Watford has 2 remaining AQMAs. These are around Vicarage Road/Hornets Junction and Bushey Arches Junction. As with most areas there has been a general reduction in the concentrations monitored. The Councils monitoring has shown that the nitrogen dioxide concentrations in both AQMAs have not been exceeded for the last 3 years. The Council has to wait for 5 years before these can be revoked. Watford therefore has to have an AQAP in place until these are revoked.
- 4.4 The proposed AQAP is shown in Appendix A.
- 5.0 Implications
- 5.1 Financial
 - 5.1.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.
- 5.2 Legal issues & Monitoring Officer
- 5.3 The legal issues have been covered in the body of the report.

5.4 Risks

Nature of risk	Consequence	Suggested control measure	Response (treat, tolerate, terminate, transfer)	Risk rating (combination of severity and likelihood)
Failure to implement an AQAP could result in action against the authority by DEFRA	Actions will be taken to ensure that the local authority undertakes its duties	Agree and implement AQAP	Treat	2
Reputational Damage by not having a plan in place	Residents may have less confidence in the local authority	Agree and implement AQAP	Treat	2

5.5 Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection

5.5.1 Equalities

5.5.1.1 The recommendation in this report supports actions that should improve the air quality for all residents. Many of the recommendations in the action plan are existing or planned projects that themselves should be subject to EqIA. There are no adverse impacts or concerns identified within the AQAP and therefore a full EqIA is not required

5.5.2 Human Rights

5.5.3 The recommendations in this report supports actions that should improve the air quality for all residents. There are no perceived Human rights concerns.

5.5.4 Data Protection Impact Assessment

5.5.4.1 Having had regard to the council's obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018, it is considered that officers are not required to undertake a Data Processing Impact Assessment (DPIA) for this report.

5.6 Sustainability

No additional sustainability implications identified

5.7 People Implications

No additional people implications, including training and resources identified.

5.8 **Community Safety/Crime and Disorder**

No additional people implications identified

5.9 **Property**

This report should not have any implications for council-owned property or assets.

6.0 **Next steps should recommendations be approved**

6.1 Review and change all associated information and documents (eg Website)

7.0 **Appendices**

7.1 Appendix A – Watford Borough Council Air Quality Action Plan 2024-2029