

Meeting:	Executive
Meeting date:	18 July 2024
Report of:	James Gilchrist, Director of Transport, Environment and Planning
Portfolio of:	Cllr Jenny Kent - Executive Member for Environment and Climate Emergency

Air Quality – Annual Status Report 2024

Subject of Report

1. The report details the latest (2023) air quality monitoring results for York and progress on achieving measures in City of York Council's (CYC) current Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP3) to deliver further improvements in air quality. The report also provides an update on York's Fourth Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP4).
2. The Executive is asked to note the contents of the report (and approve the submission of the Annual Status Report (ASR) to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs [DEFRA]) including the generally improving trend in air pollution in recent years.
3. Air quality monitoring results in 2023 can be summarised as follows:
 - Actions taken by CYC including the voluntary Clean Air Zone (CAZ) and electrification of buses, low emission taxi upgrades, 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. CYC has already made considerable progress in reducing air pollution in the city through such initiatives, many of which have been supported by DEFRA funding in recognition of CYC being a pioneering authority that delivers air quality improvement measures.
 - Improvements in air quality were seen across the city centre Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and wider city compared

with 2022. Historical improvements in air quality in other areas of York have already led to the revocation of AQMAs in these areas and CYC remains committed to delivering further improvements across the remaining AQMA to improve public health outcomes.

- Most of York has good air quality and meets the health-based annual average air quality objective for NO₂ (40µg/m³). The annual average objective for NO₂ was exceeded at a small number of monitoring sites within the current AQMA on Gillygate, Bootham and Rougier Street. For the first time since air quality monitoring began (with the exception of 2020 during the pandemic) no exceedances of the annual mean objective were monitored in the Holgate Road / Blossom Street area of the city.
 - The highest concentration of NO₂ monitored at a 'relevant location' (location of relevant public exposure) was 43µg/m³ near the junction of Gillygate and Bootham, compared with 47µg/m³ on Gillygate in 2022. Continued improvements in air quality in challenging 'hotspot' areas such as Gillygate support ongoing CYC action to reduce emissions through uptake of cleaner vehicle technologies, sustainable travel initiatives and associated behaviour change campaigns.
 - Concentrations of particulates (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) remain well within the current (and recently strengthened) health-based air quality objectives for these pollutants. The highest annual mean levels of PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} monitored in York during 2023 were 16.8µg/m³ (PM₁₀ objective 40µg/m³) and 8.0µg/m³ (PM_{2.5} target is 10µg/m³).
4. CYC continued the delivery of measures in its third Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP3) throughout 2023, progressing the following initiatives and projects:
- **Bus service improvements** – in partnership with First Bus, we introduced further zero emission electric buses to the York fleet, significantly reducing carbon, NO_x and particulate emissions across the city. This follows the introduction of the UK's first and only 'voluntary' Clean Air Zone (CAZ) for buses in 2020/21.
 - **Anti-idling initiatives** – we continued to work with partners to deter stationary vehicle idling.
 - **Low Emission Taxi grant** – we continued CYC's Low Emission Taxi Grant scheme so that by the end of December 2023, 37%

of CYC licensed taxis were using low emission petrol hybrid or zero emission electric vehicles.

- **EV charging** - we continued to upgrade our public electric vehicle charging network and finalised infrastructure upgrades at Hazel Court to facilitate the transition to an all-electric council fleet for vehicles under 3.5t. In February 2024, 41% of CYC's operational fleet (<3.5t) were electric vehicles.
- **Low Emission Planning** - we 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 opportunities.
- **Measures around domestic solid fuel burning** – our DEFRA funded 'Fuel for Thought' campaign, to improve public awareness of domestic solid fuel burning practices, particulate emissions and associated health impacts, was launched in November 2023.
- **Pollution forecasting and alert platform** – we progressed a DEFRA funded project to funding to develop an online air pollution forecasting and notification service, York Air Alert, to allow residents and visitors to York to access information that allows them to minimise their own exposure when pollution episodes are forecast.
- **Consultation on fourth Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP4)** – we held a public consultation on AQAP4 between 22 November 2023 and 4 February 2024. AQAP4 aims to reduce levels of air pollution in the city, thereby improving the health and quality of life of residents and visitors to York. Over three quarters (79%) of respondents agreed that the council should continue to reduce air pollution, with between 67% and 87% of respondents indicated support for all priority actions.
- **Farming practices** - Nationally, farming is estimated to be responsible for around 88% of ammonia emissions, which can lead to particulate formation in the atmosphere; this can cause odour impacts and can affect local and national air quality. On DEFRA's advice, we wrote to over 350 farmers to highlight resources and grant opportunities available to assist them to

adopt best practice with respect to reducing ammonia and particulate emissions.

