

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 14 MARCH 2017

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SPACE

AIR QUALITY AND HEALTH & WELLBEING

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- This report outlines the actions taken to date to tackle air pollution in East Herts with the aim of minimising its negative impact on the health and wellbeing of local residents.
- The report discusses the council's three Air Quality Management Areas, AQMAs, and improvements in air quality at these sites in recent years.
- The report goes on to inform members that work is currently underway on a revised Air Quality Action Plan for East Herts covering the period 2017/18 to 2019/20 inclusive. Scrutiny members are invited to make suggestions regarding actions that could be included.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY

That:

(A)	any comments on work to date to improve air quality be forwarded to the Executive Member for the Environment and Public Space and the Head of Housing and Health; and
(B)	suggestions for actions that could be included in a new Air Quality Action Plan covering 2017/18 – 2019/20 be forwarded to the Head of Housing and Health.

1.0 Background

1.1 Air pollution is associated with a number of adverse health impacts. It is recognised as a contributing factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer. Additionally, air pollution particularly

affects the most vulnerable in society: children and older people, and those with heart and lung conditions.

- 1.2 In an attempt to tackle air pollution at the local level, Part VI of the Environment Act (1995) places an obligation on all local authorities to regularly review and assess air quality in their areas, and to determine whether or not the air quality objectives are likely to be achieved. The statutory air quality objectives applicable in England are as follows:

Table 1 – Air Quality Objectives in England

Pollutant	Air Quality Objective	
	Concentration	Measured as
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO ₂)	200 µg/m ³ not to be exceeded more than 18 times a year	1-hour mean
	40 µg/m ³	Annual mean
Particulate Matter (PM ₁₀)	50 µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 35 times a year	24-hour mean
	40 µg/m ³	Annual mean
Sulphur Dioxide (SO ₂)	350 µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 24 times a year	1-hour mean
	125 µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 3 times a year	24-hour mean
	266 µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 35 times a year	15-minute mean

- 1.3 The council has determined that three areas in the district are at particular risk of elevated levels of NO₂ and so has declared three Air Quality Management Areas, AQMAs, at which NO₂ emissions are monitored. These are as follows.

Table 0 – Declared Air Quality Management Areas

AQMA Name	City / Town	Pollutants and Air Quality Objectives	Description
AQMA 1 Hockerill Junction	Bishop's Stortford	NO ₂ annual mean	An area encompassing a number of properties at crossroads known as Hockerill Junction

AQMA Name	City / Town	Pollutants and Air Quality Objectives	Description
AQMA 2 Gascoyne Way	Hertford	NO ₂ annual mean	Residential properties by the A414 from the junction with Mimram Road to the junction with Railway Place. Also includes properties along the first 450m of London Road and along the road beginning with Parliament square up to and including St Andrew's Street and approximately half of North Road. It also extends up Old Cross and Cowbridge until the junction with Port Vale.
AQMA 3 London Road	Sawbridge worth	NO ₂ annual mean	Residential Properties along Cambridge Road from and including The Bull public house including properties along London Road and Bonk Hill up to the junction with High Wych Road.

See **Essential Reference Paper 'B'** for maps of each area.

2.0 Work to date to tackle air quality

2.1 An Air Quality Action Plan was devised by Hertfordshire County Council, in partnership with the districts, in 2011/12. It was last reviewed in 2013/14.

2.2 While many of the actions are the responsibility of the County Council, notably with regard to traffic management and revision of road layouts, East Herts Council has a key role to play in enabling behaviours that will help reduce air pollution. Of note, as the district's three AQMAs primarily suffer from traffic-related air pollution, efforts to reduce vehicle use and/or emissions from vehicles are particularly important locally.

