

E & E Forum

July 6, 2017

Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂)

Health concerns. NO₂ can cause obstructive lung diseases and in 2006 the World Health Organisation estimated that over 2 million deaths result annually from air pollution in which nitrogen dioxide constituted one of the pollutants. In 2008, the report of United Kingdom committee on the medical effects of air pollutants (COMEAP) suggested that air pollution is the cause of about 29,000 deaths annually in this country.

A lesser-known effect, in the eyes of the public, is of human exposure to NO₂ is on the reproductive system in males – and to a lesser extent in females.

World Health Organisation and European Union guidelines state that there should not exceed a mean 40 micrograms per cubic metre of air a year.

In the figures, which are for 2015, the three Priory Road monitoring sites (actually sited on St Oswald's Road) and the one at Barton Street (close to junction with Charles Street) all exceeded the EU and UK limits, with Barton Street showing a slight decrease over the previous year, and the three in Priory Road showing very welcome decreases of between, 10 and 20 micrograms per cubic meter of air a year

For some reason, diesel fuel is more of a threat than petrol. But the NO₂ problem is not just confined to air quality alongside roads and railways – plus at airports. NO₂ levels inside petrol/diesel vehicles can be up to three times greater. And in the home, a gas cooker can even be very unhealthy, especially if it is used without some form of ventilation.

District Councils and unitary authorities have a statutory to measure air quality, which the City Council does. But when there is a problem, and pollution levels need to be reduced, the matter, when it comes to Gloucester, has to be passed-on to another authority for action. In the case of this report, it is the Highways Department of the County Council.

So, what is the County Council doing? How is the City Council working with Shire Hall on reducing this air pollution and what is the reaction from the county?