5. Further details of all the above measures, together with an overview of complementary air quality initiatives delivered in 2023 through CYC's Transport and Carbon Reduction work programmes, are discussed in this report.

Benefits and Challenges

6. Producing an Annual Air Quality Status Report (ASR) is required under the Local Air Quality Management regime, as specified by the Environment Act 1995 (as amended by the Environment Act 2021) and subsequent regulations. It also ensures local transparency with respect to publication of air quality data and progress with measures in CYC's current Air Quality Action Plan.
7. Not submitting an ASR to DEFRA for appraisal within the required timescales would mean that CYC is not fulfilling statutory requirements and may also weaken York's ability to attract future DEFRA funding for air quality related initiatives.

Policy Basis for Decision

8. The ASR has been produced as part of our statutory duties required by the Local Air Quality Management framework under the Environment Act 1995 (as amended) and provides an update on CYC's latest Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP4). CYC's AQAP is fully aligned to the Council Plan and reflects ambitions contained within our 10-Year Strategies covering climate, health and wellbeing and the economy.

Financial Strategy Implications

9. There are no specific financial implications associated with submission of the ASR to DEFRA, but delivery of measures to improve air quality will require both capital and revenue funding. Ongoing monitoring of air quality in the city also requires ongoing revenue funding. Any request for funding will follow the council's budgetary (capital & revenue) process.

Recommendation and Reasons

10. The Executive is asked to:

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 and progress made with delivery of measures in CYC's Air Quality Action Plan.

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

Background

11. 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).
12. This report provides an update on air quality in York (2023 calendar year), including progress on delivery of measures within CYC's current Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP3), prior to submission of this year's ASR to DEFRA. The full 2024 Annual Status Report is included at Annex A.
13. 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 ages¹, with a total estimated healthcare cost to the NHS and social care of £157 million in 2017².
14. Historical 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.
15. 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

¹ Defra. Air quality appraisal: damage cost guidance, January 2023

² Public Health England. Estimation of costs to the NHS and social care due to the health impacts of air pollution: summary report, May 2018

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.

Air Quality Monitoring Update

16. Continuous monitoring of NO₂ and other pollutants has been undertaken at a total of 14 different locations across York since 1999 (continuous monitoring is currently undertaken at 9 sites). CYC also undertakes monthly diffusion tube monitoring at 233 sites across the city. In addition to fulfilling statutory air quality monitoring requirements, monitoring air pollution across the city can assist with the evaluation of air quality improvement, planning and transport measures.

City Centre Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and former CYC AQMAs

