
**Decision Session – Executive Members for
Environment and Climate Emergency**

5 July 2023

Report of the Corporate Director of Place

Air Quality – Annual Status Report 2022

Summary

1. The report details the latest (2022) air quality monitoring results for York and progress on achieving measures in York's current Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP3) to deliver further improvements in air quality. The report also provides an update on a successful funding bid made to DEFRA's Air Quality Grant Scheme for two projects to improve public awareness of air pollution.
2. Recent air quality monitoring can be summarised as follows:
 - Actions taken by CYC including the voluntary Clean Air Zone (CAZ) and electrification of buses, low emission taxi updates, anti-idling initiatives and incentives for electric vehicles (EVs) such as improved EV charging infrastructure have helped to improve air quality and continue the long-term general downward trend in nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) concentrations of the past 10+ years. Whilst improvements in air quality were seen in some areas of the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in 2022, pollutant concentrations in most were broadly similar to 2021, but remain lower than pre-pandemic levels recorded in 2019.
 - Most of York has good air quality and meets the health-based annual average air quality objective for NO₂ (40µg/m³); it was exceeded in the same three 'technical breach' areas within the city centre as in 2021, which include the following roads: Gillygate / Bootham / St Leonards Place, Blossom Street and Rougier Street.
 - The highest concentration of NO₂ recorded at a 'relevant location'¹ was 47µg/m³ on Gillygate, again consistent with 2021 figures.

¹ A relevant location is an outdoor, non-occupational location (e.g. facade of a residential dwelling) where members of the public may be exposed to poor air quality

- Concentrations of particulates (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) remain well within the current (and recently strengthened) health-based air quality objectives for these pollutants.
3. CYC has continued to progress the delivery of measures within York's Third Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP3). Since publication of AQAP3 and during 2022, York has:
- Secured additional funding to deliver further electric buses and associated charging infrastructure. This will allow the First York bus fleet to become fully electric by 2024, significantly reducing carbon, NO_x and particulate emissions across the city. This follows the previous introduction of the UK's first and only 'voluntary' Clean Air Zone (CAZ) for buses in 2020/21, again supported by CYC funding for bus replacement / retrofit.
 - Continued to work with partners and develop measures to deter stationary vehicle idling, including wider promotion of the 'Kick the Habit' anti-idling awareness-raising campaign, negotiation of new licence agreements with some ice cream van traders to prevent idling or the use of generators, and updates to Planning Guidance to introduce a requirement for 'Idling Management Plans' on some new developments.
 - Continued CYC's low emission taxi grant scheme. Over a third of York's taxis are now either low emission hybrid vehicles or zero emission electric vehicles.
 - Following the previous award of 'Go Ultra Low' city status by the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV), CYC has continued the upgrade of its fast, rapid and ultra-rapid (hyper-hubs) public electric vehicle recharging network in line with CYC's Public EV charging strategy
 - Progressed significant infrastructure upgrades at CYC's Hazel Court Eco Depot site to facilitate the introduction of EV charging for fleet vehicles. At the end of 2022, 18.4% of CYC's operational fleet were electric or hybrid vehicles. This paves the way for CYC's transition to an all-electric fleet for all council vehicles under 3.5 tonnes.
 - Continued to ensure that emissions and air quality impacts from new developments were appropriately assessed and mitigated, exposure to poor air quality was reduced via good design practices and that new private trips were minimised via the provision of sustainable transport solutions. Our Low Emission Planning Guidance note was updated in June 2022 to reflect changes to Building Regulations with respect to EV charging infrastructure requirements.

- Continued to engage with businesses, including delivery companies, on options for a DEFRA funded pilot scheme aimed at reducing emissions associated with freight deliveries. The pilot scheme concept was developed further throughout 2022 with a base identified for a 9-month hub pilot, due to progress in 2023.
 - Promoted the government's national 'Burn Better' campaign to reduce emissions and continued a programme of compliance checks across solid fuel distribution outlets to ensure correct certification of solid fuels for domestic use.
 - Obtained further DEFRA Air Quality Grant funding to improve public awareness of domestic solid fuel burning practices, particulate emissions, and associated health impacts. Grant funding was also awarded to develop an air pollution forecasting and notification platform to ensure residents have access to information that allows them to minimise exposure when pollution levels are high.
4. In February 2023, CYC published a draft Local Transport Strategy, that set out high level principles / priorities for York that will underpin future transport strategies for the city. The document examines the evidence, sets out implications and suggests the sort of interventions which could be used to overcome the challenges with York's existing transport system. 'Tackling transport emissions' is recognised as key policy strand within the draft strategy. Measures in CYC's emerging Air Quality Action Plan update (AQAP4), in development, will support both this aim and York's wider transport vision, to reduce congestion, pollution and traffic levels and make active travel and new modes of travel more attractive. It should be noted that AQAP4 will also contain further measures to address non-transport emissions, such as those associated with domestic solid fuel burning. A consultation draft of AQAP4 is expected later in 2023.

Recommendations

5. The Executive Member is asked to:
- i. Note the contents of the report (and approve the submission of the Annual Status Report to DEFRA), including the generally improving trend in air pollution in recent years, progress made with AQAP3 and progress with updating the current plan in line with the Environment Act 2021, to complement other key CYC strategies.

Reason: to ensure that the Executive Member is aware of current air quality position in the city including continued exceedances of objectives in some areas, progress made with air quality improvement measures and progress with AQAP4.

