

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Net Zero, Environment and Transport
DATE	12 November 2024
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Revocation of Anderson Drive corridor and Wellington Road Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) and Amendment of City Centre AQMA.
REPORT NUMBER	CORS/24/278
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Andy MacDonald
CHIEF OFFICER	Alan Thomson/Vikki Cuthbert
REPORT AUTHOR	Aileen Brodie
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1, 6

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To obtain Committee approval to revoke the Anderson Drive and Wellington Road Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) and amend to the City Centre AQMA to omit particulates (PM₁₀).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee :-

- 2.1 note the compliance with national PM₁₀ and NO₂ national air quality objectives in the Anderson Drive and Wellington Road Air AQMA and compliance with the PM₁₀ objective in the City Centre AQMA;
- 2.2 approve the revocation of the Anderson Drive and Wellington Road AQMA and amendment of the City Centre AQMA to omit PM₁₀, and:
- 2.3 instruct the Interim Chief Officer - Governance to commence statutory procedures to formally revoke and amend the AQMA.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 The Environment Act 1995 (the 1995 Act), section 83, requires local authorities to regularly review and assess air quality within their geographical areas against air quality objectives set out in the Air Quality (Scotland) Regulations 2000, as amended in 2002 and 2016. Where the levels are exceeded, or are likely to be exceeded at any location, the authority must declare the affected area an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and develop and publish an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) detailing the actions the authority proposes to improve air quality in the designated area. Where air quality has improved and the authority is satisfied that the objectives are being met within the AQMA and unlikely to be exceeded in any future occasion the authority is required to revoke the AQMA.

3.2 There are 3 AQMAs in Aberdeen City introduced due to measured or predicted exceedance of national air quality objectives for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulates (PM₁₀). The areas covered by the AQMAs and pollutants of concern are as follows:

- City Centre AQMA: Market Street, Union Street, King Street (between Castle Street and Roslin Terrace), Virginia Street, Commerce Street, Guild Street, Bridge Street, Holburn Street (between Union Street and Great Southern Road), Victoria Road, Torry (between Queen Elizabeth II Bridge and Crombie Road) and West North Street (King Street to 100m north of the junction with Littlejohn Street) (annual mean NO₂ and PM₁₀ objectives and 24-hour PM₁₀ objective)
- Anderson Drive AQMA: All of Anderson Drive, from the Bridge of Dee to the Haudagain roundabout, 815 Great Northern Road to Haudagain roundabout, Haudagain roundabout to Auchmill Road/Howes Road junction (annual mean NO₂ and PM₁₀ objectives)
- Wellington Road AQMA: (Queen Elizabeth Bridge to Balnagask Road) (annual mean NO₂ and PM₁₀ objectives and the 24 hour PM₁₀ objective)

3.3 Trends in air quality within each AQMA are shown in the Revocation Reports in Appendices 1, 2 and 3. There have been no exceedances of the annual mean NO₂ objective at monitoring locations within the Wellington Road AQMA or Anderson Drive AQMA since 2018 and no exceedances of the PM₁₀ objectives since 2016. There have been no exceedances of the PM₁₀ objectives in the City Centre AQMA since 2015.

3.4 Emissions from road traffic are the main source of raised NO₂ and PM₁₀ concentrations in Aberdeen. Air quality across the City has progressively improved in the last 10 years due to a range of national and local policies and actions. Further details of actions implemented by Aberdeen City are detailed in the 2024 Annual Air Quality Annual Progress Report [Air quality reports | Aberdeen City Council](#), which was reported to the Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee on 3 September 2024 (report number CORS/24/209) and the AQMA Revocations Reports in Appendix 1, 2 and 3. The most significant actions to improve air quality are:

- the gradual replacement of older highly polluting diesel vehicles with cleaner vehicles;
- the implementation of road infrastructure measures, particularly the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR), Haudagain roundabout improvements and Phase 1 of the South College Improvement Scheme;
- the introduction of City Centre bus priority measures and vehicle access restrictions in 2022 and 2023
- a general reduction in road traffic and congestion from 2017 demonstrated by road traffic count surveys carried out in 2012, 2017, 2019 and 2023.
- Formal declaration of a City Centre Low Emission Zone (LEZ) which encouraged private vehicle owners and commercial operators to upgrade their fleet prior to enforcement commencement in June 2024;

