

Early consultation on proposed Air Quality Action Plan measures

Kirklees Air Quality Action Plan 2026–2031

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Purpose

This document sets out proposed measures being considered for inclusion within the council's forthcoming Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP). The AQAP itself is still being finalised and has not been adopted. Under Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) requirements, local authorities must undertake public and stakeholder consultation before finalising an Air Quality Action Plan.

The purpose of this consultation is to seek views on the suitability, feasibility and potential impacts of these proposed actions prior to finalising the AQAP. It also ensures the final AQAP reflects local priorities and practical considerations. Inclusion of a measure within this consultation does not constitute formal approval, funding commitment or implementation decision.

Why air quality action plans matter

Air pollution is recognised nationally as a serious public health issue. Pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) can worsen heart and lung disease, trigger asthma, reduce lung development in children and increase the risk of early death.

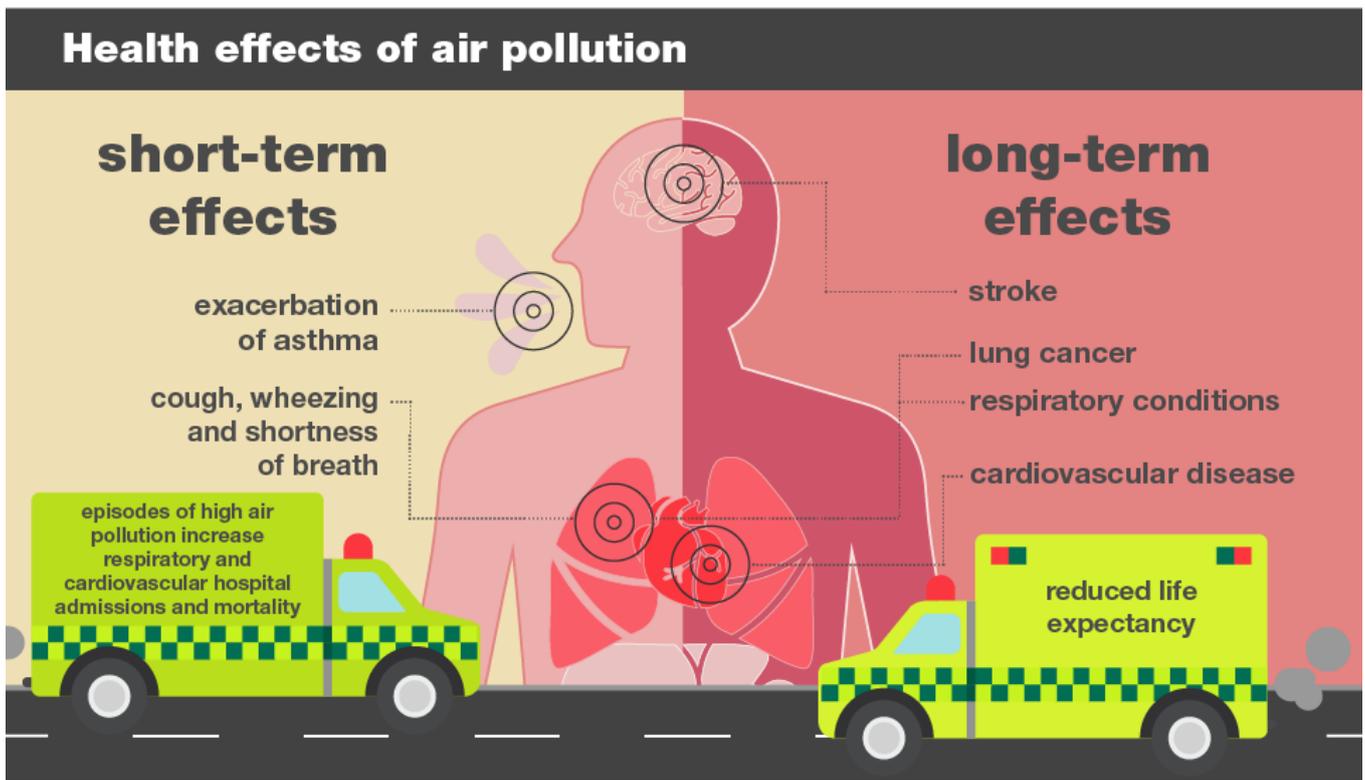


Figure 1 – The short-term and long-term effects of air pollution (Source Health Matters, Public Health England)

Locally, we have seen real progress in many areas of Kirklees over recent years. However, our latest Annual Status Report shows that some places still experience higher levels of pollution. Improving air quality is therefore a key public-health priority. Cleaner air will help protect vulnerable residents, reduce preventable illness, support healthier childhoods and reduce pressure on the NHS. By focusing action where pollution and health inequalities are greatest, this plan aims to ensure that everyone in Kirklees can benefit from cleaner, healthier air, in line with the ambitions and legal duties set out through national policy and legislation.

Our statutory role

Under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995, updated by the Environment Act 2021, the council must:

- Monitor local air quality
- Identify where national air quality objectives may not be met
- Declare or amend Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs)
- Where AQMAs have been declared, produce an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) showing how we will improve air quality and protect public health

About Air Quality Management Areas

Air Quality Management Areas are places where pollution levels are, or were, likely to exceed national air quality limits. Local authorities must declare an AQMA when monitoring or modelling shows there is a risk of breaching legally-set Air Quality Objectives.