Background

6. Annual Status Reports (ASRs) were introduced to aid transparency, increase accessibility of air quality to the wider public and encourage buy-in to delivering air quality improvement measures by those best placed to assist (e.g., Directors of Public Health and Transport).
7. This report provides an update on air quality in York (2022 calendar year), including progress on delivery of measures within CYC's third Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP3), prior to submission of this year's ASR to DEFRA. The full 2023 Annual Status Report is included at Annex A.
8. Air pollution is associated with a number of adverse health impacts. It is recognised as a contributing factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer. Additionally, air pollution particularly affects the most vulnerable in society: children, the elderly, and those with existing heart and lung conditions. The mortality burden of air pollution within the UK is equivalent to 29,000 to 43,000 deaths at typical ages², with a total estimated healthcare cost to the NHS and social care of £157 million in 2017³. The theme for Clean Air Day 2023 is 'Clean up our air to look after your mind' and is aimed at highlighting increasing evidence that shows people who breathe polluted air are also more likely to develop mental health and brain conditions.
9. Historic monitoring of air quality across the city identified some areas of the city centre, around the inner ring road, where long term annual average nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) levels were above health-based objectives. This became the city centre AQMA. Other AQMAs declared in Fulford and on Salisbury Terrace were revoked in 2020 and 2017 respectively due to air quality improvements.
10. CYC has a statutory duty to try to reduce NO₂ concentrations within the remaining city centre AQMA and additional obligations in relation to the protection of public health and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. The main air pollutants of concern in York are NO₂ and particulate matter (PM). Previous source apportionment work has suggested that traffic is responsible for around 50-70% of the total NO₂. Road transport is also a source of PM emissions, although its contribution is less than half that of domestic burning of solid fuels in closed stoves and open fires.

² Defra. Air quality appraisal: damage cost guidance, January 2023

³ Public Health England. Estimation of costs to the NHS and social care due to the health impacts of air pollution: summary report, May 2018

Air Quality Monitoring Update

11. Real-time monitoring of NO₂ and other pollutants has been undertaken at a total of 14 different locations across York since 1999 (real-time monitoring is currently undertaken at 9 sites). CYC also undertakes diffusion tube monitoring at 233 sites across the city. In addition to monitoring air pollution across the city, the results determine the impact of air quality improvement, planning and transport measures.

City Centre AQMA

12. The latest air pollution monitoring data for 2022 indicates that NO₂ concentrations in the AQMA remain broadly similar to those monitored in 2021, with further minor improvements observed in some areas. Concentrations of NO₂ monitored at the majority of locations in York throughout 2022 continue the general downward trend in NO₂ concentrations monitored in the city over the last 10 years. Annual mean NO₂ concentrations across the AQMA are generally lower than the pre-pandemic levels of 2019, but higher than the atypical concentrations monitored during the pandemic in 2020.
13. Minor improvements in annual mean NO₂ concentrations were monitored at most of CYC's roadside automatic monitors between 2021 and 2022 with the exception of Gillygate where annual NO₂ concentrations rose by 6%.
14. The highest concentration of NO₂ recorded at a location representative of long-term public exposure in 2022 was 47µg/m³ on Gillygate (the same as in 2021).
15. Exceedances of the health based annual mean NO₂ objective of 40µg/m³ were monitored in 2022 at some locations on Gillygate (Diffusion Tubes 7, 13, 14), Bootham (A1), St Leonards Place (D59), Blossom Street (C27) and on Rougier Street (109, 115)⁴. Monitoring at background sites indicates that most pollution is due to an increase in traffic post lockdown. Air quality action plan measures including the further electrification of buses and taxis, initiatives to reduce emissions associated with deliveries and wider modal shift measures aim to address these traffic emissions and bring about improvements in air quality.
16. In December 2018, the boundary of the city centre AQMA was extended to include the full length of Coppergate and the buildings either side of

⁴ Diffusion tube locations can be viewed on [York Map](#)

the road, due to monitored concentrations of NO₂ above the annual mean objective. The highest annual mean concentration of NO₂ monitored along Coppergate in 2022 was 35.9µg/m³. Whilst annual mean concentrations of NO₂ were below the objective in this location in 2022 (and indeed were below concentrations monitored between 2017 – 2019), they are higher (~13%) than concentrations monitored in 2021 and it is therefore considered appropriate to keep this area of the city under observation prior to making any amendments to the AQMA boundary. It should be noted that this increase was not observed at all monitoring locations on Coppergate.

17. Despite some localised increases in NO₂ in some areas, concentrations of NO₂ monitored at the majority of locations in York throughout 2021 and 2022 continue the general downward trend in NO₂ concentrations monitored in the city since 2012. However, due to the differences in air pollution observed across the city throughout the period 2019 – 2022 (especially the increases observed between 2020 and 2021/2022) and uncertainties around the longer-term impacts of the pandemic on traffic and emissions, it is not considered appropriate to reduce the size of the city centre AQMA at this time. Ongoing air quality monitoring in all locations will be fundamental to understanding the longer-term environmental impacts of the pandemic and the magnitude of any changes due to increased sustained levels of walking and cycling and changes in use of public transport.

