



Council name	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>CABINET – 7 MARCH 2024</b>
Subject	<b>REVOCATION OF LECHLADE AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREA</b>
Wards affected	Lechlade, Kempsford & Fairford South
Accountable member	Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services Email: <a href="mailto:juliet.layton@cotswold.gov.uk">juliet.layton@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
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Report author	Susan McPherson – Senior Officer, ERS Email: <a href="mailto:Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk">Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To obtain approval for the revocation of the Lechlade Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).
Annexes	Annex A – DEFRA Appraisal of 2023 Annual Status Report
Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet resolves to: I. Approve the revocation of the Lechlade AQMA
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responding to the Climate Emergency</li><li>• Supporting Communities</li></ul>
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	No consultation is required as the AQMA in Lechlade has met the relevant criteria, as required by Defra to trigger the revocation of the AQMA status.



## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **1.1 Lechlade Air Quality Management Area**

The Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in Lechlade was declared on 2 April 2014. The area incorporates a 35m section of north Thames Street from the junction of the A417.

Please refer to Figure 1. The AQMA was declared due to exceedances in the annual average concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) above the UK objective of 40µg/m<sup>3</sup>.

### **1.2 Air Quality Improvements**

Following changes to the signalling sequence of the traffic lights at the junction of Thames Street and the A417 (High Street) in 2017, the air quality in Lechlade has steadily improved, and has been comfortably below the objective for five years, please refer to Figure 2.

### **1.3 Revocation**

Defra's recommends revocation following a minimum of three consecutive years where the pollutant(s) of concern are 10 per cent below the relevant objective. The Lechlade AQMA has met this criteria (excluding 2020 and 2021 because of the pandemic), and Defra have requested the council considers revocation of the AQMA.

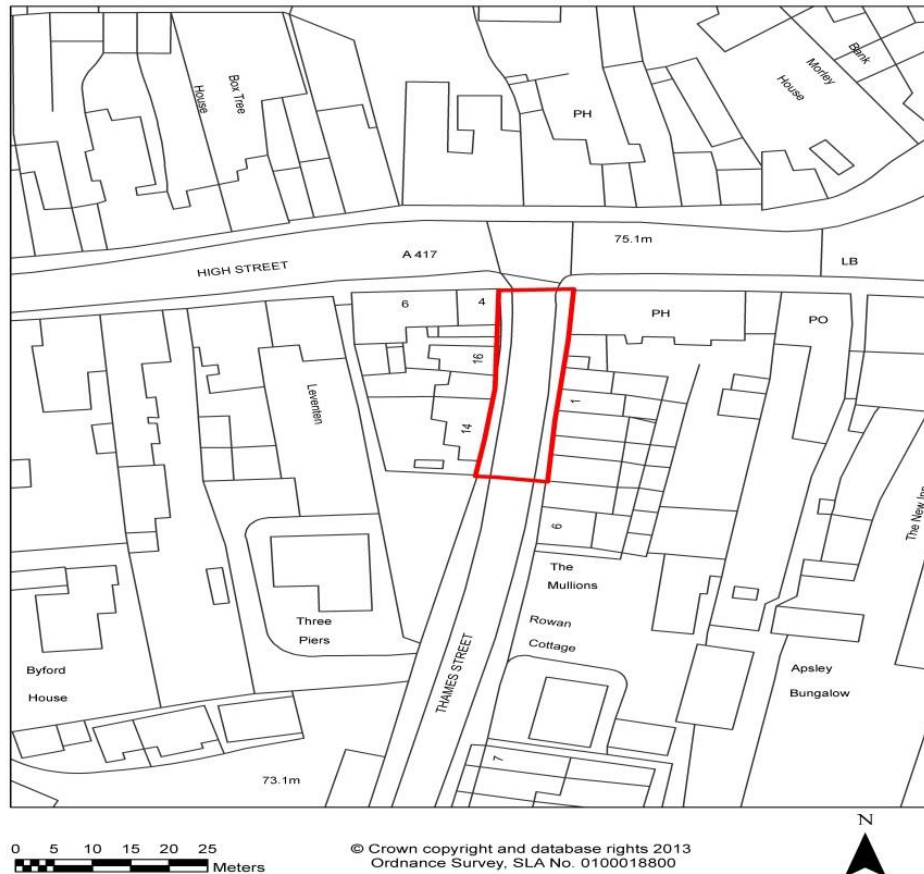
## **2. BACKGROUND AND AQMA DECLARATION**

**2.1** Under the Environment Act 1995, local authorities are required to monitor and improve air quality in their area. The legislation targets certain pollutants which may pose a health risk to humans should they enter the body, primarily by inhalation. These pollutants have been assigned objective concentrations which reduce the health risks to an acceptable level.

**2.2** Where concentrations are found to be above the associated objective, the local authority must declare the area as an AQMA, and demonstrate it is putting in measures to improve air quality. In Lechlade, the area of Thames Street, south of the junction with the A417 (High Street) exceeded the objective for NO<sub>2</sub> (40µg/m<sup>3</sup>) from the year monitoring began at this location (2008). Formal recognition of the issue in 2013, was followed by agreement to declare by Cabinet in March 2014, with the AQMA formally declared later that year. The location and extent of the AQMA is shown in Figure 1.