The council has declared seven [Air Quality Management Areas \(AQMAs\)](#) where national air quality objectives are not consistently met. These designations are based on long-term monitoring evidence and are due to nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) in specific locations.

The good news is that air quality has shown some improvements over recent years and since the publication of our Annual Status Report (ASR 2025), there have been the following changes to our AQMA 1 (Bradley/Leeds Road (A62), Huddersfield), AQMA 2 (Leeds Road/Soothill, Batley) and AQMA 4 (Birkenshaw) have been formally revoked following sustained compliance.

Figures 2–8 below show the locations of the remaining Air Quality Management Areas, outlined in red

AQMA 3 - Ainley Top, Huddersfield

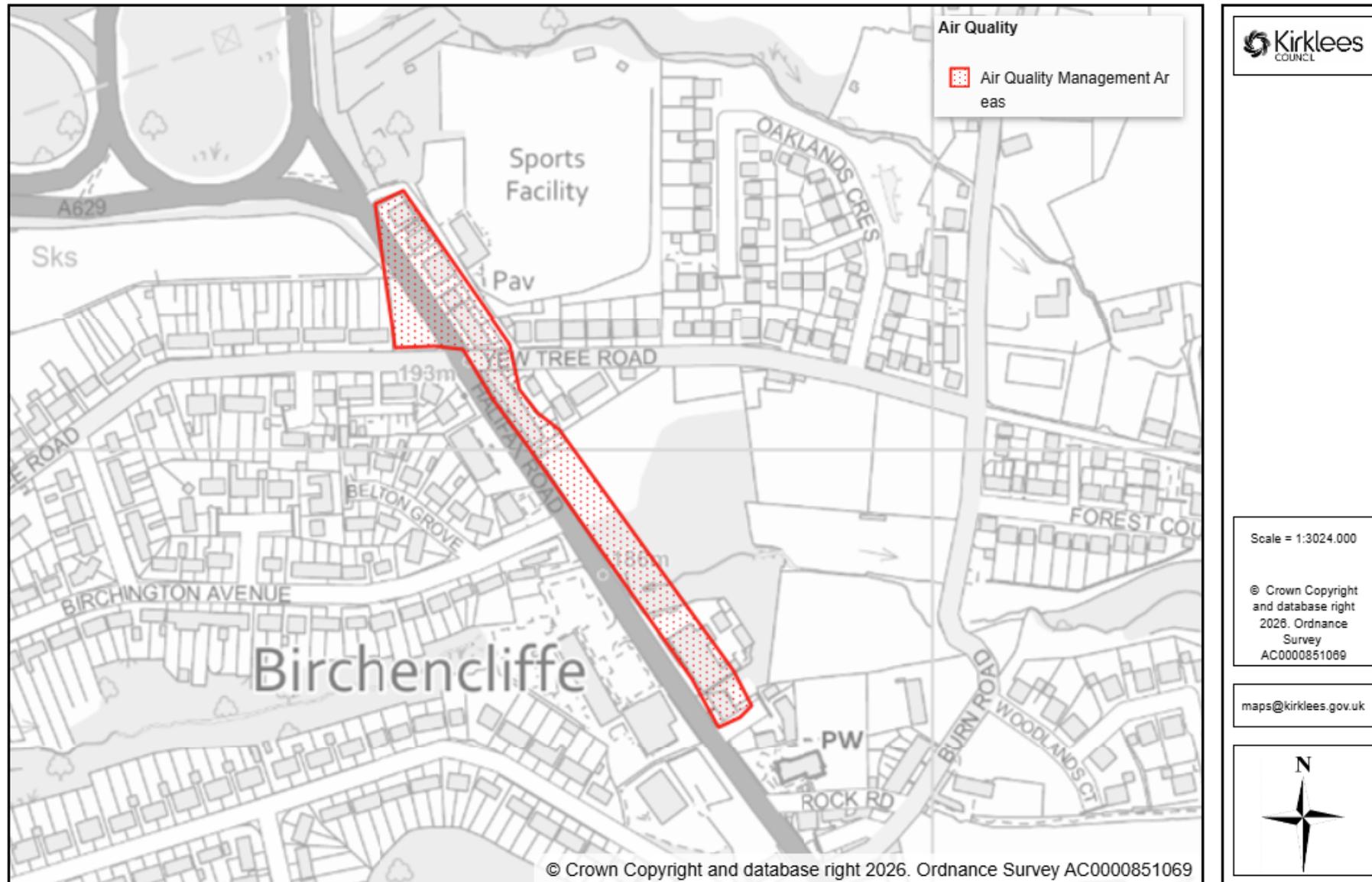


Figure 2 - AQMA 3 – Ainley Top / Lindley Moor Road / Halifax Road (A629). Status: This has been amended since our 2025 Annual Status Report.

