

## NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL AIR QUALITY PLAN

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 New Forest District Council was issued with a Ministerial Direction as directed under the Environment Act 1995 requiring the submission to the Secretary of State of an Initial Plan by 31 March 2018 and an Air Quality Final Plan by 31 December 2018.
- 1.2 The Initial Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State on 29 March 2018.
- 1.3 The Air Quality Final Plan which details how compliance with the EU Ambient Air Quality Directive for nitrogen dioxide as an annual mean will be delivered in the New Forest in the shortest possible time was approved by Cabinet on 18 December 2018 and submitted to the Secretary of State on 20 December 2018.

### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In July 2017, the Government published the UK Plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations<sup>1</sup>. The Plan used national modelling to identify a further 23 local authorities, including New Forest District Council, who were in exceedance of the annual mean nitrogen dioxide concentration ( $>40\mu\text{g}\text{m}^{-3}$ ) in relation to the EU Ambient Air Quality Directive.
- 2.2 The UK Plan required the identified local authorities to develop local plans to detail how compliance with the EU Ambient Air Quality Directive would be delivered in the shortest possible time.
- 2.3 The national model identified an exceedance in the New Forest on a short stretch (less than 1km) of the A35 at Totton up to the boundary with Southampton City Council on the Redbridge Causeway.

### 3. NEW FOREST BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The exceedance identified in the New Forest is viewed as an extension of the exceedance identified on the Western Approach into Southampton City. New Forest District Council and Southampton City Council have been working closely, as part of an agreement through a Memorandum of Understanding, to develop plans to deliver nitrogen dioxide compliance in the shortest time possible in their own areas.
- 3.2 New Forest District Council is only responsible for ensuring compliance is met in its own area. Any implemented options to reduce nitrogen dioxide concentrations must not have a detrimental air quality impact on surrounding areas including neighbouring authorities.
- 3.3 Detailed and complex local air quality modelling has been undertaken to determine local nitrogen dioxide roadside concentrations around Totton; A35, A326 and A36.

The local model predicts concentrations in subsequent years up to 2020 when compliance with the EU Ambient Air Quality Directive is expected.

- 3.4 The Final Plan which was submitted to the Secretary of State was developed in accordance with Government guidance and in consultation with the Joint Air Quality Unit (a body comprising of the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Department of Transport). The Final Plan contained evidence of the work completed and conclusions reached.
- 3.5 New Forest District Council has engaged with stakeholders throughout the development of the Final Plan, including Hampshire County Council, Totton and Eling Town Council, Members, local businesses and residents.
- 3.6 New Forest District Council's preferred option identified within its Final Plan is to continue with a **business as usual scenario**. This approach was approved by the Cabinet on 18 December 2018.

#### **4. RESPONSE TO NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL'S FINAL PLAN.**

- 4.1 On 21 February 2019 the Council received confirmation from Dr Therese Coffey MP that the Air Quality Final Plan has been approved. Attached as Appendix 1 to this report is a copy of the letter.

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications from adopting this Final Plan.

#### **6. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are none.

#### **7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Any implications are addressed in the Final Plan.

#### **8. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are none.

#### **9. PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S COMMENTS**

- 9.1 For our environment and our health there are few things more important than the air we breathe. I am so pleased all of our hard work has been recognised by Government by the approval of our Final Plan. I see this Plan approval, not as the end point with the achievement of meeting compliance with the European Air Quality directive in the shortest time possible but as the beginning.

As stated in our Final Plan we will continue to work to maintain and improve air quality throughout the New Forest District and take the opportunity to work with neighbouring authorities in relation to air quality for the benefit of our residents.

I wish to thank Rachel Higgins and Joanne McClay for their dedication and commitment throughout the last year to complete the Final Plan and its approval.

**10. RECOMMENDED:**

- 10.1 That the approval of the Air Quality Final Plan for New Forest District Council be noted; and.
- 10.2 That the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regulatory Service continues to work on improving air quality throughout the New Forest District and to take opportunities to work with neighbouring authorities.

For further information contact:

Rachel Higgins  
Environmental Protection Team Manager  
[rachel.higgins@nfdc.gov.uk](mailto:rachel.higgins@nfdc.gov.uk)

Joanne McClay  
Service Manager – Environmental and Regulation  
[joanne.mcclay@nfdc.gov.uk](mailto:joanne.mcclay@nfdc.gov.uk)

**Background papers:**

The Final Plan

**References:**

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/air-quality-plan-for-nitrogen-dioxide-no2-in-uk-2017>