



**Agenda
item:**

Report for:	Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	28th July 2020
Part:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Annual Status Report 2020 and air quality update
Contact:	Julie Banks- Portfolio Holder for Community and Regulatory Services Author/Responsible Officer Neil Polden, Lead Officer (Environmental and Community Protection)
Purpose of report:	To provide Members with an update on local air quality management and the recently produced Annual Status Report
Recommendations	For Information only.
Corporate objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clean, safe and enjoyable environment • Building strong and vibrant communities • Ensuring economic growth and prosperity
Implications:	<u>Financial</u> None.
'Value for money' implications	<u>Value for money</u> The writing of the ASR has been met within existing budget arrangements.
Risk implications	<p>Risk Assessment completed for each service area as part of Service planning and reviewed quarterly. Key risks are recorded on the Council's Risk Register which has been Updated recently.</p> <p>The key risks relate to not meeting with statutory obligations as set out in the Environment Act 1995. Despite challenges presented by the current global health pandemic due to COVID-19 the Council has fulfilled obligations expected by DEFRA to report on local air quality before 30th June 2020.</p> <p>Failure to act also has the following implications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for the public health to be put at risk • Legal action taken against the Council • Reputational damage to the Council • Mandated actions from central government

Equality Impact Assessment	None – the reporting of air quality is mandatory function of the council
Health and safety Implications	None
Consultees:	None
Background papers:	DBC_ASR_2020
Historical background <i>(please give a brief background to this report to enable it to be considered in the right context).</i>	See background, below
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	AQAP – Air Quality Action Plan AQMA – Air Quality Management Area ASR – Annual Status Report DEFRA – Department for the Environment Food and Rural Affairs CAZ – Clean Air Zone HCC – Herts County Council LAQM – Local Air Quality Management NO ₂ – Nitrogen Dioxide PM _{2.5} & PM ₁₀ – Fine Particulate matter

1. Background

- 1.1. This report is presented to members to provide an update on local air quality. The report is presented for information purposes, and fulfilment of the Councils obligation for LAQM.
- 1.2. Under the Environment Act 1995, the Council has various duties towards LAQM. This includes a duty to periodically review and assess air quality in line with national air quality objectives and to work towards a general emission reduction for PM_{2.5} (for which no objective has been set).
- 1.3. Where the Council identifies breach of any of the air quality objectives it must declare an AQMA and produce an AQAP within 12 – 18 months of that declaration, setting out measures to may resolve the AQMA.
- 1.4. In accordance with its duties, the Council must produce an annual report as part of its undertaking for LAQM. In accordance with timescales set by DEFRA the Council has produced its ASR for 2020 and has been reported to them in accordance with submission deadline. The report was submitted on the 29th June 2020. This has been accomplished despite the impacts of COVID-19 which have required the Council to reprioritise its work and redeploy resource.

- 1.5. In brief the key findings of the ASR are that generally air quality across the district are within the set air quality standards, with the exception of the AQMAs the Council declared in 2012. These being:
- Lawn Lane, Aspley
 - London Road, HH
 - Northchurch
- 1.6. Within the Lawn Lane and London Road AQMA latest monitoring for 2019 shows an increase in ambient NO₂ concentrations where we have identified exceedances. Over the last 5 years of monitoring, and as presented in the ASR the trend in local NO₂ concentrations has seen marginal improvements in air quality in these localities.
- 1.7. However, in the Northchurch AQMA results are more positive with local NO₂ concentrations measuring below the objective limit for a 2nd consecutive year. To support revocation of the AQMA, Policy Guidance suggest 3 years of compliant data being appropriate.
- 1.8. The ASR also reports that the Council has revised its AQAP and is currently working on a new draft AQAP. The Council has created a Steering Group to assist continued development of the AQAP.
- 1.9. The ASR also reports that new monitoring has been introduced for 2020 leading on from evidence contained in consultant reports that assess air quality for new development and development of local knowledge of the district. This has identified the following areas where the local air quality monitoring network has been extended / refined:
- A section along St Albans Road, between Bennetts End and Leverstock Green Way – Hemel Hempstead
 - The junction at Maylands Avenue and Wood Lane End – Hemel Hempstead
 - The roundabout at Coombe Street and Leighton Buzzard Road – Hemel Hempstead
 - The roundabout at Queensway and Marlowes – Hemel Hempstead
 - The junction formed by Lower Kings Road, Kings Road and High Street – Berkhamsted
 - A section along Brook Street near to the Silk Mill Industrial Estate – Tring

2. Priorities for 2020/21

- 2.1 Noting that the status of the AQAP remains draft the priority will be to ensure that measures start to be implemented. It is important to make members aware that the principal challenges and barriers to implementation that Dacorum faces are that all AQMAs are declared based on emissions from road transport, and for which it has no administrative control over the road network.
- 2.2 The Council does seek to work proactively with colleagues at HCC in bringing forward measures. To date the Council has been able to progress on some of the AQAP measures. This has included the development of an internal draft

of planning guidance to show how emissions reduction from new developments may be achieved through the planning system. The Service is currently working with the Planning policy team on the update of the local plan and producing appropriate policy measures that may support the Council in its duty towards local air quality improvements, in particular the expectation of emission reduction from PM_{2.5}.

- 2.3 To aid the achievement of the AQAP measures, linked to feasibility assessment for CAZ, and reducing financial burden on the Council, a grant bid for £45k was submitted to the air quality grant fund scheme at DEFRA. The Council was unsuccessful in this bid, and will be pursuing alternative funding streams such as contributions from its partners.
- 2.4 Due to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, local air quality monitoring was temporarily suspended upon advice from DEFRA. Monitoring was deemed not to be a critical function when balanced against the need to stay at home, save lives and protect the NHS. Monitoring has been resumed with the Council having lost one month's data. This will not affect the dataset for 2020, although the decrease in activity on our local roads will be expected to contribute towards lower ambient pollution levels for 2021.