AQMA 5 - Eastborough, Dewsbury



Figure 3 - AQMA 5 – Eastborough, Dewsbury (Leeds Road/A638)

AQMA 6 - Edgerton Road, Huddersfield

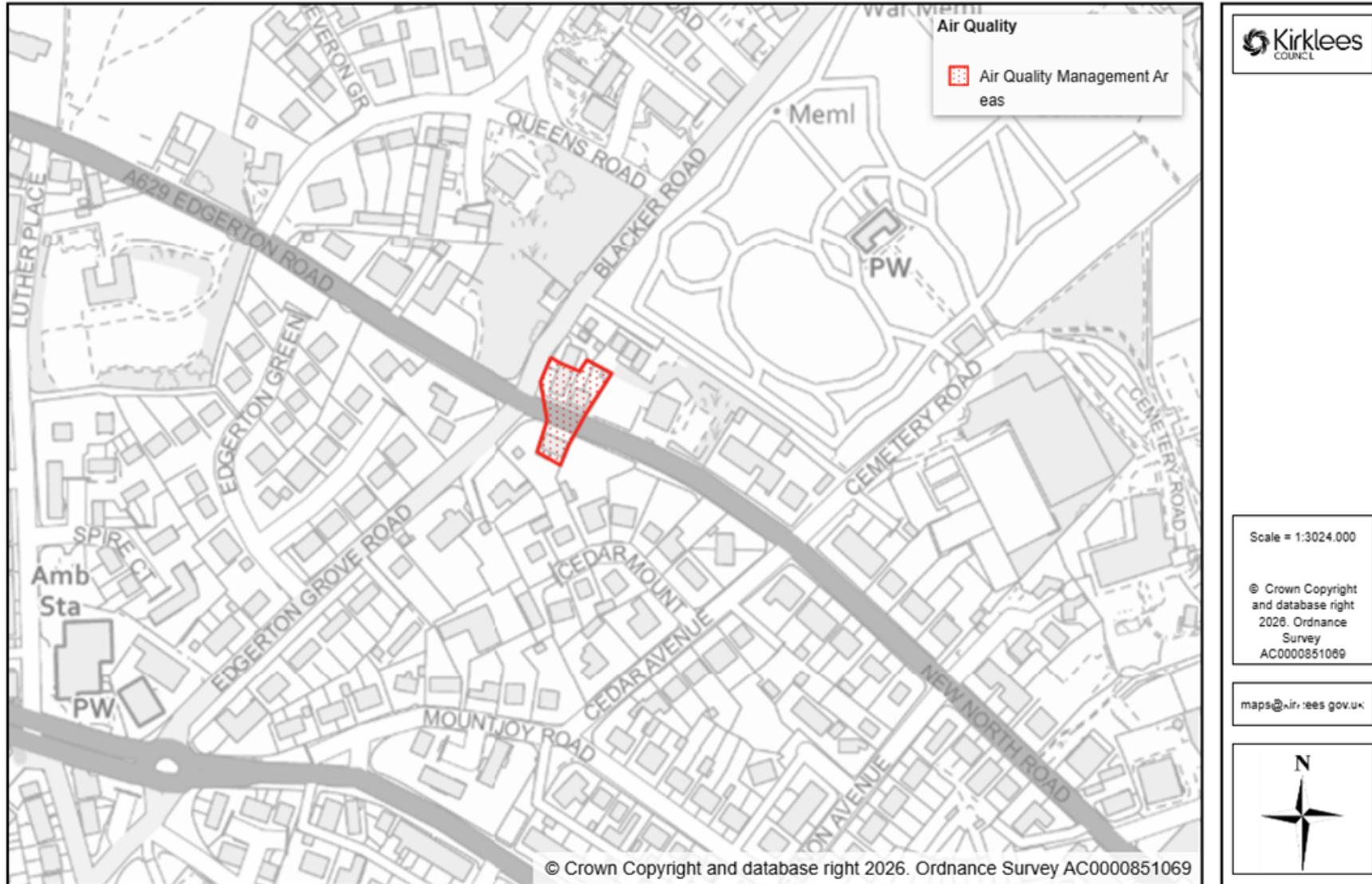


Figure 4 - AQMA 6 – Edgerton Road, Huddersfield

AQMA 7 - Liversedge (A638 Corridor)

