

Great Barton Air Quality Action Plan – Review summary

Background

Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 introduced the system of Local Air Quality Management (LAQM), placing a statutory duty on local authorities to periodically review and assess the air quality within their area. The provisions in Part IV of the 1995 Act are largely enabling and give local authorities the flexibility to take forward local policies to suit local needs. Local circumstances will also determine the content of local air quality strategies, the designation of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) and the content of Air Quality Action Plans (AQAPs).

In 2017, Gt Barton declared an AQMA for a short stretch of the A143 because the annual average level of Nitrogen Dioxide was noted as above the national objective which is 40 micrograms per metre cubed ($\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$). This particular area is a canyon and traps air pollution.

In accordance with legislation, West Suffolk Council are required to have an Air Quality Action Plan for Great Barton, which stipulates the actions that will be taken to improve air quality in this area, setting out the target to show consistently reduced levels of pollution over the course of five years.

The Great Barton Air Quality Action Plan has been in place since 2018 and has registered a consistent reduction in air pollution, but not for the requisite three-year period (please note: the time of the pandemic is not counted towards this total).

The AQAP expires unless renewed by Cabinet decision and it is a statutory requirement to hold a public consultation to approve new proposals. The deadline for submitting the plan to DEFRA is the end of February 2023.

View the [map of the Great Barton AQMA area](#)

Achievements so far and new developments

Since the AQAP was introduced in 2018, the council has moved a pedestrian crossing on the A143 to reduce build-up of traffic in the AQMA, which was done with a grant from DEFRA and showed initial improvements.

The pollution levels are below the $40\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ threshold, but still relatively high (34.5).

New proposed actions for the AQAP

The actions cover three main priorities:

1. Reducing the number of HGVs and LGVs travelling through Great Barton where possible.
2. Improve the flow of traffic along the A143.
3. Ensuring that new developments contribute positively to local air quality.

To ensure that new developments do not hinder the progress made in Great Barton so far, it is proposed that the following steps will be taken:

- Undertake traffic management feasibility assessment – this will review and explore localised options for traffic management improvement initiatives, such as traffic modelling, the possibility of re-routing HGVs, speed limit reduction.
- Implement traffic management improvements – the assessed traffic improvement initiatives will be consulted on locally and implemented, assuming successfully passing public consultation, and funding is secured.
- Engage with HGV drivers about local air quality – this will involve direct engagement with companies that utilise HGV drivers around methods of lowering emissions.
- Reduce emissions from new commercial developments - this would be through ensuring that low emission strategies are submitted with all commercial development planning applications that could impact on the AQMA.

Consultation

West Suffolk Council is legally required to consult on the proposed changes to the AQAP before a renewal can be agreed by Cabinet.

The consultation will run from 20 December 2023 and **will close on 22 January 2024**

Please let us know what you think by sending any comments or further suggestions to: environment@westsuffolk.gov.uk