

Air Quality Management Areas Frequently Asked Questions

1 What is the air quality like in Harborough district?

Generally, the air quality within the district is good. However, the council declared an Air Quality Management Area in Lutterworth in 2001. Recent monitoring of air quality in the Kibworths has identified higher than average levels of Nitrogen Dioxide (a pollutant gas) along the A6 London Road.

2 How is air quality monitored?

Harborough District Council measures the levels of nitrogen dioxide in the district using Nitrogen Dioxide diffusion tubes. Twenty of these tubes are used and are monitored and changed on a monthly basis. Five of these tubes are located along the A6 in Kibworth.

The Government's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) also operate an automatic monitor at Eyebrook reservoir which takes readings every 15 minutes.

3 Where does nitrogen dioxide come from?

In Harborough District the main source of nitrogen dioxide emissions are from road vehicles. Older and larger cars will produce higher levels of nitrogen dioxide.

4 What is an Air Quality Management Area?

An Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) is declared for an area where the local air quality is unlikely to meet the national Air Quality Objectives. When an AQMA has been declared further work is undertaken to monitor air quality in the area, and identify what actions can be taken to improve the air quality.

5 Why are only certain properties included in an Air Quality Management Area?

The air quality monitoring results, along with traffic information, have been fed into a model to identify properties which are likely to be affected by increased pollution levels along the A6. Small changes in distance from the source of the pollution (in this case the road) can make a big difference in the level of exposure. Only those properties closest to the road have been included in the Air Quality Management Area.

6 What are the national Air Quality Objectives?

The national Air Quality Strategy sets Air Quality Objectives for England and Wales. The Air Quality Objectives have been set with health effects in mind. The aim is to ensure that everyone is able to enjoy acceptable levels of air quality that meet these objectives, posing no significant risk to human health or quality of life. The main concerns within Harborough District are the roadside locations which exceed the nitrogen dioxide annual air quality objective of 40 microgrammes per metre cubed.

7 Have other councils declared Air Quality Management Area's (AQMA)?

Approximately 220 local councils have declared at least one Air Quality Management Area since the introduction of the relevant legislation. Some, such as the London Boroughs have declared their whole boroughs as Air Quality Management Areas. There are currently over 540 AQMA's declared across the country with over 90% related to levels of nitrogen dioxide.

Five out of the seven district or borough councils in Leicestershire have declared at least one AQMA in their area A large proportion of Leicester City is covered by a single AQMA.

Further information on where AQMA's have been declared is available on the Government's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs website at <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/summary>

8 What steps are the council taking to resolve the matter?

Once an Air Quality Management Area has been declared, an Air Quality Action Plan has to be produced within 12 months. The plan is produced by a number of local organisations, and will identify steps which can be implemented to try and reduce the levels of Air Quality pollutants within the Air Quality Management Area to meet the national objectives.

9 What are the health implications associated with high nitrogen dioxide levels?

There are a number of declared Air Quality Management Areas across Leicestershire, and approximately 540 in place across the UK. Whilst many houses front main roads in the district and air quality is generally good, there can be some health implications linked to high levels of nitrogen dioxide. These can include, in extreme cases, irritation of eyes and throat and respiratory issues. We are not however aware of any direct links to poor health caused by air quality in the district. If however you do have any concerns about the impact of air quality upon your health, then please visit your GP.

The Government's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs produce air quality forecast maps, similar to a weather forecast, which help identify when local air quality may be of concern so individuals can take appropriate steps if they wish to. These are available online via <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/forecasting/locations>

10 Do I have to declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) against my property on the land registry?

No. There is no legal requirement for the AQMA to be placed on the land registry against properties located within the AQMA. However, the information has to be made available to the public, and will be placed on a national website by the Government's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. It will also be listed on Harborough District Council's website.

11 Does the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) stay in place forever?

No. The council will continue to monitor the levels of nitrogen dioxide, and if the annual average levels fall below the air quality objective, the Air Quality Management Area can be removed.

12 Where can I find copies of Harborough District Council's air quality reports and the Air Quality Management Area?

All the air quality reports undertaken by Harborough District Council dating back to 2001 can be found on the Council's website at www.harborough.gov.uk/air-quality-review