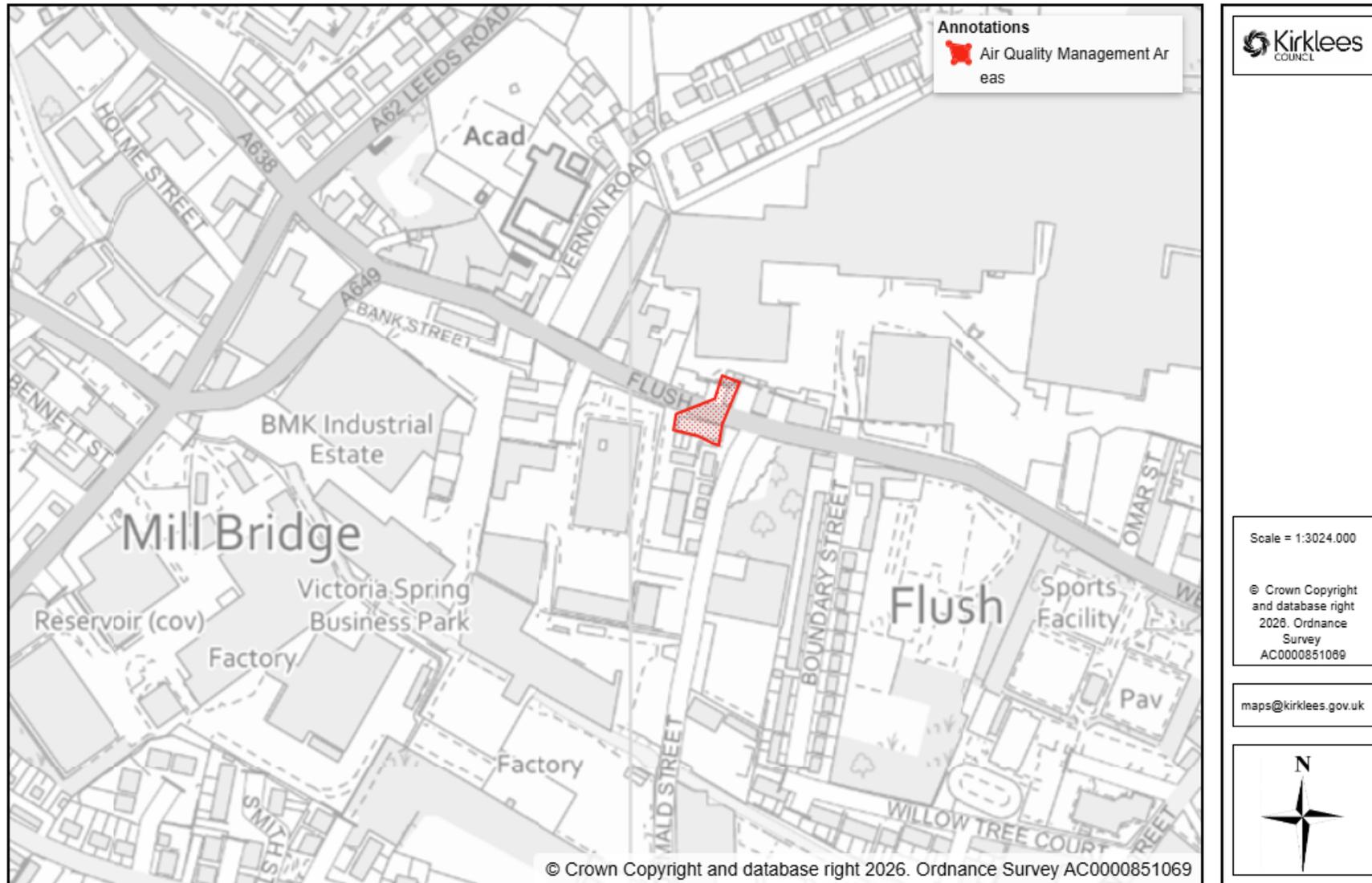


Figure 5 - AQMA 7 – Liversedge/Heckmondwike (A62/A638 corridor) Status: This has been amended since our 2025 ASR.