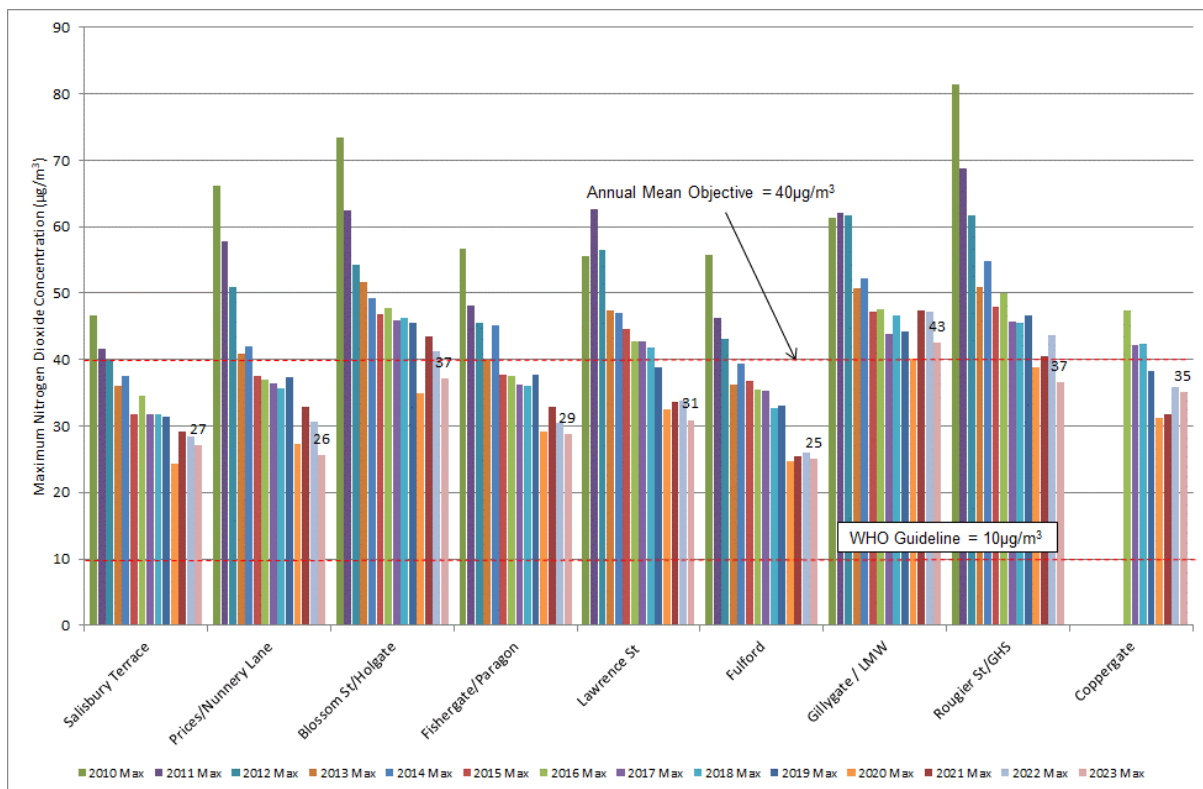
17. The annual average air quality objective for NO₂ (40µg/m³) was exceeded at a small number of monitoring sites within the current AQMA on Gillygate, Bootham and Rougier Street in 2023 (Diffusion Tubes 7, 115 and A1). The highest concentration of NO₂ recorded at a 'relevant location' was 43µg/m³ near the junction of Gillygate and Bootham (Diffusion Tube A1).
18. Improvements in annual mean NO₂ monitored at roadside continuous monitoring stations were observed between 2022 and 2023 at Fishergate (10% improvement), Nunnery Lane (7% improvement), Gillygate (7% improvement), Lawrence Street (8% improvement) and Heworth Green (13% improvement). Annual mean NO₂ monitored at Holgate Road and Fulford Road in 2023 was broadly comparable to that monitored in 2022 (~1% change). Annual mean background concentrations of NO₂ monitored at the Bootham urban background monitoring site also improved by 6% between 2022 and 2023.
19. Maximum annual mean concentrations of NO₂ monitored at relevant locations across the current AQMA were 43µg/m³ (Gillygate / Bootham), 37µg/m³ (George Hudson St / Rougier St), 37µg/m³ (Holgate / Blossom Street), 31µg/m³ (Lawrence St), 29µg/m³ (Fishergate / Paragon St), 26µg/m³ (Prices Lane/Nunnery Lane) and 35µg/m³ (Coppergate). Maximum concentrations of NO₂ decreased in all these areas between 2022 and 2023 and ranged from 2% lower on Coppergate (in 2023) to 16% lower around Prices Lane / Nunnery Lane and Rougier Street (in 2023).

- 20. Concentrations of NO₂ monitored at the majority of locations in York throughout 2023 continue the general downward trend in NO₂ concentrations monitored in the city since 2012.
- 21. Monitoring of NO₂ in 2023 has not indicated any potential breaches of the short-term hourly NO₂ objective in the city.

Local Air Quality Indicators

- 22. The maximum NO₂ concentrations monitored (at relevant locations³) in keys areas across the city centre AQMA are captured by Performance Indicator CAN028. Trends in air quality between 2011 and 2023 are shown below in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Maximum nitrogen dioxide concentration (at relevant location) in areas across the AQMA



Note: AQMAs covering in Salisbury Terrace and Fulford Road have now been revoked, but are shown on Figure 1 for information.