- City Centre Masterplan (CCMP) adoption and roll-out, including delivery of various traffic restriction schemes to give priority to walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport;
 - Aberdeen to Inverness Rail Improvements, including dualling of the track between Aberdeen and Inverurie and the re-opening of Kintore Station.
- 3.5 To justify an amendment or revocation of an AQMA Scottish Government Policy Guidance PG(S) (24) recommends a minimum requirement of at least 3 consecutive years when the objective of concern has not exceeded the objective levels and where monitoring data suggests further exceedances are unlikely to occur. There is an expectation that once an authority has demonstrated that an AQMA is in compliance with an objective the AQMA will be amended or revoked at the earliest opportunity
- 3.6 There have been no exceedance of the PM₁₀ objectives in any of the AQMAs for 8 years and no exceedance of NO₂ objectives in the Anderson Drive or Wellington Road AQMAs for 5 years. This report therefore seeks approval to revoke the Anderson Drive and Wellington Road AQMAs.
- 3.7 City Centre monitoring results showed compliance with the NO₂ objectives at all locations for the first time in 2023. While NO₂ concentrations have progressively reduced in recent years, revocation of the City Centre AQMA cannot be considered until monitoring results demonstrates continued compliance with the objective levels over at least 3 consecutive years. Compliance with the PM₁₀ in the City Centre has been achieved since 2015 and this report seeks approval to amend the City Centre AQMA to remove PM₁₀.
- 3.8 PG(S) (24) also advises that all available supporting information to justify the amendment or revocation should be provided to the Scottish Government and SEPA, in the form of a Revocation Report, before the changes take effect. The Revocation Reports in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 were accepted by both the Scottish Government and SEPA in July 2024.
- 3.9 In 2021 the World Health Organisation (WHO) published updated global air quality guidance (AQG) and interim levels for a number of air pollutants associated with risk to public health. Table 1 shows the 2005 and 2021 WHO AQG for NO₂ and PM₁₀ and the current national air quality objectives. Interim targets, which provide an opportunity for countries to progressively develop pollution reduction policies, are not included.

Table 1 WHO Recommended Air Quality Guidance Levels (AQGs) compared to 2005 AQGs

Pollutant	Averaging Time	2005 AQG	2021 AQG	National Objective
PM ₁₀	Annual	20	15	18
	24-hour	50	45	50
NO ₂	Annual	40	10	40
	24-hour	-	25	-
	1-hour	200	200	200

The Scottish Government Cleaner Air for Scotland 2 strategy (CAFS2) sets out the policy framework for air quality in Scotland to 2026. In the annual Progress Report on CAFS2 (published June 2024), the Scottish Government committed, as part of the review of Cleaner Air for Scotland 2, to consider the impact of the new WHO guidelines and whether changes to the Scottish targets should be reviewed as a result. No timeframe has been set for any review and the Scottish Government has advised to continue to assess AQMA revocation and amendment proposals against the current national objective levels.

- 3.10 Where current air quality objectives are met, the Scottish Government expects local authorities to continue to implement measures to protect and enhance health, wellbeing and the environment.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications from the revocation and amendment of the AQMAs.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Under Section 83 of the Environment Act 1995, where it appears that any air quality standards or objectives are not being achieved, or not likely to be achieved, the local authority must declare the affected area and AQMA. Air Quality Policy Guidance PG(S) (24) states there is an expectation that once an authority has demonstrated that an AQMA is in compliance with an objective the AQMA will be amended or revoked at the earliest opportunity. While the objectives, with the exception of the annual mean NO₂ objective in the City Centre, have been met in Aberdeen for a number of years, this included the COVID period when traffic flows were significantly reduced. Revocation and amendment of the AQMAs was delayed to ensure continued compliance with the objectives post-pandemic and following the implementation of the City Centre road traffic vehicle access restrictions in 2022 and 2023.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Monitoring of air quality both within the AQMAs and across Aberdeen will continue to ensure that the trend of progressively improved air quality is maintained to protect and enhance health, wellbeing and the environment.

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	No significant		L	Yes

	risk identified			
Compliance	No significant risk identified	The revocation and amendment of the AQMAs complies with the Scottish Government's expectations where compliance with air quality objectives are met in an AQMA.	L	Yes
Operational	No significant risk identified	Revocation and amendment of the AQMAs places no additional demands on resources	L	Yes
Financial	No significant risk identified		L	Yes
Reputational	No significant risk identified		L	Yes
Environment / Climate	No significant risk identified	Continued monitoring of NO ₂ and PM ₁₀ will identify any location at risk of exceedance of national objectives	L	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

Council Delivery Plan 2024	
Impact of Report	
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement Working in Partnership for Aberdeen	The report recommends the revocation and amendment of the AQMAs due to compliance with national air quality objectives. There are no proposals in the report that have a direct impact on the Delivery Plan
Regional and City Strategies	The proposals within this report support the Regional Economy Strategy by ensuring air quality continues to improve thereby encouraging more visitors to the city and a more attractive environment for local business to thrive.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	New Integrated Assessment has been completed.

Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Other	None

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Aberdeen City Council's Air Quality Progress Report, June 2024 [Air quality reports | Aberdeen City Council](#)
- 10.2 Annual Progress Report Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee report 03/09/2024, CORS/24/209

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Anderson Drive AQMA Revocation Proposal Report
- 11.2 Wellington Road AQMA Revocation Proposal Report
- 11.3 City Centre AQMA Revocation Proposal Report

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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