AQMA 8 - Outlane

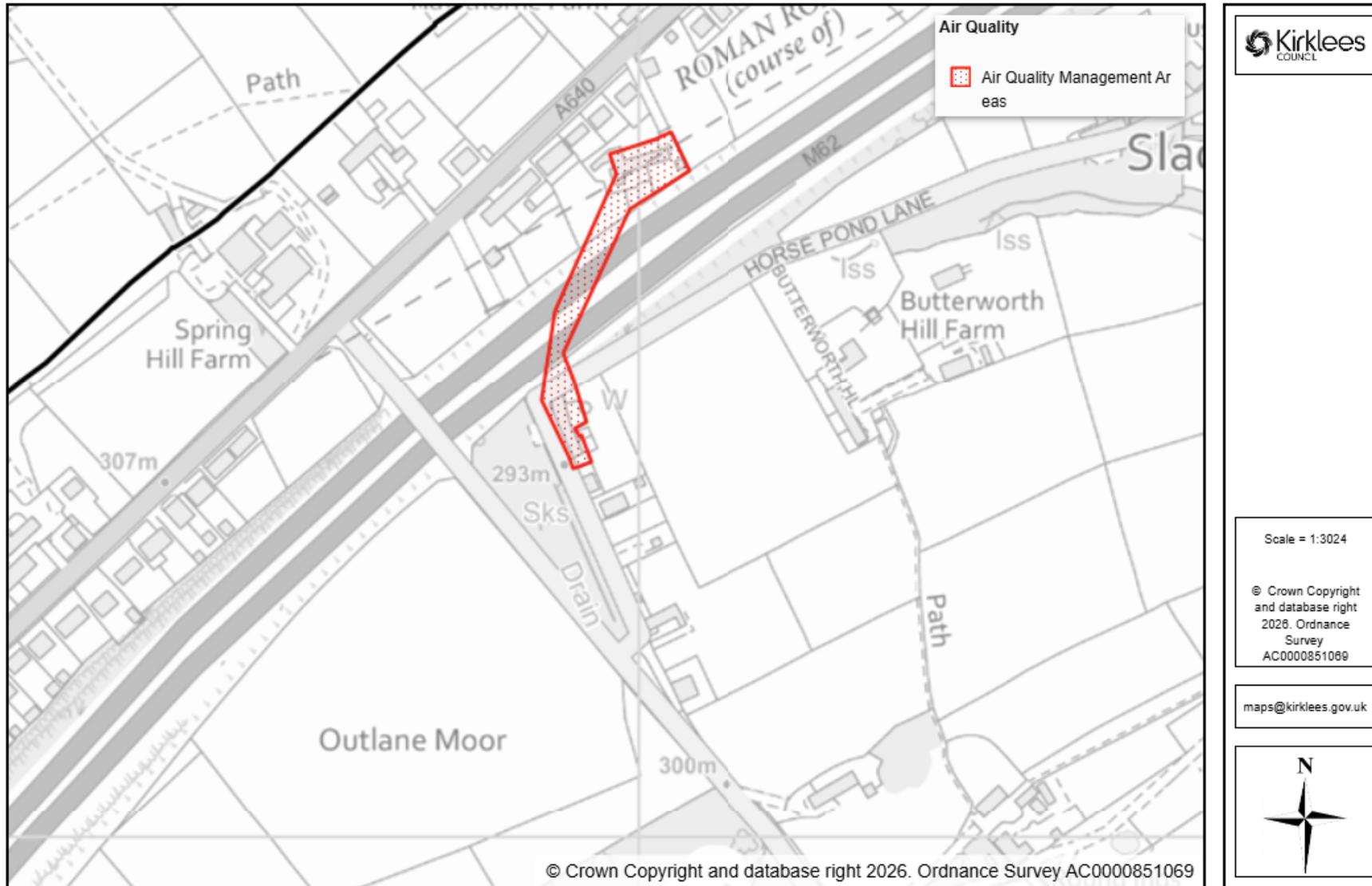


Figure 6 - AQMA 8 – Outlane

AQMA 9 - Huddersfield Town Centre

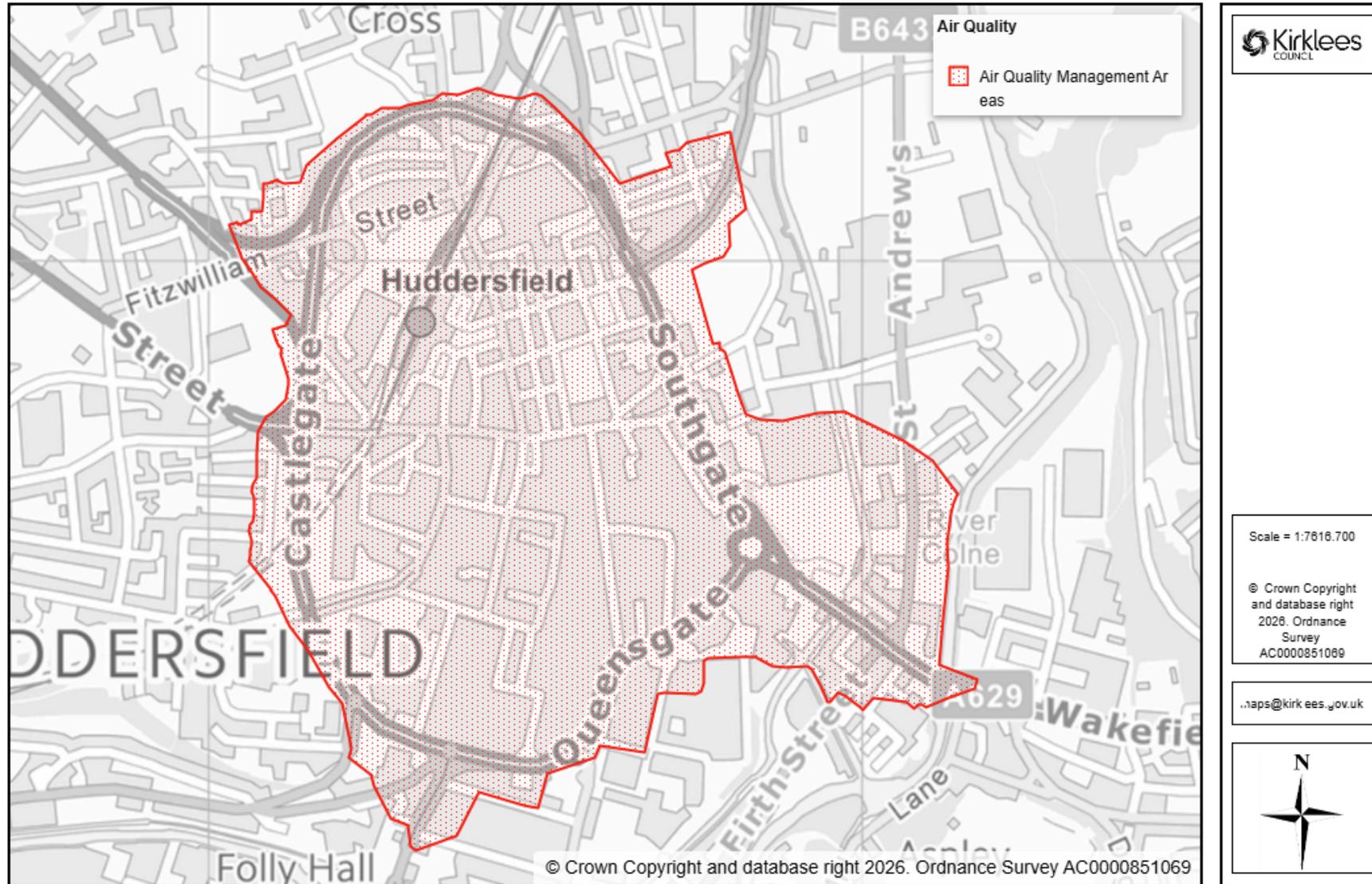


Figure 7 - AQMA 9 – Huddersfield Town Centre (Westgate, Trinity Street, Castlegate)

