

**RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN UNDER
DELEGATED AUTHORITY FROM
EXECUTIVE/COUNCIL/COMMITTEE
DELEGATED POWERS OUTLINED IN
THE CONSTITUTION**



DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION TAKEN BY:	Strategic Director of Environment & Operations
DELEGATED BY:	Choose an item. (date of delegation)
IN CONSULTATION WITH:	
PORTFOLIO AREA:	Environmental Services

SUBJECT: Revocation of Intack, Bastwell and Four Lane Ends Air Quality Management Areas

1. DECISION

To revoke the three air quality management areas, Intack, Bastwell and Four Lane Ends.

2. REASON FOR DECISION

The levels of NOx have been below the government objective for a number of years. They are not expected to rise above the limit in the foreseeable future.

This is in line with a national trend in the reduction of NOx levels and due to site specific action plans being implemented.

3. BACKGROUND

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council has a duty under the Environment Act 1995 to monitor air quality within the borough. This is a framework known as Local Air Quality Management or LAQM.

Historic monitoring has led to the declaration of a number of air quality management areas within the borough.

The declaration of an air quality management area provides a duty upon the local authority to produce an action plan and work to improve the air quality in that area. Action plans have been completed for these areas. These measures combined with a national trend in the reduction of NOx associated with vehicles is responsible for reduced levels of NOx.

This document relates to three air quality management areas, namely;

- Intack – the junction between Accrington Road, Shadsworth Road and Whitebirk Road – introduced in 2005
- Bastwell – the junction between Whalley New Road, Plane Street and Whalley Range – introduced in 2005
- Four Lane Ends – the junction between Shear Brow, Revidge Road, Pleackgate Road and Lammack Road – introduced in 2012

4. KEY ISSUES AND RISKS

4.1 Consultation

Prior to the revocation of an Air Quality Management Area there is a duty to consult widely, the details of the consultation are included in Appendix 1.

The consultation details are included as appendices. The consultation ran between the 7th March and the 4th April 2023 and included;

- Placing the consultation on the council website.
- Putting a communication out via the Shuttle and a press release that was picked up by the local press.
- Putting up site notices on lampposts in the Air Quality Management Areas themselves.
- Notifying a number of statutory / other consultees;

For each aspect of the consultation the response is summarised and reproduced in full in Appendix 3.

4.2 Public Response

Two comments were received by members of the public:

A call was received from a representative of Swallow Field Community Group. They were supportive of the move to revoke the AQMA and pleased about the improvement in air quality at Four Lane Ends.

An e-mail was received from one resident requesting that the areas are retained due to general concerns about air quality in the borough.

Whilst they make good points about air quality their concerns were not specifically relevant to the revocation of the areas. We will contact them directly to discuss.

4.3 Other Consultees

These included;

- Public Health – commented in support with the caveat that areas will continue to be monitored
- Environment Agency – response received – consultation passed to local office. No further comment made.
- Highways England – response received – no objection.
- Neighbouring Local Authorities were consulted including Hyndburn BC, Chorley BC, Rossendale BC, South Ribble BC and Ribble Valley BC – Rossendale BC replied in support of the revocation, No other replies were received.

DEFRA – were not consulted but were already aware of the move to revoke the areas in the Annual Status Report. They were supportive of this course of action. See the feedback for the latest Annual Status Report in Appendix 2.

4.4 Summary

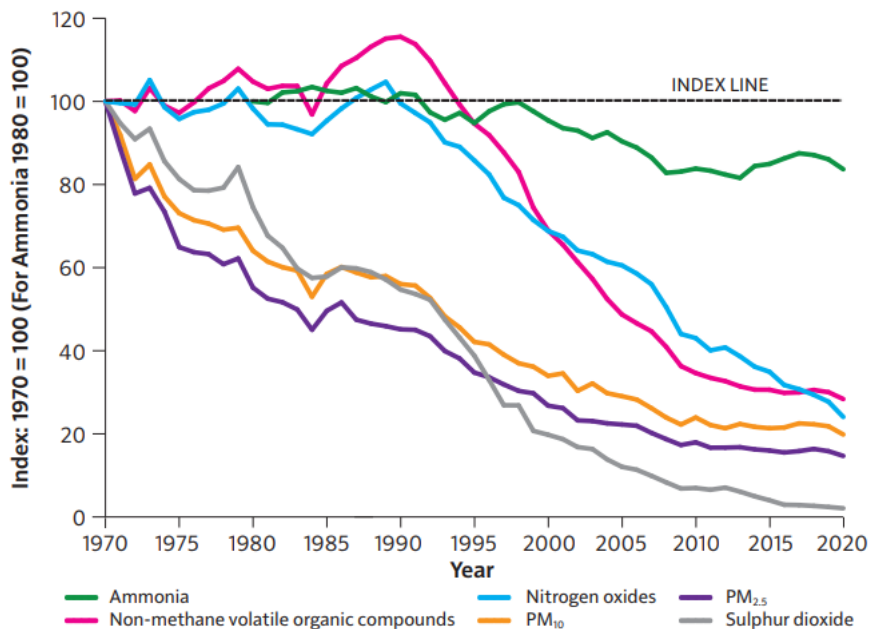
Comments were broadly supportive of the move other than one public comment.

4.5 Risk

The main risk is that the improvements are temporary and that levels will again increase and areas will have to be declared again.

Current evidence available makes this unlikely. The fall in NOx levels is a national trend. This has been brought about by a number of different factors but includes improvements in the efficiency of internal combustion engines and the gradual switch to low emission vehicles. This is a trend that is set to continue with sales of conventional fuelled vehicles being ceased from 2030.

Data from the Chief Medical Officers Annual Report 2022 illustrates this trend below ⁽¹⁾



Note: The figure shows trends in annual emissions of particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}), nitrogen oxides, ammonia, non-methane volatile organic compounds, and sulphur dioxide, 1970 to 2020, expressed as a percentage change from the base year of 1970 (for ammonia the base year is 1980).

Source: Ricardo Energy & Environment. Defra (2022)²

Figure 2: Trends in UK emissions of air pollutants 1970 to 2020

Figures available on the DEFRA website list the numbers of current and revoked AQMA's.

To date over 200 AQMA's that were declared for NOx have been revoked whereas 509 remain⁽²⁾. This is a significant amount of revocations demonstrating the national trend in this area.

In conclusion there is little chance that areas will have to be declared following revocation.

References

1 – Chief Medical Officers Annual Report 2022, Figure 2

2 - [Summary AQMA data - Defra, UK](#)

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The orders themselves are a legal declaration and will need to be revoked by a legal order.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

No significant resource implications.

8. OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Keeping the Air Quality Management Areas has been considered but has been rejected.

There has been no exceedance of the objective since 2016 / 2017 in these areas and we have reported in our Annual Status Report that we are looking to revoke these orders. This course of action has been agreed by DEFRA (Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) in the appraisal of our last Annual Status Report.

9. CONSULTATIONS

See section 4.

10. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of the officer with delegation and the any Member who has been consulted, and note of any dispensation granted should be recorded below:

None

VERSION:	1
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CONTACT OFFICER:	John Wood
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DATE:	30 th June 2023
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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:	Appendix 1 - Air Quality Consultation Document Appendix 2 - Annual Status Report Feedback Appendix 3 - Consultation Responses
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