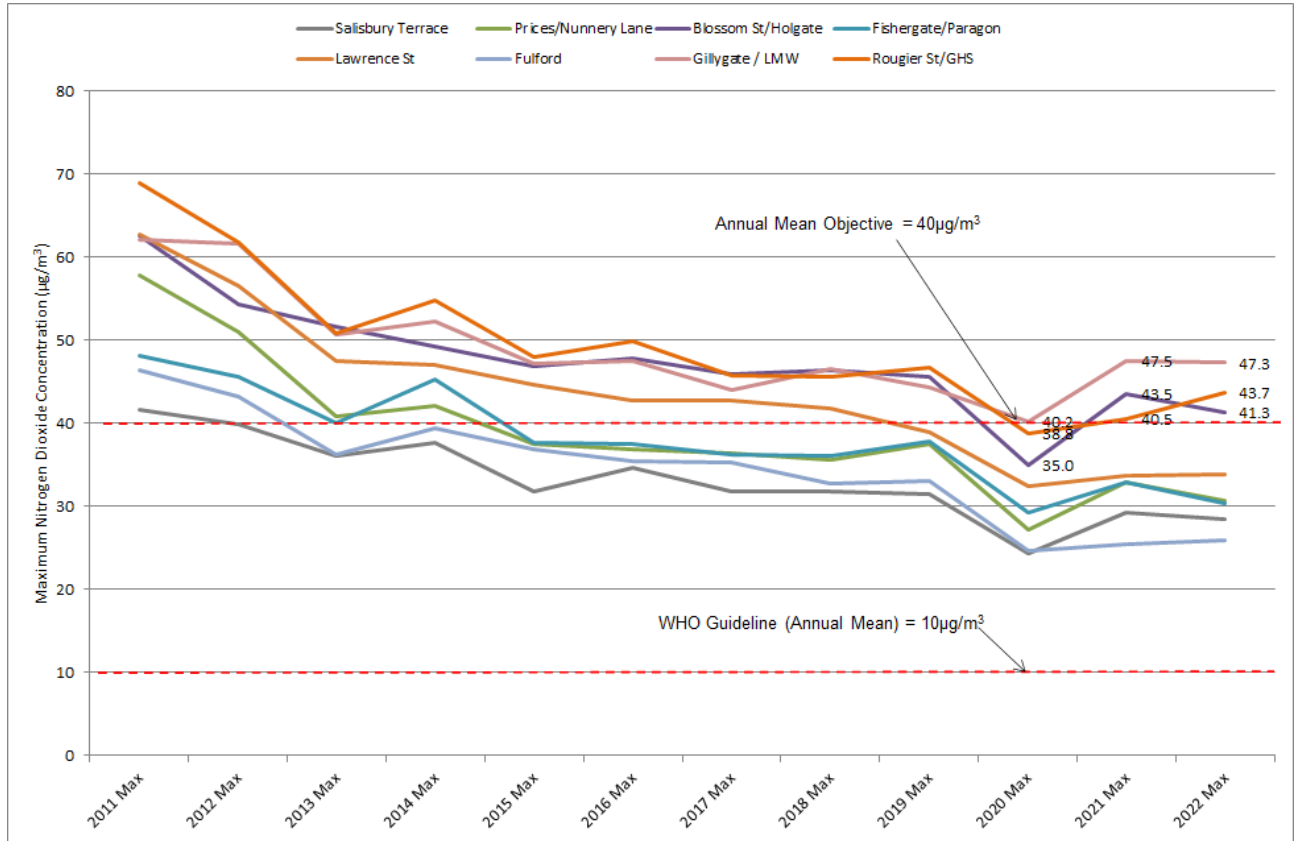
Local Air Quality Indicators

18. The maximum NO₂ concentrations monitored (at relevant locations⁵) in key areas across the city centre AQMA are captured by Council Plan Indicator CAN028. Trends in air quality between 2011 and 2022 are shown below in Figure 1a. An additional graph is shown at Figure 1b to illustrate changes between 2019 - 2022 (before, during, and post pandemic). With the exception of Gillygate, maximum concentrations of NO₂ monitored in all other areas in 2022 were lower than those recorded in the 9 years between 2011 and 2019. This continues to suggest a steady downward trend in nitrogen dioxide concentrations over the last 10+ years for most areas of York. Whilst maximum annual mean concentrations of NO₂ recorded in the Rougier Street area increased by

⁵ A relevant location is an outdoor, non-occupational location (e.g. facade of a residential dwelling) where members of the public may be exposed to poor air quality

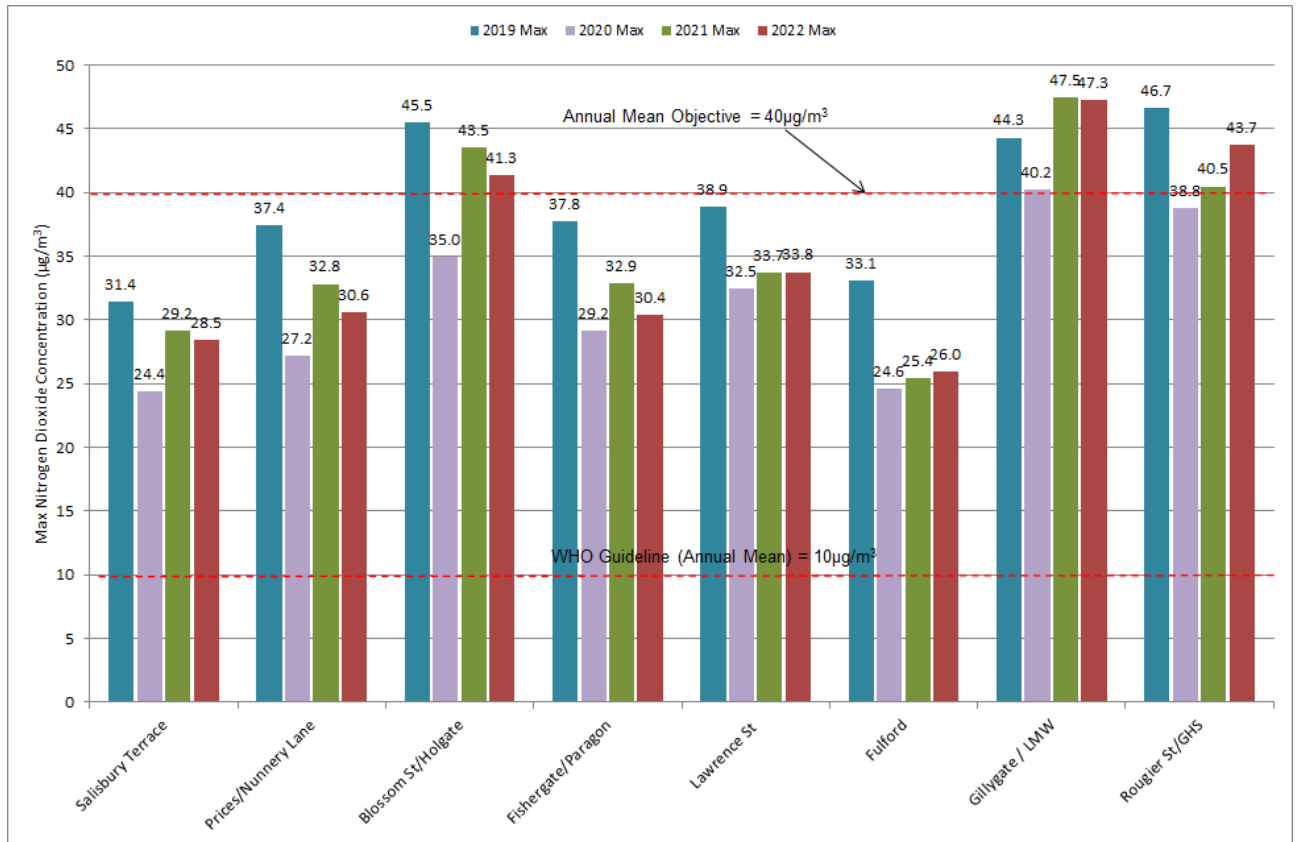
8% between 2021 and 2022⁶, they too still remain below levels monitored in all years pre-pandemic up to 2019.