AQMA 10 - Thornton Lodge

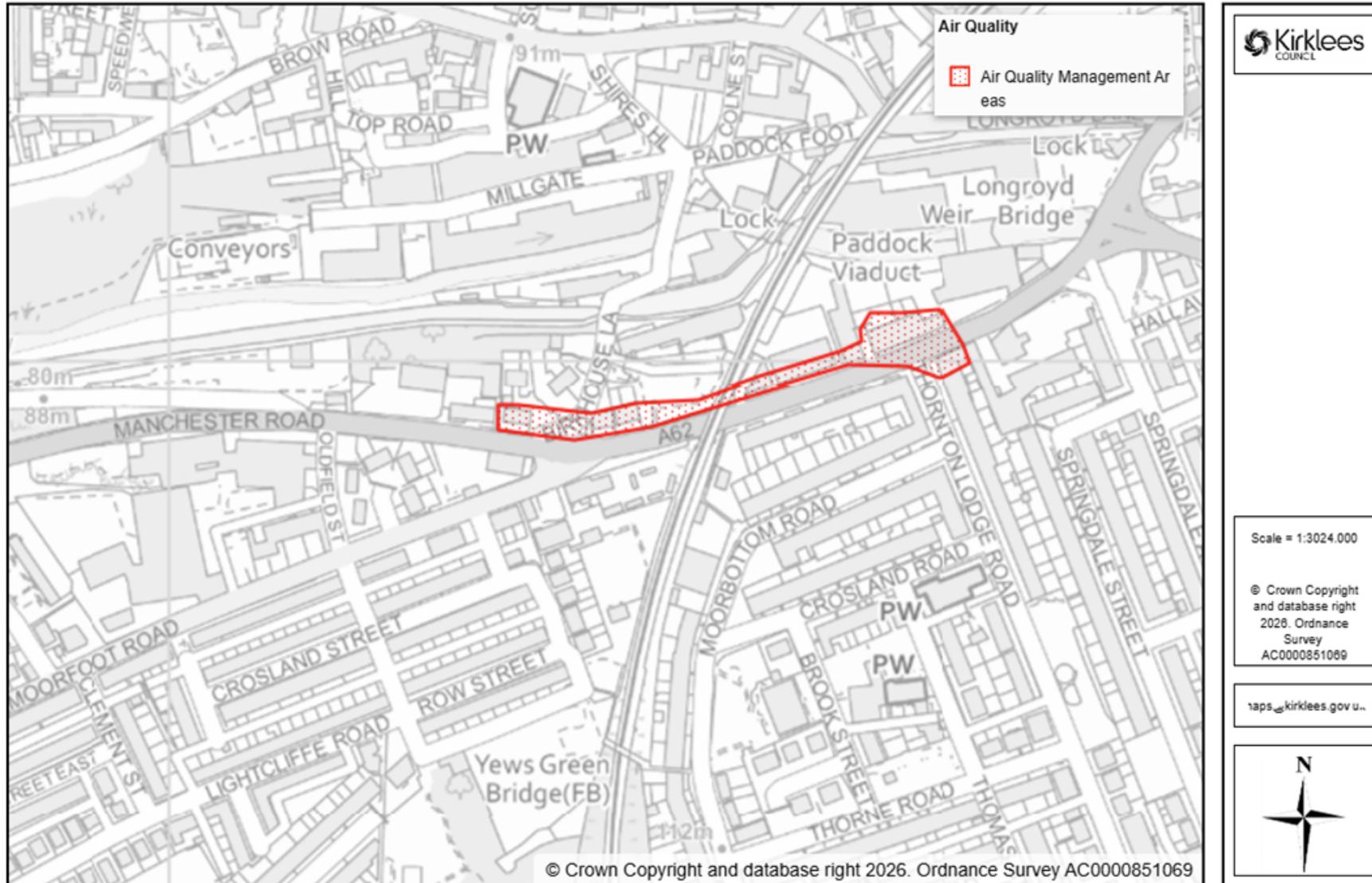


Figure 8 - AQMA 10 – Thornton Lodge (Manchester Road A62) Status: This has been amended since our 2025 ASR.

What the evidence tells us about local air quality

These AQMAs guide where we need to prioritise action. They also help ensure we comply with our legal duties under the Environment Act 1995 and Environment Act 2021.

Our 2025 Annual Status Report (ASR) highlights the following:

- Air quality has improved in several places over recent years, and we have formally revoked AQMAs 1, 2 and 4.
- Parts of AQMAs 3, 7 and 10 have been removed to reflect improvements in air quality in those areas.
- Huddersfield town centre (AQMA 9) continues to exceed the NO₂ annual mean objective, particularly around Westgate and Trinity Street.
- Thornton Lodge (AQMA 10) and Eastborough, Dewsbury (AQMA 5) remain close to, or slightly above, legal levels and need further action.