- 23. The maximum annual mean NO₂ concentration monitored at a relevant location in 2023 was 43µg/m³ (Diffusion tube A1 near the junction of Gillygate and Bootham). Maximum concentrations of

³ 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

NO₂ in all other areas in 2023 were below the annual mean NO₂ objective and decreased between 2022 and 2023. Of the 3 areas that exhibited breaches of the annual mean NO₂ objective in 2022, namely Blossom St/Holgate, Gillygate/Lord Mayor's Walk and Rougier Street/George Hudson St, all areas exhibited improvements in 2023 (10%, 10% and 16% respectively).

24. Whilst there is a clear long-term downward trend in NO₂ concentrations over the last 10+ years for most areas of the AQMA, maximum concentrations of NO₂ in and around Gillygate have been more variable over the last 5/6 years. It should, however, be noted that the current 2023 maximum value of 43µg/m³ in Gillygate is lower than that monitored in 2021 and 2022 and indeed the lowest concentration recorded over the last 13 years (with the exception of 2020 during the pandemic).

Former Fulford Road and Salisbury Terrace AQMAs

25. Maximum concentrations of NO₂ monitored in 2023 in the former Salisbury Terrace and Fulford Road AQMAs continue to be well below the annual mean objective. This confirms the decision to revoke these AQMAs in 2017 and 2020.

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

26. National health-based air quality objectives for PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} are currently met in York. The highest annual mean levels of PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} monitored in York during 2023 were 16.8µg/m³ (Holgate Road monitor) and 8.0µg/m³ (Fishergate monitor) respectively. Maximum particulate concentrations monitored in 2023 are below the maximum levels of 17.9µg/m³ (PM₁₀) and 8.8µg/m³ (PM_{2.5}) monitored in 2022 at the same sites.
27. Annual mean PM₁₀ decreased at all sites in 2023 compared with 2022. Annual mean PM_{2.5} decreased or remained the same in 2023 compared with 2022. Trends in PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} at CYC monitoring sites over the last 5 years are shown in figures 2 and 3 below. Trends over the longer term indicate that PM_{2.5} has generally decreased across the city, whereas there does not appear to be any clear trend in PM₁₀.