Figure 1a: Maximum concentrations of NO₂ monitored within key areas of the AQMA (and former areas covered by historical AQMAs) between 2011 and 2022 (longer term trends).



⁶ It should be noted that maximum concentrations monitored on Rougier Street in 2022 appear higher than those monitored 2021, however, this was a result of increased concentrations at only 2 of 6 CYC monitoring sites in this area and the trend was not reflected at the other 4 sites.

Figure 1b: Maximum concentrations of NO₂ monitored within key areas of the AQMA (and former areas covered by historical AQMAs) during and post pandemic period, 2019 - 2022



Former Fulford Road and Salisbury Terrace AQMAs

- Maximum concentrations of NO₂ monitored at relevant locations within the former Salisbury Terrace and Fulford Road AQMAs in 2022 remain well below the health-based objectives, confirming the decision to revoke these AQMAs in 2017 and 2020. Current monitoring will remain for now to monitor future changes in air quality due to development in the city.

Monitoring of Particulate Matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5})

- CYC monitors particulate (PM₁₀) at 4 sites in the city (Bootham, Fishergate, Holgate Road and Plantation Drive) and ultra-fine particulate (PM_{2.5}) at 3 sites (Bootham, Fishergate and Gillygate). National air quality objectives for PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} are currently met in York⁷. The highest annual mean levels of PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} monitored in York during 2022 were 17.9µg/m³ and 8.8µg/m³ respectively. Along with most urbanised areas of the UK, these concentrations are above World Health

⁷ PM₁₀ Annual Mean Objective is 40µg/m³, PM_{2.5} Annual Mean Objective is 10µg/m³ by 2040 (with interim target of 12µg/m³ by the end of January 2028)

Organisation (WHO) guidelines for these pollutants, which have recently been strengthened to $15\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (PM_{10}) and $5\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ($\text{PM}_{2.5}$).

21. Concentrations monitored in 2022 are slightly above maximum levels of $17.2\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (PM_{10}) and $8.4\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ($\text{PM}_{2.5}$) monitored in 2021. Trends over the last 5 years indicate that $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ has generally decreased across the city since 2018, whereas there does not appear any clear trend in PM_{10} over the same period. Trends in PM_{10} and $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ at CYC monitoring stations in recent years are shown in figures 2 and 3 below.