Our proposed actions for 2026–2031

We have set up an internal steering group to create, review and deliver the Air Quality Action Plan over its five-year lifespan. The group brings together Transport Planners, Public Health officers and other council teams whose work helps improve air quality, ensuring coordinated action across the council. The first task of the steering group was to identify priority actions that will shape the plan and ensure it reflects a whole-council approach to reducing emissions.

These priorities are based on:

- Local air quality evidence
- Our statutory duties
- Feedback from the multi-service Air Quality Action Plan Steering Group

They are designed to deliver the greatest improvements in public health and to reduce pollution in the places where it matters most. We want your views on these priorities before we develop the final actions and detailed delivery plans.

The proposed measures have been grouped into seven categories that reflect the different ways in which air quality can be improved across Kirklees. Table 1 summarises these categories, and Table 2 provides the detailed list of the proposed measures to improve air quality in Kirklees

Table 1 - Overview of the Seven Air Quality Categories and the Measure Numbers They Contain

| Category | Description | Measures |
|--|--|----------|
| Improving traffic flow/reducing congestion | When roads are less congested, vehicles spend less time idling or repeatedly stopping and starting. This is when engines produce the most pollution. By improving how traffic moves, we can reduce emissions of nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂) and fine particles along our busiest routes. | 1-5 |
| Low-emission transport | These actions support the shift towards cleaner vehicles, including electric cars, electric taxis and lower emission buses. Because these vehicles produce little or no exhaust pollution, they help reduce harmful emissions across Kirklees and support long term improvements in air quality. | 6-11 |
| Modal shift towards active transport options | Encouraging more people to walk, cycle or wheel for short journeys reduces the number of car trips on our roads. This helps cut emissions, improves local air quality and creates healthier, safer streets for everyone. | 12-18 |
| Modal shift towards public transport options | By improving bus, rail and future mass transit services, we can make public transport a more attractive alternative to driving. Fewer private car journeys mean lower overall pollution levels and cleaner air in our communities. | 19-23 |
| Freight, taxis, and council fleet | These measures focus on vehicles that travel frequently or for long distances, such as taxis, delivery vehicles and the council's own fleet. Updating engines, improving standards and encouraging cleaner technologies helps reduce emissions from these high mileage vehicles. | 24-26 |
| Planning | Through the planning system, we can make sure new developments do not worsen air quality. This includes assessing the air quality impact of proposals, securing mitigation where needed and ensuring industrial sites meet strict emissions standards through permitting processes. | 27-31 |
| Information and awareness | These actions help residents understand air pollution, how it affects health and what we can all do to reduce it. Awareness campaigns can influence behaviours such as engine idling or burning solid fuel, helping to improve air quality across the district. | 32-35 |

Table 2 - Short list of proposed measures to improve air quality across Kirklees

| Measure no. | Proposed Measure title ¹ | Category | Description of proposed measure |
|-------------|--|--|--|
| 1 | A629 Halifax–Huddersfield Road Scheme | Improving traffic flow – reducing congestion | The project is a highways improvement scheme within the AQMA 3. Phase 5 of the A629 improvement programme will ease congestion and improve traffic flow between Halifax and Huddersfield. |
| 2 | Urban Traffic Management Control Upgrades | Improving traffic flow – reducing congestion | Ongoing upgrades to the UTMC system to better manage traffic signals and reduce congestion across the network at key junctions. |
| 3 | Local Transport Plan 4 Development | Improving traffic flow – reducing congestion | Development of the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan (LTP4), setting the long term strategic approach for reducing congestion across the region (West Yorkshire Combined Authority-led). |
| 4 | Bus Hotspots Congestion Reduction Programme | Improving traffic flow – reducing congestion | Identification and mitigation of congestion hotspots to improve bus journey times, reliability and network performance. |
| 5 | Moving Traffic Enforcement Implementation | Improving traffic flow – reducing congestion | Introduction of civil Moving Traffic Enforcement powers from late 2026 to improve compliance and maintain network flow. |
| 6 | EV Charging Infrastructure Expansion | Low emission transport | Delivery of new publicly accessible EV charge points through LTP4 and a £1m local charging infrastructure programme. |
| 7 | Kirklees Innovative Electric Vehicles (KIEV) Programme | Low emission transport | Support for electric vehicle innovation and rollout, including expanded EV charging provision. |
| 8 | Green Parking Permit for ULEVs | Low emission transport | Parking permit scheme in council-owned car parks for qualifying ultra-low emission vehicles. |
| 9 | EV Taxi Transition Support | Low emission transport | Support for the transition of the taxi and private hire fleet to electric vehicles, delivered in partnership with WYCA. |
| 10 | Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) | Low emission transport | Development of a Kirklees Local Area Energy Plan with WYCA to support long-term transport decarbonisation |
| 11 | West Yorkshire Bus Service Improvement Plans | Low emission transport | Reducing emissions from the public bus network through franchising, zero emission fleet planning and application of Euro VI standards across West Yorkshire |
| 12 | Kirklees Transport Strategy Adoption | Modal shift towards active transport options | Adoption and implementation of the Transport Strategy and Active Travel Interim Position to support increased walking and cycling. |
| 13 | Bikeability training provided to school children | Modal shift towards active transport options | Delivery of cycle training to equip children with the skills and confidence to travel safely by bike. |