Figure 2: Annual Mean PM₁₀

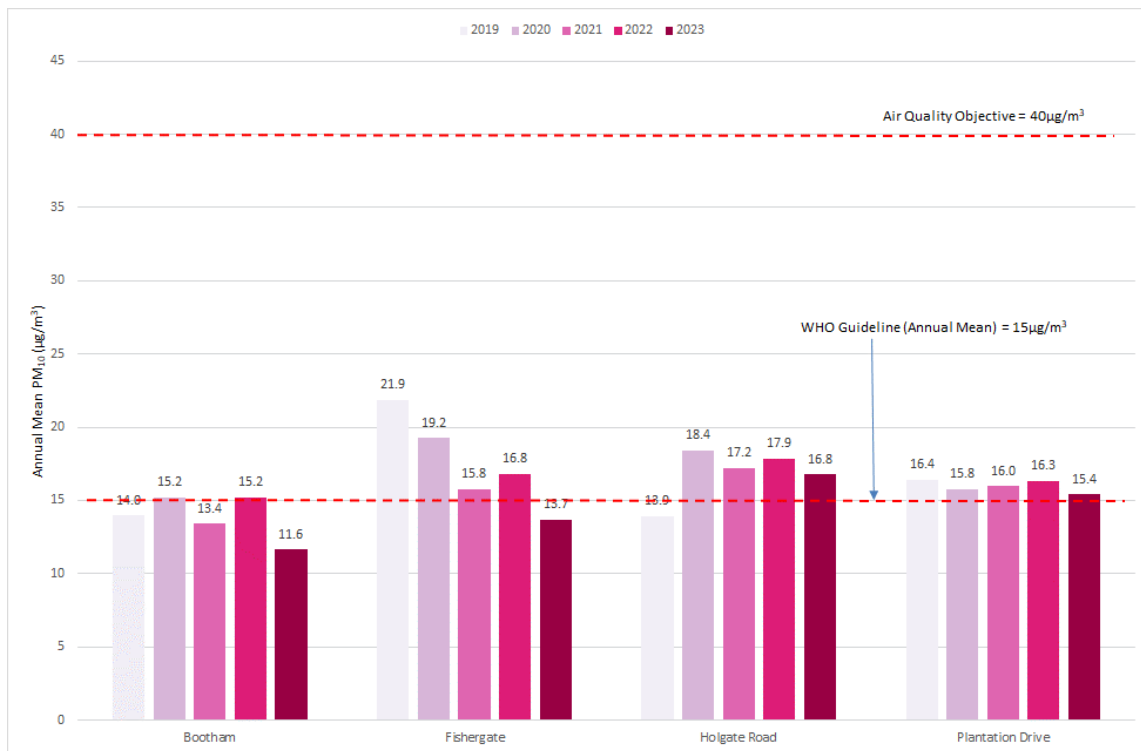


Figure 3: Annual Mean PM_{2.5}



28. Short term trends and annual variation in particulates do not necessarily reflect those seen with nitrogen dioxide. This is because while transport in York produces between 50-70% of total NO_x emissions (which become nitrogen dioxide), it is only

responsible for around 15% and 17% of PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} emissions respectively, with the remainder from background sources and other sources such as domestic and commercial heating, nature, waste and agriculture.

29. CYC's updated AQAP includes further actions that will contribute to local reductions in particulate concentrations. Some examples include the phasing out of diesel buses, other diesel vehicles and machinery, reducing particulate emissions from domestic and commercial heating, reducing emissions during construction and operation of new developments, improving public awareness of domestic solid fuel burning practices, particulate emissions and associated health impacts. CYC also continue to enforce existing smoke control areas to reduce particulate emissions and nuisance. In 2023, we developed a new Enforcement Protocol for civil penalties for smoke emissions within Smoke Control Areas (under the Clean Air Act 1993, as amended by the Environment Act 2021). Adoption of this protocol is subject to further member decision.
30. Along with many areas of the UK, PM₁₀ / PM_{2.5} concentrations in York are above (but in York's case, not much above) the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines for these pollutants, which are 15µg/m³ and 5µg/m³. 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. CYC's current and future Air Quality Action Plans will strive to work towards WHO Guidelines in the longer term.

Actions to improve air quality

31. City of York Council has continued the delivery of measures in its existing Air Quality Action Plan throughout 2023, progressing the following initiatives and projects:
32. **Bus service improvements** - In August 2023, First Bus together with City of York Council 'switched on' a new fleet of zero emission buses for York in a transformation that will see the York bus depot become one of the first outside London to be fully electric. The buses herald new 'York electric' branding. Additional electric buses have since been introduced across other routes in the city. Each bus will significantly reduce NO_x and particulate emissions and save up to 60 tonnes of carbon emissions a year, meaning an

anticipated annual reduction of more than 3,000 tonnes of CO₂ when the full fleet is in operation. As part of the overall investment, the First Bus depot has been transformed with the installation of power charging and infrastructure to handle the full zero emission fleet, totalling 86 buses. The new buses, supported by funding through DfT's Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) scheme, complement the existing electric buses serving York's Park and Ride sites. CYC has also been awarded additional funding 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. The York Enhanced Partnership for Buses will act as the principal delivery body for the BSIP funding until 2025. CYC launched a Clean Air Zone (CAZ) for buses in 2020/2021 in the city centre and supported operators with bus upgrades as reported in previous Annual Status Reports.

33. **Anti Idling Initiatives** – we continued to promote our 'Kick the Habit' anti-idling campaign on Clean Air Day and throughout 2023 and worked with partners including schools and businesses to reduce the incidence of vehicle idling across the city. The campaign sets out to encourage people to think about the importance of clean air and the impact that this has on them, their health and those around them. Work in 2023 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.
34. **Low Emission Taxi Grant** – we continued to rollout our DEFRA funded Low Emission Taxi Grant Scheme. The scheme offers financial support for eligible CYC registered taxi drivers to upgrade to low emission vehicles and will have the direct effect of reducing emissions of NO_x/NO₂ and particulate matter across York. At the end of December 2023, 37% of the York fleet were using low emission petrol hybrid or zero emission electric vehicles. Our Taxi Licensing Policy will be reviewed in 2024 to further reduce taxi emissions, in consultation with the trade and other relevant parties.
35. **Upgrades to Electric Vehicle (EV) charging facilities** – we continued to upgrade our public electric vehicle charging network, consisting of 'fast', 'rapid' and 'ultra-rapid' charge points, as outlined in our Public Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy. Two new 'HyperHub' sites (containing both 50kW rapid and 175kW ultra-rapid charge facilities) at Monks Cross and Poppleton were