Figure 2: Annual Mean PM_{10}

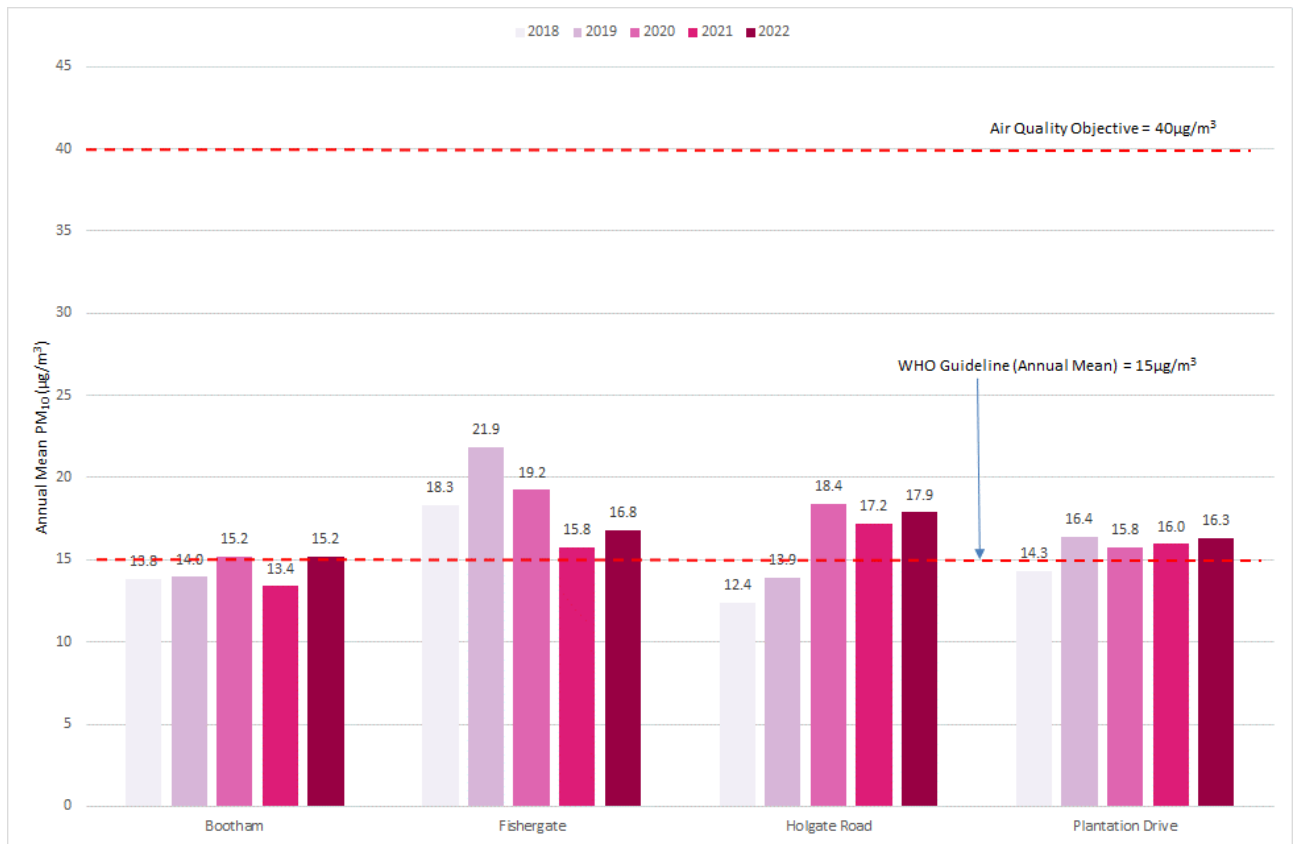
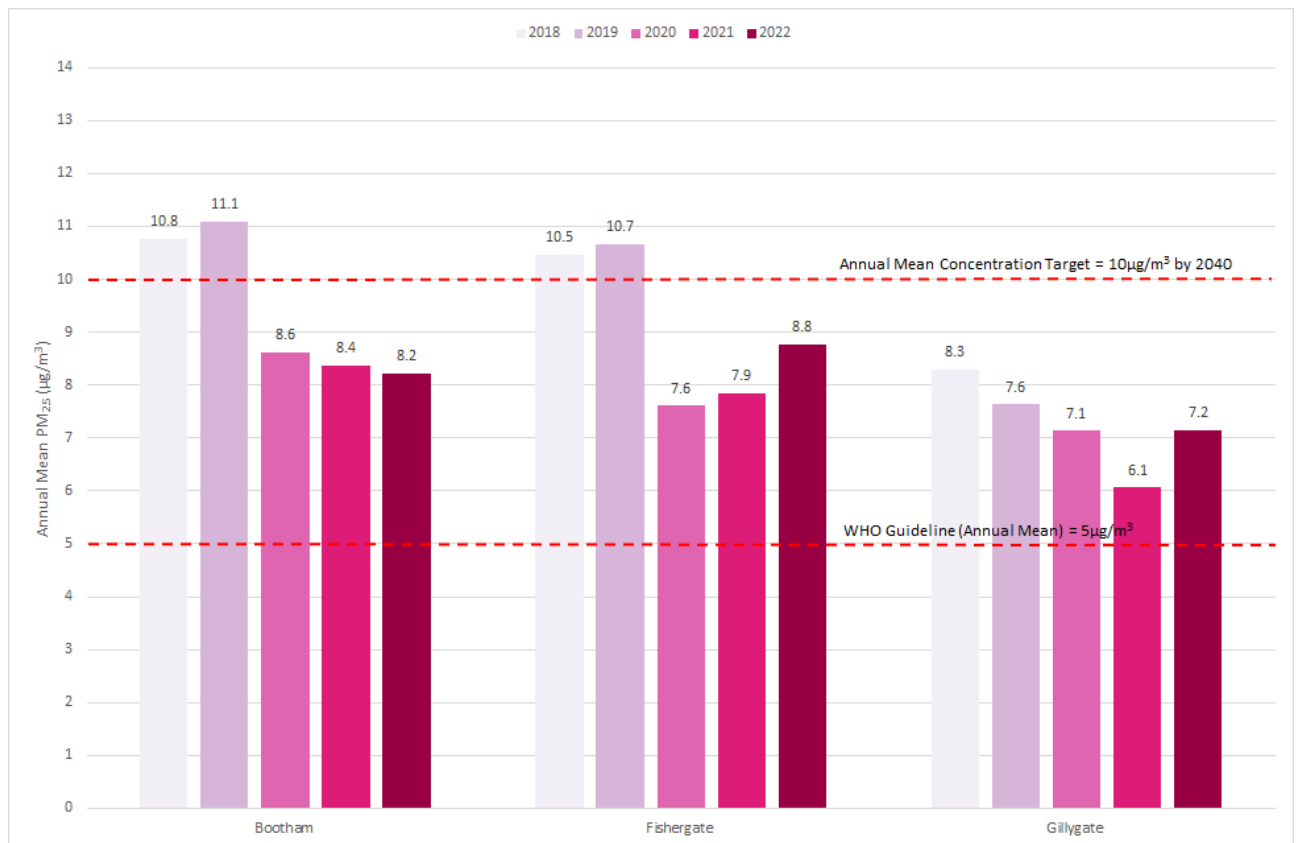


Figure 3: Annual Mean PM_{2.5}



22. Short term trends and annual variation in particulates do not necessarily reflect those seen with nitrogen dioxide, especially during the pandemic. This is because while transport in York produces between 50-70% of total NO_x emissions, it is only responsible for around 15% and 17% of PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} emissions respectively, with the remainder from other sources such as domestic and commercial heating, nature, waste, and agriculture.
23. Whilst domestic and commercial combustion make up around a quarter of NO_x emissions across York, they are estimated to be responsible for 44% of PM₁₀ emissions and 68% of PM_{2.5} emissions. Domestic combustion is estimated to be responsible for around 37% of PM_{2.5} emissions, with the majority (about 31%) from wood burning⁸. DEFRA official statistics⁹ report that that road transport also remains a major source of PM emissions in the UK, although its contribution is less than half that of domestic heating. Most PM_{2.5} emissions from road transport arise from vehicle brake, tyre, and road wear. New legislation around the types of fuels that can now be legally sold will, in part, help to reduce levels of fine particulate, but it is proposed to include further measures to tackle this pollutant in CYC's

⁸ CYC Source Apportionment work undertaken to support AQAP4 development.

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/emissions-of-air-pollutants/emissions-of-air-pollutants-in-the-uk-particulate-matter-pm10-and-pm25#major-emission-sources-for-pm10-and-pm25-in-the-uk>

AQAP update. Further actions to reduce particulate concentrations will include the phasing out of diesel buses, other diesel vehicles and machinery and reducing particulate emissions from domestic and commercial heating. Recent DEFRA Air Quality grant funding awarded to CYC will be used to raise awareness of domestic solid fuel burning and impacts on indoor and outdoor air quality, to aid further reductions in particulate matter in the city.