2.3 Key actions relating to the work of East Herts Council over the last three years include:

Action	Current status
Improve information regarding AQ impact of bonfires, and potential enforcement action	ACHIEVED East Herts Council's website gives comprehensive information on bonfires including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what is and isn't permissible under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Highways (amendment) Act 1986 • how to minimise pollution, smoke and nuisance • alternative methods of disposing of combustible waste • how to complain about bonfires.
Investigate complaints regarding nuisance, monitor AQ and	ACHIEVED & ONGOING East Herts Council monitors air quality and responds to concerns as they arise. The council submits a Status Report

<p>ensure compliance with the AQ strategy</p>	<p>to DEFRA each year. This gives a detail breakdown of pollution in each AQMA along with key issues and progress. The council is currently leading on a total update of the Air Quality Action Plan for East Herts.</p>
<p>Installation of electronic charging</p>	<p>ACHIEVED & ONGOING</p> <p>There are 14 electric car charging sockets available in East Herts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • four in Bishop’s Stortford – Bishop’s Stortford Station and Glyn Hopkins, Northgate End • six in Hertford – County Hall, Gascoyne Way and Hertford East Station • four in Ware – Asda, Park Road and Farnham’s Hall Hotel. <p>In addition, there are 10 sockets at Birchanger Green Services just across the boundary in Uttlesford. This includes four high-speed superchargers.</p> <p>The Council has made a successful bid to DEFRA to enable the council taking the lead in promoting greater uptake of electric, low emission vehicles. The bid includes kick-starting an electric car club with four vehicles supported by the installation of ten additional charging points across the District in Bishop’s Stortford, Hertford, Ware and Sawbridgeworth.</p> <p>The bid includes two high speed rapid chargers (providing four points) - including at a site in central Stortford. Such rapid chargers may allow the Council to investigate the future opportunity, together with private partners, to potentially establish an electric taxi scheme within the District.</p>
<p>Consider effect of development on air quality and where appropriate secure mitigation through s106 <i>and</i> Take AQ into account in all planning applications, particularly when within or close to AQMA</p>	<p>ACHIEVED & ONGOING</p> <p>Air Quality Planning Guidance was approved in 2016. The policy is a material consideration and will be used in appropriate circumstances. Officers consider each application proposal against the guidance to assess if it applies and, if so, in what ways.</p> <p>The Planning team uses the guidance at the pre-application stage. As we move into the new Plan period, the larger strategic sites will start to come forward. It is these sites to which the guidance will have most relevance.</p>
<p>Secondary school teaching packs</p>	<p>ACHIEVED & ONGOING</p> <p>The council, working with the London Sustainability Exchange, has developed the ‘Cleaner Air 4 Secondary Schools Toolkit’ to help secondary school students better understand the impact of travel options on the environment. To date, the toolkit has been used at Richard Hale School in Hertford and Leventhorpe School in Sawbridgeworth. The</p>

	<p>toolkit was distributed to all secondary schools in East Herts in early December 2016</p>
EHC staff car sharing	<p>ACHIEVED & ONGOING</p> <p>EHC participates in Liftshare. This identifies car sharing opportunities between colleagues at East Herts and beyond. Currently, East Herts Council has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24 signed up members • 18 offering lifts • 4 current share offers. <p>The scheme is regularly promoted to staff, most recently in the Jan 2017 and Nov 2016 staff magazines.</p> <p>In addition, we understand that a number of staff have established their own car share arrangements outside of the Liftshare scheme. Unfortunately, we don't currently have a record of the numbers doing this.</p>
Consideration of contribution of parking in proximity to AQMA to congestion in area	<p>ONGOING</p> <p>Access to parking is an inherent part of town centre road usage. There is limited scope at this point for amending the location of car parking so as to impact on air pollution in particular locations. That said, a survey of car parking near AQMAs was conducted in 2016. Results suggest that reductions in diesel vehicles using the car parks and/or an overall reduction in vehicles, for example via car-sharing, have the most potential to reduce pollution.</p>
Assert control over part B/ part A2 processes for small scale industry under Pollution Prevention and Control Act 1999	<p>ONGOING</p> <p>The council carries out all part B (emissions to air) process inspections according to the regulations; whether an annual, biennial or less frequent inspection is required is risk-based. There are no A2 processes in the district.</p>
Measure improvements of energy efficiency in housing and report annually in accordance with the Home Energy Conservation Act	<p>ONGOING</p> <p>Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) reports are made on a biennial basis. The next report will be submitted in Spring 2017.</p> <p>A key finding from the report submitted in 2015 was that the average CO₂ per capita for East Herts fell by 22% between 2005 and 2014. Reduced energy consumption has both direct and indirect impacts on the creation of pollutants both locally and at the source of power generation e.g. nitrogen dioxide also arises from domestic heating.</p> <p>The council has commissioned the Building Research Establishment to undertake a private sector housing condition review and an initial interim report is planned for the end of this financial year, 2016/17.</p>
Support goods yard link development and	<p>CURRENT SITUATION</p> <p>The proposed arrangements for road access to and through</p>