opened in 2022 and 2023; the use of these sites comprised over 80% of our network usage. We have plans to develop two further Hyper Hub sites. Our current charge point rollout programme is outlined on the [council website](#). In addition to the expansion of our public electric vehicle charge point network, we finalised infrastructure upgrades at the council's Hazel Court ECO depot site to facilitate the transition to an all-electric council fleet for vehicles under 3.5t. In February 2024, 41% of CYC's operational fleet (<3.5t) were electric vehicles. In preparation for the new fleet of electric vehicles, we continued our programme of mandatory Alternative Fuel Vehicle (AFV) training for all staff.

36. **CYC Low Emission Planning Guidance** - we 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 opportunities. An overview of planning applications reviewed by Public Protection during 2023 is provided in the main Annual Status Report at Annex A.
37. **Measures around domestic solid fuel burning** – we promoted the government's national 'Burn Better' campaign to reduce emissions and continued compliance checks across solid fuel distribution outlets to ensure correct certification of solid fuels for domestic use. In early 2023, CYC was awarded further DEFRA Air Quality Grant funding to improve public awareness of domestic solid fuel burning practices, particulate emissions and associated health impacts. We undertook research via an online survey and hosted a number of focus groups with the local community to inform the '[Fuel for Thought](#)' campaign, launched in November 2023.
38. **Development of an online pollution forecasting service** – we were awarded DEFRA funding to develop [York Air Alert](#), an online air pollution forecasting and notification service for residents and visitors to York to access information that allows them to minimise their own exposure when pollution episodes are forecast. The service is of particular benefit to anyone who suffers from health conditions exacerbated by poor air quality. The service provides a 3-day forecast of air pollution in 8 areas of York. The service is free to subscribe to and provides notifications via email, text, voicemail and Twitter/X to users.

39. **Consultation on fourth Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP4)** – we held a public consultation on our Fourth Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP4) between 22 November 2023 and 4 February 2024. AQAP4 was developed in parallel to CYC’s draft Local Transport Strategy, consulted on during the same period. AQAP4 aims to reduce levels of air pollution in the city, thereby improving the health and quality of life of residents and visitors to York. AQAP4 outlines the action the council will take to further improve air quality in York over the next 5 years. Over three quarters (79%) of respondents agreed that the council should continue to reduce air pollution, with between 67% and 87% of respondents indicated support for all AQAP4 priority actions.
40. **Air Quality Hub (AQ Hub) for local authorities** - we continued work on the development of the Air Quality Hub alongside Bradford Metropolitan District Council and Lancaster City Council (working together as the Low Emission Partnership (LEP)). The AQ Hub was promoted at the national AQ Symposium organised by DEFRA in September 2023. Following a successful launch, the AQ Hub membership base has grown significantly over the last 3 years, covering local authorities across the UK. The Air Quality Hub was formally adopted by DEFRA in February 2024 to support the Local Air Quality Management regime and will now be managed by DEFRA as a national resource, with ongoing support from the LEP.
41. **Farming practices** - Nationally, farming is estimated to be responsible for around 88% of ammonia emissions, which can lead to particulate formation in the atmosphere; this can cause odour impacts and can affect local and national air quality. Some farming practices (e.g. lime spreading) can also directly give rise to particulate emissions that are known to affect health. In October 2023, CYC wrote to over 350 farmers to highlight resources and grant opportunities available to assist them to adopt best practice with respect to reducing ammonia and particulate emissions.
42. Complementary air quality initiatives delivered in 2023 through CYC’s Transport and carbon reduction work programmes included:
43. **Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)** – we have progressed development of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). The LCWIP identifies York’s key walking and cycling networks and will be used as an evidence base for future investment opportunities. The LCWIP will be a living document and will be updated as and when necessary (i.e.

when schemes have been funded or delivered) to ensure a pipeline of potential schemes is always available