24. For York, like most of the UK, particulate concentrations are above (but, in York's case, not much above) the new aspirational World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines, which have recently been tightened to $15\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (PM_{10}) and $5\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ($\text{PM}_{2.5}$). The new guidelines are significantly more stringent than current UK Air Quality Objectives and do not currently apply in UK law. The new guidelines reflect the large body of evidence produced in recent years of the harm caused by much lower levels of pollution than previously thought. WHO recognise these are challenging public health recommendations and achieving the guideline levels would be the ultimate goal.
25. There are no known safe limits for air pollutants. Our understanding around the health impacts of air pollutants is continually evolving and the latest evidence indicates that air pollution is the greatest environmental threat to health and a leading cause of heart attacks and strokes. The WHO air quality guidelines have been included on the graphs presented in this report as a reference point. Whilst there is no legal obligation for CYC to meet the WHO air quality guidelines, they serve as a reminder that significant health benefits can be achieved by reducing people's exposure to air pollution and that the council should aspire to go beyond the current Air Quality Objectives.

Actions to Improve Air Quality

26. Although air quality has improved significantly in recent decades and should continue to improve due to national policy decisions and advances in technology, the Council still has a role and plan to further improve air quality. The government's 2019 Clean Air Strategy¹⁰ sets out the case for action, with goals even more ambitious than EU requirements to reduce exposure to harmful pollutants. The Road to Zero¹¹ sets out the approach to reduce exhaust emissions from road transport through a number of mechanisms; this is extremely important given that the majority of

¹⁰ Defra. Clean Air Strategy, 2019

¹¹ DfT. The Road to Zero: Next steps towards cleaner road transport and delivering our Industrial Strategy, July 2018

AQMAs are designated due to elevated concentrations heavily influenced by transport emissions.

27. As well as the UK's first voluntary Clean Air Zone, York developed the UK's first overarching Low Emission Strategy (LES) in 2012, based on reducing emissions from all sources, including vehicles, and encouraging the uptake of alternative fuels and low emission vehicle technologies (*whilst at the same time reducing carbon and greenhouse gas emissions*). The LES has been particularly effective at tackling emissions from buses and taxis which fall outside the scope of trip reduction based modal shift measures but contribute to air pollution. The LES also led to York's early public charging network for electric vehicles (EVs) in 2013, which has developed significantly over the last 10 years.
28. Modal shift and congestion reduction measures remain fundamental to the delivery of air quality improvement and emission reduction in York. The primary local delivery programmes for these measures are the Local Transport Plan and iTravel York programme. Such measures are supported by planning policies that ensure that sustainable travel solutions are included in all new developments in York. Measures in CYC's current Air Quality Action Plan support other emission reduction measures across other CYC strategies such as the Local Transport Plan and Climate Change Strategy. An update to CYC's current Air Quality Action Plan is anticipated in 2023 and a consultation draft will be brought to a future Executive Member Decision session. The revised Action Plan will fully update existing measures and targets to drive continual improvement in air quality across the city over the next 5-year period to meet health-based Air Quality Objectives, improve public health outcomes and help to achieve carbon reduction targets in line with the priorities of CYC's new administration.
29. Since publication of CYC's Low Emission Strategy and third Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP3) and during 2022, York has:
 - Secured funding to deliver electric buses and charging infrastructure at York's Park & Ride (P&R) sites. In March 2022, CYC was awarded £8.4m through DfT's Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) scheme fund to buy an additional 44 new electric buses. DfT has since awarded the council an additional £1.8m to increase the scope of the ZEBRA scheme to co-fund a further 9 electric buses. With these additional vehicles, the First York bus fleet will become fully electric by 2024, significantly reducing carbon, NO_x and particulate emissions across the city. In April 2022, CYC was also awarded £17m to support

the development of key schemes and initiatives in line with York's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), including wider electrification of the urban bus fleet, bus priority measures, improvements to stops, shelters and passenger information.

- Launched a Clean Air Zone (CAZ) for buses (January 2020). Buses making 5 or more entrances to the city centre CAZ per day are now required to be Ultra Low Emission Buses (ULEB) (Euro VI diesel or electric). CYC gave £1.65m to 5 bus operators to help replace/retrofit 93 buses to CAZ compliant standards. The CAZ became fully operational from the end of January 2021. An advisory minimum emission standard of ULEB applies to exempted vehicles (<5 entrances to the CAZ per day) from January 2024 and it is anticipated that all buses entering the city centre will meet ULEB standard by this date.
- Worked with partners to reduce the incidence of vehicle idling across the city. In 2022, we negotiated new licence agreements with some ice cream van traders to prevent idling or the use of generators in the city and introduced a new requirement for 'Idling Management Plans' on new developments where there are opportunities for customers to sit in their vehicles with engines running. CYC also welcomed the introduction of permanent anti-idling signage at an existing drive through fast food establishment at Monks Cross (August 2022), complementing CYC's other signage around the city. Work in 2022 reinforces action in previous years, including the erection of permanent anti-idling signage in all CYC owned car parks, at most city centre bus stops, multiple taxi ranks and at other key locations across the city. Further information about the campaign can be found on [CYC's Kick the Habit Webpage](#)
- Continued the promotion and rollout of the DEFRA funded [Low Emission Taxi Grant scheme](#) throughout 2022 and welcomed further hybrid and electric taxis to the York fleet. Over a third of York taxis are now using electric or petrol hybrid vehicles. In October 2022, CYC's Licensing and Regulatory Committee agreed that further Hackney carriage vehicle licences shall only be issued to wheelchair accessible, fully electric or plug in hybrid electric vehicles. Licensing and Regulatory Committee members also agreed to update CYC's Taxi Licensing Policy, in consultation with the trade and other relevant parties.
- Continued the upgrade of its fast, rapid, and ultra-rapid public electric vehicle recharging network. Once complete, CYC's charging network will consist of 350 fast charging spaces, 19 rapid chargers, and 12 ultra-rapid chargers providing different charging options depending on an EV driver's requirements. York's second electric vehicle Hyper Hub, next to Poppleton Park and Ride, opened in Sept 2022. The new site joins the

Monks Cross HyperHub, which opened earlier in 2022 and is one of the largest charging hubs in Northern England. The number of charging episodes in the city during 2022 was 24,109.