relocation of bus station closer to rail station	the goods yard development and the relocation of the bus interchange are being considered through the current planning application relating to the site.
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2.4 While the primary measure of air quality in the three AQMAs is the NO₂ annual mean, local authorities are expected to work towards reducing emissions and/or concentrations of PM_{2.5} (particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 2.5µm or less). There is clear evidence that PM_{2.5} has a significant impact on human health, including premature mortality, allergic reactions, and cardiovascular diseases. PM_{2.5} levels can extend beyond the AQMAs, so East Herts Council is taking the following measures to address PM_{2.5}:

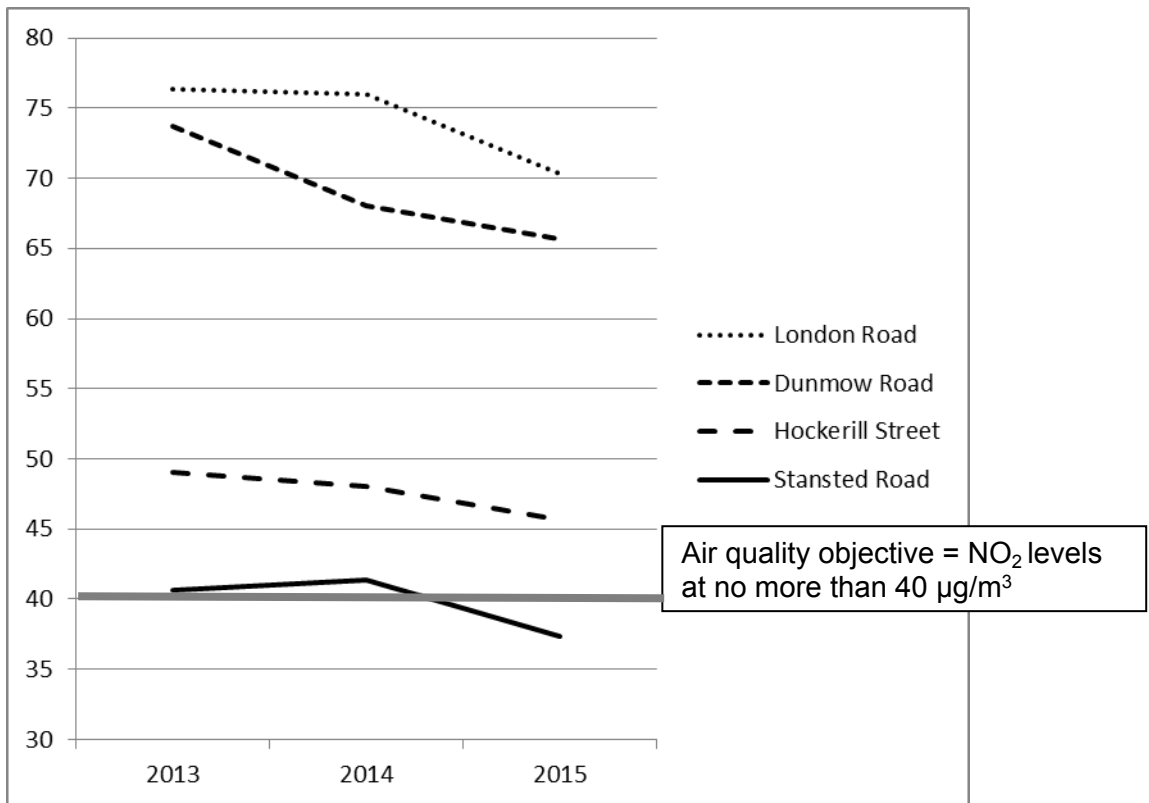
- extending the Air Quality Action Plan to include actions that would improve air pollution across the district and not just within the AQMAs
- assisting Hertfordshire County Council to achieve the main aim outlined in the Active Travel Strategy which is *“To increase the proportion of journeys made by walking or cycling to improve individual health, quality of life, the environment and the economy”*
- encouraging council employees and visitors to the council to use more sustainable methods of travel.