**Cotswold District Council  
Air Quality Management (Thames Street, Lechlade 2014) Area**



### 3. POLLUTION SOURCE AND MITIGATION

- 3.1 The primary, if not exclusive, source of NO<sub>2</sub> in the Lechlade AQMA is petrol/diesel vehicle exhaust gases. The traffic signals at the junction of Thames Street and the A417, frequently caused congestion on the Thames Street approach. This, coupled with incidences of fog during weather inversion conditions (due to its proximity to the River Thames) and, the restricted dispersal of exhaust gases caused by the relatively high buildings either side of the narrow road, resulted in a build up of NO<sub>2</sub> within this northern section of Thames Street.
- 3.2 Of the three factors contributing to the high concentrations of NO<sub>2</sub>, improvements to traffic flow was the only practicable option to mitigation the issue.
- 3.3 Following discussions with Gloucestershire County Council Highways, the sequencing of the traffic lights was changed in 2017. Since this change, the air quality in Lechlade has steadily improved

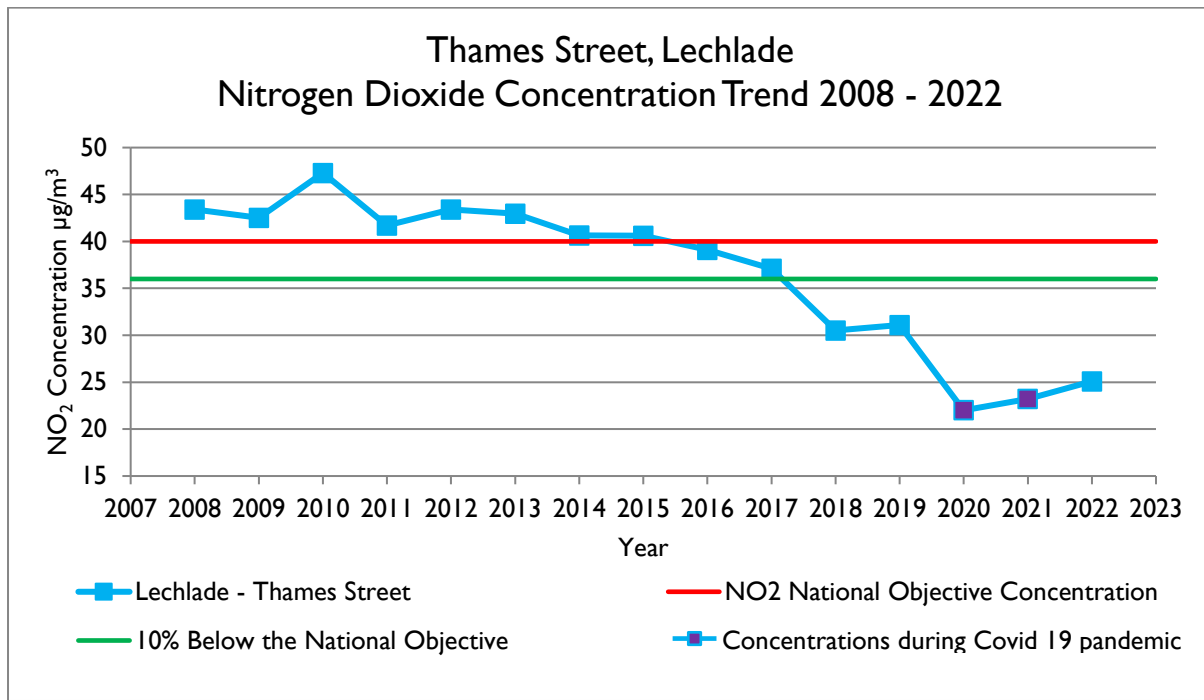


Figure 2 Trend in NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations at Thames Street, Lechlade between 2008 and 2022

- 3.4** To revoke an AQMA, Defra’s Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance (TG22) states that concentrations of the pollutant of concern must be shown to be below to associated objective by 10 per cent (36µg/m<sup>3</sup> for NO<sub>2</sub>), for three consecutive years. This excludes 2020 and 2021, where travel restrictions imposed by the Government to control the spread of Covid 19, resulted in a sharp drop in all pollutants associated with motorised road vehicles across the UK.
- 3.5** Excluding 2020 and 2021, Figure 2 clearly shows the Lechlade AQMA has been compliant for the required three consecutive years, and as a consequence there is an expectation from Defra for this AQMA to be revoked (please refer to highlighted text in document in Annex A).
- 4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**
- 4.1** The only alternative would be not to revoke this AQMA, however there is no benefit in retaining this status.



## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1** To conclude, concentrations of NO<sub>2</sub> are no longer a cause for concern in Lechlade, which is good news for the health of, not only those who live in the affected area, but for the population of the town as a whole.
- 5.2** Compliance with the national objective, in accordance with TG22, has been demonstrated, and consequently the council are in a position to revoke the AQMA, as requested by Defra. In addition, air quality in Lechlade is likely to continue to improve as petrol/diesel engines become more efficient, and low emission and ultra low emission vehicles become more popular.
- 5.3** Revocation of the Lechlade AQMA will leave only one further such area in the district, located at the Air Balloon roundabout. It is anticipated that this AQMA will also be revoked three to five years following the opening of the 'Missing Link' infrastructure project.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1** There are no financial implications associated with this revocation.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1** The Council is meeting its statutory obligations for air quality management. There are no legal implications associated with this revocation.

## **8. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1** There are no risk implications associated with this revocation.

## **9. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 9.1** There are no equality implications associated with this revocation.

## **10. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1** Revocation of the AQMA will not impact on the climate and ecological emergency. Conversely, this revocation demonstrates an improvement in air quality with positive implications for climate change.

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

(END)