

**Title:** Air Quality Update

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**Intended audience:** Internal     Partner Organisations     Public     Confidential

## 1.0 Purpose or recommendation

1.1 The purpose of this note is to provide a briefing on Air Quality in the City of Wolverhampton and specifically to update the Panel on recent communications and direction from the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

## 2.0 Summary

2.1 It is now well established that certain areas of the UK are failing to meet European Union (EU) Standards on Air Quality, specifically relating to levels of Nitrogen Dioxide NO<sub>2</sub>.

2.2 In Summer last year Defra produced an Air Quality Action Plan mandating certain Councils with the worst air pollution problems to formally report on how they propose to meet EU Air Quality objectives. At that stage the 'marginal' authorities were not included in the plan with Defra happy to take a more informal, pragmatic approach on air quality actions.

2.3 Following a further challenge from Client Earth (a charity led action group) the High Court have recently issued a judgement stating that the government must take a firmer approach with those marginal authorities. All four Black Country Authorities are included in this definition.

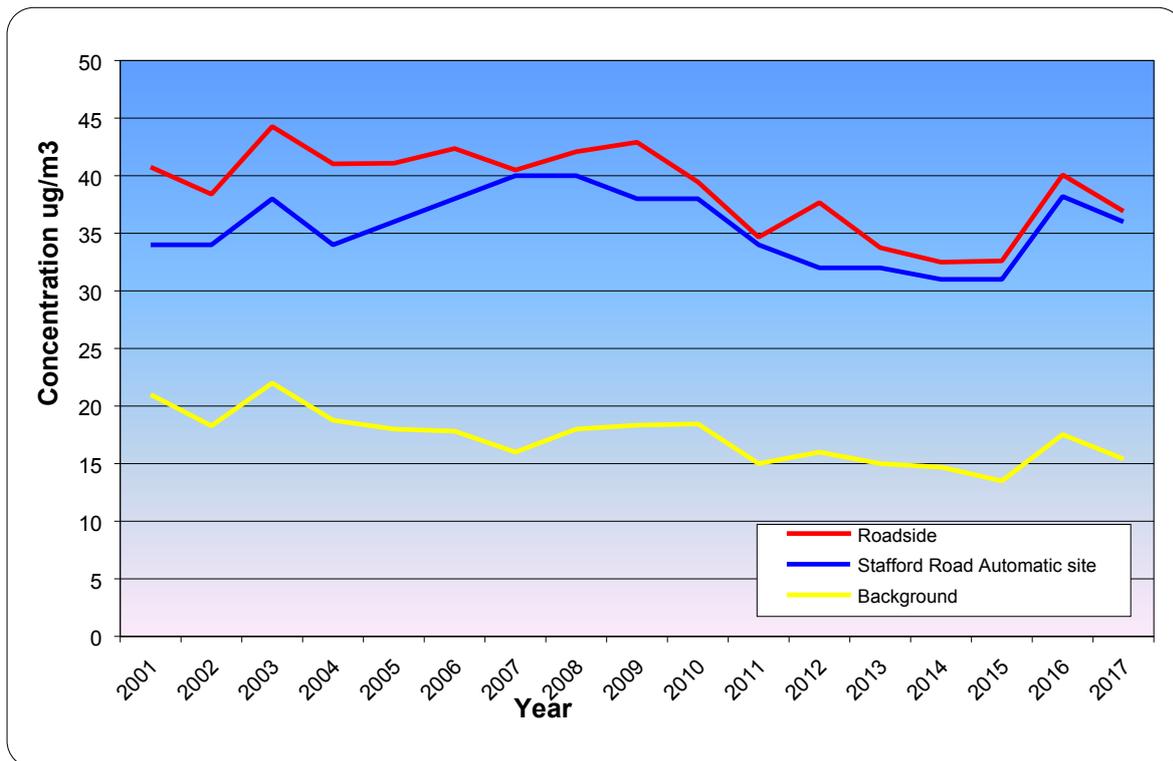
2.4 In March 2018 the government subsequently issued a Ministerial Direction on City of Wolverhampton Council requiring the consideration of measures to bring forward compliance with the EU directives in the shortest possible time.

## 3.0 Air quality in Wolverhampton

3.1 The entire City of Wolverhampton is declared as an Air Quality Management Area due to exceedances of the statutory limit for Nitrogen Dioxide NO<sub>2</sub>. This is predominantly caused by road vehicles and is closely associated with the busiest roads within the City.