3.0 Improvements in air quality in recent years

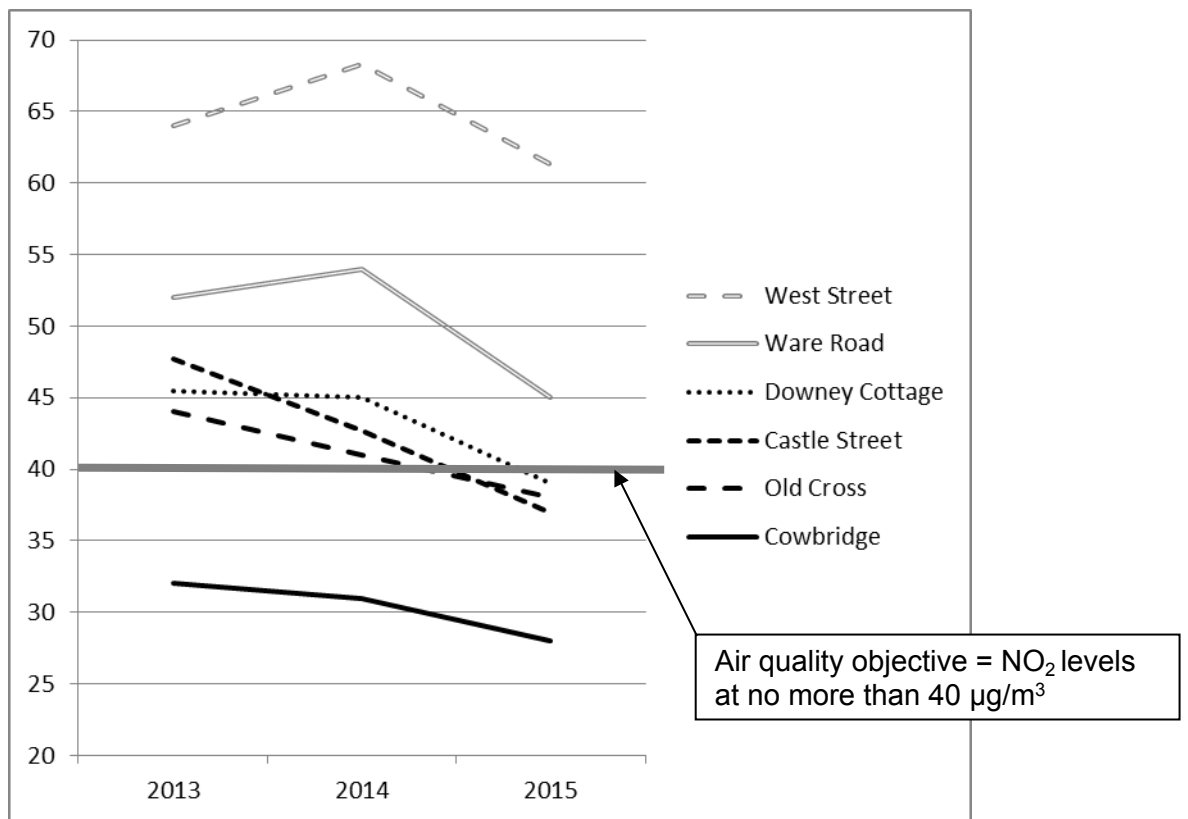
3.1 Each year, the council is required to report on the air quality recorded in its AQMAs. Each AQMA has at least three different sites at which NO₂ levels are monitored.

