



Breckland
COUNCIL

Mr J Gathercole
Brecklands
Northwell Pool Road
Swaffham
Norfolk
PE37 7HW

Your Ref:
Our Ref: SR 256033
Contact: Andrew Grimley
Direct Dial: 01362 656241
E-mail: andrew.grimley@breckland.gov.uk

Date: 10 September 2019

Dear Mr Gathercole

**Environmental Protection Act 1990, Part III
Air Pollution Question**

I refer to your recent enquiry relating to air pollution levels in Swaffham where you asked the following and would reply as below.

It has been stated that your Environmental Health Department has claimed that air pollution from motor vehicles, both private and commercial, has improved in Swaffham.

We walk and cycle into the centre of town via Station Street which was known to have seven times the level of air pollution that was deemed acceptable. Please can you supply evidence of any improvement and explain how this has been achieved given that traffic levels have increased.

The council is charged with assessing air quality across its district and has used low cost nitrogen dioxide tubes (NO₂) to monitor pollution levels near to busy roads mainly within the 5 market towns over several decades. Generally the air quality across the district is good but there is one area of Swaffham of particular concern. The A1065 runs through the centre of the town and is the main through route for both local traffic and for traffic travelling to North Norfolk. The layout of the town leads to frequent traffic congestion and this leads to elevated concentrations of NO₂. Over the past few years these concentrations have hovered mostly above, but occasionally below, the Annual Objective of 40ug/m³ in a small stretch of Station Street

In 2017 the monitoring within the central part of Swaffham showed that the annual mean for Nitrogen Dioxide had been exceeded and as such the council was required to declare an air quality management area and develop an air quality action plan to identify measures to reduce the nitrogen dioxide levels below the set annual mean.

The nitrogen dioxide monitoring has continued throughout this period of time using the same monitoring tubes to determine the annual mean for pollution levels at these locations.

I note your comment stating that you believe that that traffic levels have increased and suggest the levels were 7 times above the acceptable pollution levels however I am not clear where this information originated from as this claim has not been made by the council. The figures for the nitrogen dioxide levels on Station Street are as follows

38.7 µg/m ³	41.6 µg/m ³	40.4 µg/m ³	37.7 µg/m ³	41.0 µg/m ³	34.3 µg/m ³	30.5 µg/m ³
---------------------------	---------------------------	---------------------------	---------------------------	---------------------------	---------------------------	---------------------------

Small changes have been made to the traffic light sequencing affecting traffic on Station Street however the differences in annual monitoring over recent years are difficult to explain but may be linked to improvements to engine emission technology and variations in annual weather conditions linked to how pollution, particularly nitrogen dioxide, behaves in the centre of Swaffham.

The council has identified a number of actions as part of its action plan which we will continue to implement particularly around considerations relating to air pollution as a result of new developments in the town, promoting cleaner means of travel including cycling and charging points for electrical vehicles. Monitoring of pollution within the town will continue however the main driver for improvements, namely the exceedance of the nitrogen dioxide annual limit, has diminished leading to the conclusion that air quality in Swaffham is improving based on the evidence currently available. That said there will need to be evidence of an ongoing trend over the next few years of the nitrogen dioxide annual mean levels being shown to be below the objective level before the future of the air quality management area is determined.

I hope this explains the reasoning behind the council's conclusions and thank you for raising this issue with me.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Grimley
Team Leader Environmental Protection