3.2 Since 2010 the levels of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) in Wolverhampton have generally been reducing. This is largely due to the gradual replacement of vehicles for more modern, cleaner models as well as better traffic / bus route flows in the city centre and the reduction of polluting traffic in and around the city centre and other hot spot areas. A graph below shows an example of monitored levels over the last 16 years.

3.3 There was however a general increase in 2016. There is no evidence that emissions dramatically increased in this year and the differences are most likely attributable to weather conditions being less conducive to dispersal at this time.



- 3.4 Defra use a specific Air Quality prediction model called Pollution Climate Mapping (PCM) to predict where there may be ongoing Air Quality issues. This is a fairly coarse national model designed to meet the requirements of the EU Directive. It is acknowledged by Defra and the High Court that there will be discrepancies between this national model and more localised conditions.
- 3.5 Using the PCM Defra have identified ongoing exceedances of the EU NO<sub>2</sub> limit at the following locations (note the EU annual average limit is 40µg/m<sup>3</sup>): Sections of St David's ring road and the Black Country Route near Bilston. These areas are shown on the Map (provided by Defra) attached.
- 3.6 The plans show the year in which the PCM predicts when the sections of road will comply with the EU Directive. The Ministerial Directive Legally obliges the Council to undertake a targeted feasibility study of how compliance can be accelerated. This must be submitted by 31 July 2018. There is also an interim milestone of 30 April 2018 where pre-existing knowledge such as monitoring/modelling data, traffic counts etc must be submitted.

#### 4.0 Next Actions

- 4.1 Defra are looking to work with the Council in identifying measures that may have already been undertaken but not accounted for in Defra's model; any information we can provide to refine the national PCM; any actions or schemes that are planned or programmed which could accelerate the dates for compliance as listed in 5 below.
- 4.2 In addition to City of Wolverhampton, Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Solihull have also been identified in the West Midlands. (This is in addition to Birmingham and Coventry who have been included in previous phases). It is subsequently proposed to work collaboratively with the potential for a single commission, possibly procured through existing frameworks, to assist in delivering the project.

4.3 In order to achieve these very tight timescales Defra have made a grant available of £50,000. Progress will be reported to Strategic Directors and to Chief Executives through the Association of Black Country Authorities (ABCA).

4.4 Our Air Quality Monitoring equipment is in need of upgrading and expanding, especially given we will need to demonstrate real world pollution levels using EU Directive compliant methods. We will explore if the Defra funding being made available gives us opportunity to do this. However the primary focus must be to achieve Defra's deadlines.

## 5.0 The role of the West Midlands Combined Authority/Transport for West Midlands

5.1 Under the legislation governing Air Quality the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) has concurrent powers to constituent authorities. At this stage a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is required to clarify how these powers will be applied in reality. At this stage the MoU has not been produced and it is expected that the WMCA could take a more overseeing/coordinating role especially were transboundary issues are being dealt with.

5.2 Importantly, Defra has served the ministerial directions directly on local authorities and not the WMCA. This means that the associated obligations fall to local authorities.

## 6.0 Examples of Progress and measures to improve air quality that may form part of our submission to Defra.

6.1 Examples of completed measures which impact on Air Quality:

### **Wolverhampton Interchange Project Phase 1**

This multi-modal interchange will provide a hub of sustainable travel options (national rail network, Metro, bus station, and direct access to national cycle routes and the forthcoming Bike Share)

### **Wolverhampton City Centre Scheme**

This includes junction improvements, cycle and bus lane provision and enhancements, pedestrianisation works. Over £1 million has been spent improving cycle routes across the City in the last few years alone.

### **Urban Traffic Control Major Scheme**

Modernisation of the traffic signals and CCTV capability allows for maximising junction capacities, smoothing flows and minimising congestion.

### **Railway Station access improvements**

6.2 The council has a number of other measures to be completed.

### **Midland Metro City Centre extension**

This is now well in progress and will provide a direct link between the metro and national rail.

### **Advanced quality bus partnership (AQPS)**

This is currently under consultation and proposes to introduce stringent emission (and other) standards for any buses entering the ring road after 2020/2021.