| Measure no. | Proposed Measure title ¹ | Category | Description of proposed measure |
|-------------|---|--|---|
| 14 | Modeshift STARS School Travel Programme | Modal shift towards active transport options | Continued support for schools participating in the Modeshift STARS programme to encourage sustainable travel (currently 58 schools engaged). |
| 15 | Active Travel Infrastructure Programme | Modal shift towards active transport options | Development and delivery of new walking and cycling infrastructure, subject to future funding opportunities |
| 16 | Huddersfield Movement & Accessibility Framework | Modal shift towards active transport options | Strategic package of interventions to improve movement, connectivity and accessibility in Huddersfield, with funding to be secured. |
| 17 | Active Travel Behaviour Change Programme | Modal shift towards active transport options | Behaviour change initiatives to encourage greater walking and cycling, subject to future funding availability. |
| 18 | West Yorkshire Active Travel Strategy & Vision | Modal shift towards active transport options | Development of a regional active travel strategy and long term vision, led by WYCA. |
| 19 | TransPennine Route Upgrade | Modal shift towards public transport options | Improvements to the TransPennine rail corridor to enhance capacity, frequency and reliability. |
| 20 | Rail upgrades – Penistone Line | Modal shift towards public transport options | Planned rail service and infrastructure improvements on the Penistone Line. |
| 21 | Mass Transit – Dewsbury Line Development | Modal shift towards public transport options | Development work for a future Dewsbury mass transit route, with delivery expected in the mid-2030s. |
| 22 | Bus Service Improvements | Modal shift towards public transport options | Improvements to bus services through franchising, the Bus Service Improvement Plan and LTP4 investment. |
| 23 | Parking Management for Modal Shift | Modal shift towards public transport options | Use of parking management in Huddersfield to encourage alternatives to car travel. |
| 24 | Vehicle Sustainability | Freight, taxis, council fleet | Measures to improve the sustainability and operational efficiency of council pool vehicles. |
| 25 | Taxi Emissions Enforcement | Freight, taxis, council fleet | Enforcement of taxi and private hire emissions standards through the licensing regime. |
| 26 | Council Sustainable Fleet Programme | Freight, taxis, council fleet | In 2025 we introduced a Sustainable Fleet Board, which aims to reduce the impact of council vehicles on the environment. We already have a number of electric and hybrid vehicles in our fleet and we expect that number to increase as we develop our sustainable fleet strategy. Replacement of older council fleet vehicles with Euro 6/7 models and expansion of EV options for light vans. |

| Measure no. | Proposed Measure title ¹ | Category | Description of proposed measure |
|-------------|---|---------------------------|--|
| 27 | Environmental Permitting & Industrial Emissions Control | Planning | Regulation of industrial processes, including NOx abatement at the energy from the incinerator AQMA 9. |
| 28 | Local Plan Site Allocation Assessment | Planning | Air quality assessment of proposed site allocations for the 2024–2043 Local Plan. |
| 29 | Development Management – Planning Applications | Planning | Planning applications are considered against relevant Local Plan policies, including LP51 (Air Quality), depending on the nature, scale and location of the proposed development to ensure developments do not lead to deterioration in local air quality. Where necessary applications are assessed in line with the West Yorkshire Low Emission Strategy (WYLES) Planning Technical Guidance, and mitigation measures are secured in accordance with the criteria set out in that document. The planning guidance is available at Air Quality & Emissions Technical Planning Guidance . <u>The document is</u> currently under review. |
| 30 | Air Quality & Planning Guidance Update | Planning | Updating regional air quality and planning guidance to reflect emerging policy and evidence. |
| 31 | Kirklees Joint Strategic Assessment | Planning | Updating the Kirklees Joint Strategic Assessment to incorporate the 2026–2031 AQAP. |
| 32 | Public Air Quality Information | Information and awareness | Provision of public information on local air quality, AQMAs, monitoring data, smoke control areas and council strategies. |
| 33 | Public Particulate Information Improvement Project (PIIP) | Information and awareness | Deployment of low-cost sensors to expand public access to particulate matter data. |
| 34 | Anti-Idling Awareness Campaign | Information and awareness | Awareness raising campaign on the impacts of engine idling and the benefits of switching off engines. |
| 35 | Smoke Control Area Awareness Campaign | Information and awareness | Kirklees District is currently a smoke control area and investigates complaints & enforces where required. This would be a campaign to promote compliance with Smoke Control Area rules and encourage cleaner burning practices. |

¹Inclusion of a measure within this consultation does not constitute formal approval, funding commitment or implementation decision.

How progress will be measured

We will track and publish progress each year through the Annual Status Report:

- NO₂ levels at key monitoring sites, especially in Huddersfield town centre
- PM_{2.5} trends from the expanded monitoring network
- Delivery of EV charging and low-emission public transport
- Traffic and idling improvements at priority junctions
- Progress on actions within each AQMA

Each year our Annual Status Report, which is available to the public, will be published on our webpage.

Have Your Say: 4 week consultation from 2nd March

We want residents, schools, businesses and community groups to help shape the final Air Quality Action Plan for 2026–2031.

During this four week consultation, please use the online survey to tell us:

- Your understanding of air quality and Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs)
- Which proposed actions you support, and where you think we should go further
- Any local issues we may have missed, particularly around schools, busy roads or areas where you feel improvements are needed

Your feedback will directly influence the draft Air Quality Action Plan 2026–2031 before it is finalised.