44. **York Walking Festival** – our annual walking festival took place in September 2023, with a nine-day programme of ideas on how to explore the city on foot. The festival, organised by CYC’s iTravel team, aims to encourage active travel and reduce vehicle emissions produced during the school run. Activities included guided group walks, a York walking quiz and promotion of resources for exploring the city.
45. **Zero Emission Day** - In September 2023, to coincide with Zero Emission Day, we raised awareness of the need to reduce the city’s carbon footprint by flying a flag bearing the Yorkshire climate change stripes. The climate stripes were developed to show people how the climate is changing where they live. Shades of blue indicate cooler-than-average years, while red shows years that were hotter-than-average. The Yorkshire climate stripes highlight the increase in temperature in Yorkshire over the past 150 years, shown in the stripes from left to right. In March 2019, CYC declared a climate emergency and pledged to be net zero by 2030.
46. **A New Energy Advice Scheme** – we launched a Local Energy Advice Demonstrator (LEAD) scheme. LEAD provide York homeowners of conservation-area and listed properties detailed advice on the best ways to insulate and heat their homes; information on how to complete planning permission applications and gain listed property consent; and the best ways to save money while contributing to our Net Zero 2030 target.
47. **Home Upgrade Grants** – we have been awarded funding to help households not using mains gas become more energy efficient through a Home Upgrade Grant. The grants can be used for a range of improvements, including wall and roof insulation, air source heat pumps, smart heating controls and solar panels.
48. **Business Forum Events** – We launched the first York Green Business Forum event in October 2023 to support local businesses to become more sustainable, increase profitability and help York become net zero by 2030. Attendees were able to access free support, participate in workshops and network with likeminded local businesses.
49. **Residents invited behind the scenes on Council’s first Passivhaus site** – In October 2023, we offered a first opportunity

for residents to go behind the scenes to learn more about how energy-efficient and zero-carbon Passivhaus homes are being built in the city. The Passivhaus Open Day took place at CYC's first Passivhaus development at Duncombe Square in Clifton. The Open Day was part of a national event to showcase this form of building homes. Passivhaus is a construction standard with a goal of creating energy-efficient buildings with a low carbon footprint. In order to achieve that, Passivhaus homes use a variety of features that are designed to reduce their need for heating and cooling rooms.

Priorities for the coming year

50. City of York Council's priorities for the coming year are:
51. **Progress delivery of AQAP4** - CYC's updated AQAP4 includes measures to further reduce nitrogen dioxide and particulates from all sources and will support and complement CYC's economic strategy, Local Plan, Local Transport Plan/Strategy and Climate Change Strategy.
52. **Continue to progress upgrades to bus services (including further electrification)** - the York Enhanced Partnership (EP) for buses between CYC and York's local bus operators acts as the principal delivery body for the £17.36 million Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding awarded to the council by the Department of Transport (DfT) for use during the financial years 2022 to 2025. The EP also provides a platform for bus users and stakeholders to share their views on the local bus network.
53. **Continue to address idling emissions** – CYC will continue to 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. In early 2024, we installed additional advisory anti-idling signage along Gillygate, requesting drivers switch off engines whilst stationary.
54. **Continue to reduce emissions from taxis** - We will undertake further consultation with the trade in relation to updates to our Taxi Licensing Policy (consultation open 19 April – 14 July 2024) . 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 undertake a full evaluation of our DEFRA funded Low Emission Taxi Grant Scheme that has supported CYC licensed taxi drivers with vehicle upgrades throughout 2023.
55. **Reduce emissions from new 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 encourage walking, cycling and low emission public transport use, which have co-benefits for health and wellbeing.

56. **Progress development of York's future transport policies** - Initial results from Our Big Transport Conversation, the recent consultation about transport in York, have shown overwhelming support for the ten policies put forward by Councillors. CYC will now formulate detailed plans on how to deliver the long-term changes residents have asked for, including a new Movement and Place Plan. A new Local Transport Plan will enable us to reduce congestion, improve air quality and help people get about the city better, as well as meeting our net zero targets.
57. **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.
58. **Raising awareness of PM emissions and health impacts** - we will full evaluate our DEFRA funded project (2022/23 AQ Grant) to improve public awareness of the links between domestic solid fuel burning, particulate emission and health impacts.
59. **Improving public awareness of air pollution** – we will promote our DEFRA funded air pollution forecasting and alert platform. The platform has been designed to ensure the most vulnerable residents have access to information that allows them to minimise exposure when pollution levels are high. We will seek to improve awareness of the links between all air pollution and health impacts generally to support CYC's ongoing LAQM and public health work.
60. **Further controls to address fine particulate emissions** – we will consider further opportunities to tackle fine particulate emissions, building on previous feasibility work. We will seek member approval for a new Enforcement Protocol for civil penalties for smoke emissions within CYC's Smoke Control Area (SCA) and seek to expand our SCA to cover the whole of CYC's administrative area.
61. **Reducing emissions associated with deliveries of light goods** - we will explore further opportunities for minimising emissions from freight vehicles in the city centre in line with priorities outlined in AQAP4.