### **Highways improvements**

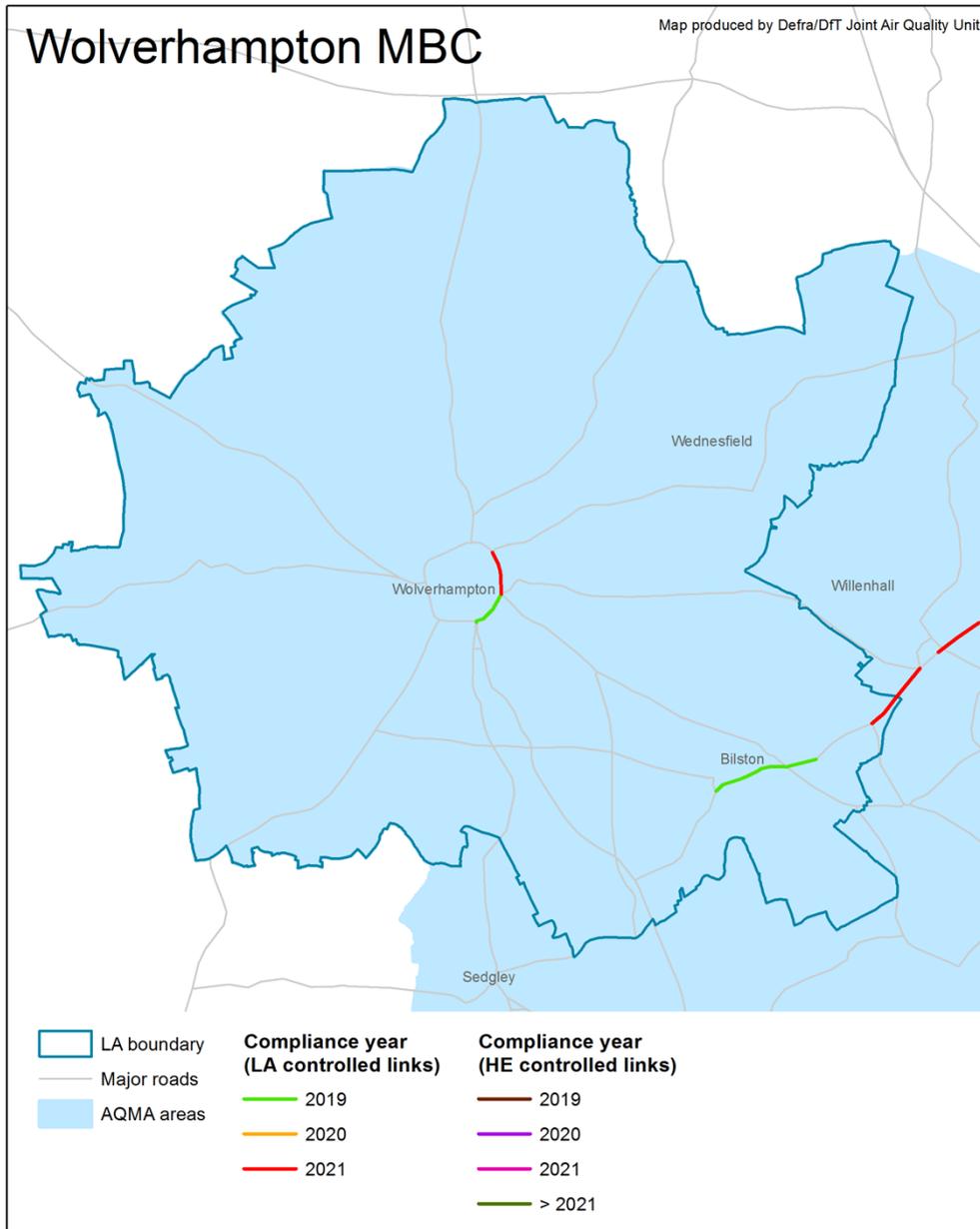
Making the most of the large investment opportunities to improve transport and roads, recognising where there are clear Air Quality benefits.

### **Promotion of ultra low emission vehicles**

This includes ongoing programmes to install vehicle charging infrastructure.

6.3 In the interests of transparency City of Wolverhampton Council publishes available data on line at:

<http://airquality.wolverhampton.gov.uk/home/googleMapWithForcast>



| Roads in exceedance | Census ID | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | Source apportionment  |
|---------------------|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|---|
| A4150               | 28464     | 49   | 46   | 43   | 41   | 38.7 | 22% diesel cars; 12% HGVr; 11% LGV diesel; 10% bus; 5% cars petrol; 3% HGVa |
| A463                | 99402     | 49   | 46   | 43   | 41   | 38   |   |
| A4150               | 57739     | 44   | 42   | 40   | 38   | 36   |   |
| A463                | 99404     | 43   | 41   | 39   | 37   | 34   |   |