- Progressed significant infrastructure upgrades at CYC's Hazel Court Eco Depot site during 2022 to facilitate the introduction of EV charging facilities for fleet vehicles. At the end of 2022, 18.4% of CYC's operational fleet were electric or hybrid vehicles. This paves the way for CYC's transition to an all-electric fleet for all council vehicles under 3.5 tonnes and complements the previous introduction of a telematics system for fleet vehicles to reduce emissions and improve vehicle / driver efficiency. Officers continue to explore options for larger vehicles over 3.5 tonnes to move away from fossil fuels such as diesel. In 2022, CYC also introduced a requirement for all depot staff to undertake mandatory Alternative Fuel Vehicle (AFV) training prior to delivery of the new electric vehicles; staff training included information on local air quality and health impacts to raise awareness of air quality issues across the CYC workforce.
- Continued to ensure that emissions and air quality impacts from new developments were appropriately assessed and mitigated, exposure to poor air quality was reduced via good design practices and that new private trips were minimised via the provision of sustainable transport solutions. Our Low Emission Planning Guidance note was updated in June 2022 to reflect changes to Building Regulations as outlined in Approved Document S: Infrastructure for the charging of electric vehicles. CYC continues to specify EV charging requirements through the planning process.
- Obtained DEFRA AQ Grant funding (March 2021) to carry out a feasibility study and subsequent pilot scheme to reduce emissions relating to freight deliveries travelling in to and out of York. CYC engaged with businesses, including delivery companies, on the early feasibility work and options for a pilot micro-consolidation scheme. The pilot scheme concept was developed further throughout 2022 with a base identified for a 9-month hub pilot, expected to progress in 2023.
- Led a DEFRA funded project to develop an air quality hub, along with Bradford and Lancaster councils. The Hub features a range of content areas related to air quality improvement measures that local authorities can adopt, as well as more specific advice notes that focus on various aspects of local air quality management, planning, monitoring and enforcement. Following the launch at the end of 2020, the membership has grown significantly throughout 2021/2022, covering local authorities across the UK. We are currently exploring opportunities with DEFRA for

wider use and adoption the Air Quality Hub to support the national Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) regime.

- Undertaken promotion of the rules around smoke control areas and issued advice and guidance to residents on the use of appropriate fuels and maintenance of appliances in line with the Government's national Burn Better campaign. We have continued a programme of compliance checks across solid fuel distribution outlets to ensure correct certification of solid fuels for domestic use. Further Air Quality Grant funding was awarded to CYC in February 2023 to improve public awareness of domestic solid fuel burning practices, particulate emissions, and associated health impacts. This is in addition to funding awarded to develop an air pollution forecasting and notification platform to ensure residents have access to information that allows them to minimise exposure to pollution. Updates on both projects will be provided in future reports to the Executive Member for Environment and Climate Emergency.
- Delivered an expanding programme of walking, cycling and public transport initiatives, alongside complementary air quality initiatives delivered through CYC's carbon reduction work programme.

Priorities for the Coming Year

30. City of York Council's priorities for the coming year are outlined below. Detailed plans for these actions will be developed further with the new administration over the coming year.

- **Progress CYC's updated AQAP** - CYC's AQAP update will include measures to further reduce nitrogen oxides and particulates from all sources and will support and complement CYC's economic strategy, Local Plan, Local Transport Plan/Strategy and Climate Change Strategy. A consultation draft of AQAP4 is expected later in 2023.
- **Progress upgrades to bus services (including further electrification of the urban fleet)** - the York Enhanced Partnership for Buses formally came into effect on 27th September 2022. This is a statutory Enhanced Partnership (EP) under the Transport Act 2000, between City of York Council and York's local bus operators. The EP sets out a range of binding responsibilities for the partners and will act as the principal delivery body for the £17.36 million Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding. This funding has been awarded to the council by the Department of Transport (DfT) for use during the financial years 2022 to 2025. The EP will also provide a platform for bus users and stakeholders to share their views on the local bus network.

- **Continue to address idling emissions** – a new Public Protection Support Officer (PPSO) service will provide anti-idling patrols, investigate complaints of idling, and raise awareness of the links between idling emissions and health in line with CYC’s existing ‘Kick the Habit’ anti-idling campaign.
- **Continue to reduce emissions from taxis** - We will undertake further consultation with the trade in relation to updates to our Taxi Licensing Policy. Anticipated changes to the policy will see a gradual change in the operational taxi fleet, as vehicle licenses are renewed and as vehicles become too old to operate in the city. We will continue to roll out our DEFRA funded Low Emission Taxi Grant Scheme to support CYC licensed taxi drivers with vehicle upgrades throughout 2023. We will explore further opportunities for minimising emissions from taxis in the city centre in line with the priorities of CYC’s new administration.
- **Reduce emissions from development** – we will continue to work with developers to ensure development related emissions are appropriately assessed and mitigated, exposure to poor air quality is reduced via good design practices and that new private trips are minimised via provision of opportunities for sustainable transport. We will continue to facilitate and encourage walking, cycling and low emission public transport use, which have co-benefits for health and wellbeing.
- **Progress development of York’s future transport policies** - CYC shall progress consultation with stakeholders and residents on a draft Local Transport Policy that reflects the priorities set out in CYC’s 10-Year Strategies and the Local Plan. The draft Strategy sets out high level principles and priorities for York and has been developed with the help of a cross-party working group, taking account of the results of the ‘Our Big Conversation’ consultation carried out in Summer 2022. CYC shall develop a local transport plan by April 2024 which will enable us to reduce congestion and help people get about the city better, as well as meeting our net zero targets.
- **Expansion of strategic EV charging network** - CYC will deliver additional charge points and actively monitor plug-in vehicle uptake in the city to ensure our charging network remains fit for purpose.
- **Raising awareness of PM emissions and health impacts** - we will progress a DEFRA funded project (2022/23 AQ Grant) to improve public awareness of the links between domestic solid fuel burning particulate emission and health impacts.
- **Improving public awareness of air pollution** – we will progress a DEFRA funded project (2022/23 AQ Grant) to develop an air pollution

forecasting and alert platform. The platform will ensure the most vulnerable residents have access to information that allows them to minimise exposure to pollution. Wider ongoing promotion of such services will improve awareness of the links between all air pollution and health impacts generally; this will support the particulate awareness campaign and CYC's other ongoing LAQM work.

