



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Cabinet

Tuesday, 21 July 2026

Report of Councillor Phil Dilks, Cabinet Member for Planning and Councillor Richard Cleaver Cabinet Member for Property and Public Engagement

Designation of Air Quality Management Area Order 2026

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

To seek approval for the Air Quality Management Area Order 2026, which will supersede the Air Quality Management Area Order 2013. This is required due to improvements in Air Quality resulting in the need to remove the Hourly Nitrogen Dioxide designation from the Air Quality Management Area Order.

Recommendations

The Cabinet is asked to approve the designation of an Air Quality Management Area Order 2026 to replace any previous Orders under Environment Act 1995 Part IV Section 83(1) to ensure South Kesteven District Council meets its statutory requirements in relation to Air Quality.

Decision Information

Is this a Key Decision?	No
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Sustainable South Kesteven
Which wards are impacted?	Grantham St. Wulframs;

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance

- 1.1 There are no costs associated with this declaration, the ongoing annual air quality monitoring is funded through existing budgets.

Completed by: *David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy s151 officer*

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 Relevant legislation is referred to throughout this report.

Completed by: *James Welbourn - Democratic Services Manager*

Climate Change

- 1.3 The proposed revocation of the NO₂ 1 hour mean represents an improvement in air quality for the designated Air Quality Management Area in Grantham town centre. This is part of a continuing trend that has been observed in the area since 2021.

Completed by: *Serena Brown – Sustainability and Climate Change Officer*

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 Under the Environment Act 1995 and the associated Local Air Quality Management Framework, Local Authorities have a duty to review and assess air quality against National Air Quality Standards. When a pollutant fails to comply with an objective and there is relevant public exposure, an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) must be declared and an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) prepared, detailing measures which will be implemented to improve air quality in the designated area.
- 2.2 South Kesteven District Council declared an AQMA in 2013 encompassing the main roads in the town centre of Grantham (see Appendix 2). The main pollutant of concern is Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), which is largely attributable to road transport emissions, with cars being the dominant source within the AQMA.

- 2.3 This AQMA requires variation as annual monitoring indicates that there have been no breaches of the NO₂ 1 hourly mean objective of 200µg/m³ for the last 8 years. To vary an AQMA Order the Local Authority is required to declare a new designation which will replace any previous designation order. The Air Quality Management Area Order 2026 contained in Appendix 1 is intended to replace the existing designation and remove the Hourly mean as it is no longer required.
- 2.4 South Kesteven District Council is required on an annual basis to produce and publish an Annual Status Report on the pollutants monitored in the District via diffusion tubes. This data including the results for 2025 support this and the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) recommends that the current AQMA be varied. It is also worth noting that if the data for 2026 (which will be published in 2027) continues in line with the previous year's trend of improving air quality, then DEFRA may recommend that the AQMA be removed in its entirety.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 Option 1 – Approve the designation of an Air Quality Management Area Order 2026 to replace any previous Orders under Environment Act 1995 Part IV Section 83(1) to ensure South Kesteven District Council meets its statutory requirements in relation to Air Quality.
- 3.2 Option 2 – To not approve the designation and the existing Order contained within Appendix 2 will remain in force against Statutory guidance.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 The preferred option is option 1, as the current designation is no longer meeting the statutory requirements and requires varying by way of a new designation to remedy this.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 There has been no reported exceedances of the National Air Quality Objectives for the NO₂ 1 hourly mean objective of 200µg/m³ for the last 8 years. Air quality continues to improve in respect of NO₂ within the district; the AQMA Statutory guidance requires the reviewing and removal of the hourly mean from the AQMA as it is no longer required.

6. Appendices

- 6.1 Appendix 1 – Air Quality Management Area Order 2026
- 6.2 Appendix 2 – Air Quality Management Area Order 2013