Consultation Analysis

62. 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 by CYC's Executive, before submission to DEFRA.

Options Analysis and Evidential Basis

63. The Executive 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 AQAP update to support and complement other key CYC strategies.
64. DEFRA's Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) Policy Guidance (PG22) and Technical Guidance (TG22) outline the process that should be followed by local authorities with respect to the LAQM regime, including the regular submission of ASR's.

Organisational Impact and Implications

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

Financial

66. 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)

67. There are no HR implications

Legal

68. Under the Environment Act 1995 (as amended by the Environment Act 2021) and subsequent regulations, 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.

Procurement

69. There are no procurement implications arising from submission of an ASR to DEFRA, but delivery of measures to improve air quality will require future procurement of services, feasibility studies, contractors etc. Such procurement will be subject to relevant procurement guidelines / regulations and will include liaison with CYC Procurement and Legal teams as necessary.

Health and Wellbeing

70. Measures to reduce emissions and improve air quality support CYC's health and wellbeing priorities which aim to tackle health inequalities and promote healthy lifestyles. AQAP4 has been developed in consultation with the Public Health team and supports the aims of the council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy by minimising and reducing public exposure to air pollution and raising public awareness about the impacts of air pollution on health.

Environment and Climate action

71. 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.
72. 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.
73. CYC's updated AQAP4 embeds the council's commitment to healthy and affordable (energy-efficient) homes and has been developed to complement CYC's Climate Change Strategy. Ongoing delivery of AQAP4 must strive to maximise synergies with this strategy; it must also prevent conflicts. Consideration has been given to these issues during the development of AQAP4 to ensure measures remain appropriate for addressing local air quality and climate change alike.

Affordability

74. Measures to improve air quality are considered in terms of affordability to the public, with each measure balanced against a potential adverse economic impact (e.g. measures such as congestion charges and Ultra Low Emission Zones (ULEZs) have been ruled out as they prevent the less well off from entering the city centre while the more prosperous can afford to pay the charges and continue to do so).
75. CYC's Air Quality Action Plan supports an environmentally friendly, efficient and affordable public transport system for all, together with safe walking and cycling. Consideration is given to all those unable to afford to transition to zero and low emission modes of transport and heating with grants and incentives being made available where possible.

Equalities and Human Rights

76. The Council recognises, and needs to take into account its Public Sector Equality Duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct; advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it in the exercise of a public authority's functions). 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.
77. At the time of writing there are no equalities implications identified in respect of the matters discussed in this report, which is brought to the Executive for information only. However, it should be noted that throughout delivery of CYC's AQAP, EIAs will be carried out on a case by case basis in respect of specific projects/measures to identify any equalities implications.

Data Protection and Privacy

78. As there is no personal data, special categories of personal data, or criminal offence data being processed to inform this report, there is no requirement to complete a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA). Future air quality projects may be subject to Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs) and will be progressed and reported in future member reports as necessary.

Communications

79. Delivering clear messages to the public around the cause and consequence of poor air quality, particularly around impacts on health, are particularly important for driving behaviour change. Campaign work is a valuable part of CYC's air quality improvement strategy. Further support from CYC's Communications team will be sought as necessary.

Economy

80. Good air quality reduces absence from work and education due to air pollution related illnesses. A healthy York population is critical to achieving the economic aspirations of the city.

Risks and Mitigations

81. Not submitting an ASR to DEFRA for appraisal within the required timescales would mean that CYC is not fulfilling statutory requirements and may weaken York's ability to attract future DEFRA funding for air quality related initiatives.

Wards Impacted

82. All wards

Contact details

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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 2024 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
AQAP4	Fourth Air Quality Action Plan
AQMA	Air Quality Management Area
CAZ	Clean Air Zone
µg/m ³	Micrograms per cubic metre
NO ₂	Nitrogen dioxide
PM ₁₀ /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