- **Further controls to address fine particulate emissions** – we will consider further opportunities to tackle fine particulate emissions.
- **Reducing emissions associated with freight deliveries** - we aim to evaluate the pilot micro-consolidation centre and work with partners to find a sustainable model that will allow the operation to continue beyond the end of the pilot. A delivery hub will aim to maximise the efficiency of city centre deliveries, using e-cargo cycles and EVs, thereby minimising the need for large vehicles to enter the city centre. We will explore further opportunities for minimising emissions from freight vehicles in the city centre in line with the priorities of CYC's new administration.

Consultation

31. Local authorities must submit an ASR to DEFRA each year. Whilst no consultation outside CYC has been undertaken specifically for the purposes of compiling the ASR, the report will be considered in public at the executive member decision session, before submission to DEFRA.

Options

32. The Executive Member is asked to note the contents of this report, including the trends in air pollution in recent years (and the intention to submit the full Annual Status Report to DEFRA), progress with air quality improvement measures and proposed AQAP update to support and complement other key CYC strategies.

Analysis

33. DEFRA's Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) Policy Guidance and Technical Guidance outline the process that should be followed with respect to the LAQM regime.
34. Pollutant concentrations will vary from year to year due to the influence of meteorological conditions and DEFRA guidance says authorities should avoid cycling between declaring, revoking, and declaring AQMAs again simply due to these variations. For this reason, it is expected that authorities will need to consider measurements carried out over three to

five consecutive years when deliberating the revocation or amendment of an AQMA, as well as national trends in emissions and local factors that may affect the AQMA, including measures introduced as part of the Air Quality Action Plan.

35. CYC's AQAP update will fully review the latest air pollution monitoring data and all current air quality improvement measures. Where still relevant to York's air quality issues and principal emission sources, measures and targets will be updated to ensure they achieve continual improvement in air quality across the city over the next 5-year period to meet health-based Air Quality Objectives and improve public health outcomes.

Council Plan

36. Monitoring and reporting on air quality and measures to improve air quality will contribute to the Council Plan's aim of delivering a prosperous city for all, where local businesses can thrive, and residents have good quality jobs, housing, and opportunities. Policies and strategies to improve air quality will promote *'good health and wellbeing'* and improved air quality will provide *'a better start for children and young people'*. CYC's AQAP recognises the important role of modal shift in air quality improvement and strives to facilitate the uptake of low and zero emission modes of transport wherever possible, thus facilitating York's residents, workforce, and visitors to *'get around sustainably'* and contribute to *'a greener and cleaner city'*.
37. Reducing emissions and improving air quality will reduce exposure to harmful air pollutants which can increase the symptoms of chronic and acute illnesses increase the risk of hospital admissions and in some case result in premature death. Good air quality reduces absence from work and education due to air pollution related illnesses. The Council Plan recognises the importance of a healthy population in achieving the economic aspirations of the city.
38. Air pollution damages buildings as well as human health. Improving air quality will help to protect the city's many historic buildings and create a cleaner environment for visitors to York, an ultra-low emission city. York's built and natural environment underpins people's quality of life and attracts millions of visitors to the city each year. Protecting and enhancing these environments for existing and future generations is a key priority for the council and our residents. The council has a key role in creating an

environment where people make sustainable choices about the way they live and work.

Implications

39. The various implications of this report are summarised below:

Financial

40. This report has no direct financial implications. However, implementation of air quality improvement measures will require both capital and revenue funding. Ongoing monitoring of air quality in the city, including continuation of monitoring in previous AQMA areas, also requires ongoing revenue funding. Any request for funding will follow the council's budgetary process.

Human Resources (HR)

41. There are no HR implications

Equalities

42. Vulnerable people, including older people, children, pregnant women, and those with respiratory and other illnesses, are more likely to be adversely affected by poor air quality.

Legal

43. CYC has a statutory duty to periodically review the air quality within its area and to designate AQMAs where air quality objectives are not being achieved or are not likely to be achieved. Once an AQMA has been designated there is a duty to carry out an assessment and prepare an Air Quality Action Plan. DEFRA have issued statutory guidance to which councils must have regard in exercising these functions. This includes annual reporting on progress with delivery of AQAPs via Annual Status Reports.

Crime and Disorder

44. There are no crime and disorder implications

Information Technology (IT)

45. There are no IT implications

Property

46. There are no property implications

Risk Management

47. Not applicable to this report, which is provided for information.

Contact Details

Author:

Mike Southcombe
Public Protection Manager
Michael.Southcombe@york.gov.uk
Tel No. (01904) 551514

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

James Gilchrist, Director of Transport,
Environment and Planning

Report ✓ **Date** 26/06/2023
Approved

Wards Affected: List wards or tick box to indicate all

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

- Adoption of York's Third Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP3) - Decision Session Executive Member for the Environment, 14th December 2014
- Previous CYC Local Air Quality Management Reports are available to view at <https://www.york.gov.uk/AirPollutionReports>

Annexes

Annex A: Full 2023 Annual Status Report (ASR)

List of Abbreviations Used in this Report:

ASR	Annual Status Report
DEFRA	Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs
DfT	Department for Transport
AQAP3	Third Air Quality Action Plan
AQMA	Air Quality Management Area
CAZ	Clean Air Zone
$\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	Micrograms per cubic metre
NO_2	Nitrogen dioxide
$\text{PM}_{10}/\text{PM}_{2.5}$	Particulate Matter up to 10 microns / 2.5 microns in size
LES	Low Emission Strategy
LTP	Local Transport Plan
EV	Electric Vehicle