3.2 The tables below show that NO₂ levels have dropped over the last three years at all monitoring locations within the three AQMAs. It is anticipated that the increases in electric and hybrid vehicles and some moves to biodiesel will have impacted on local pollution levels.

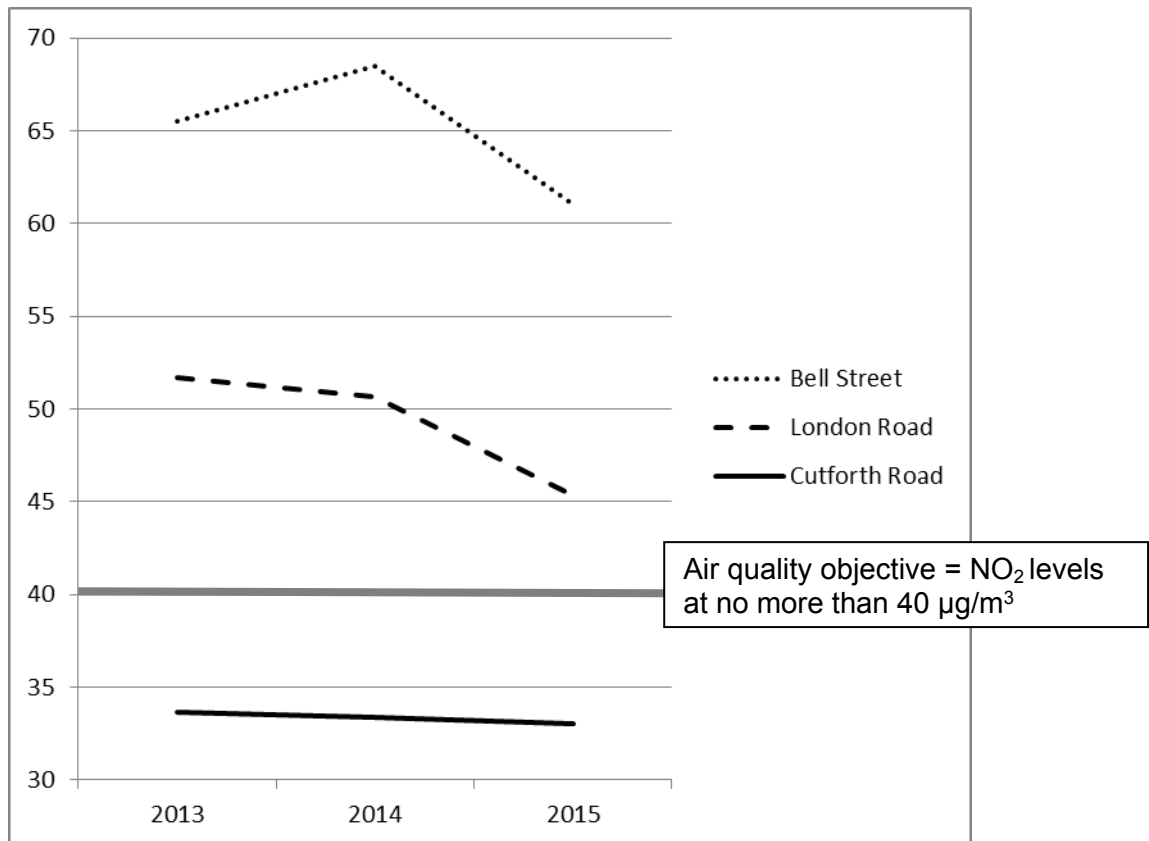
Graph 1: Bishop's Stortford AQMA – annual average NO₂ levels (µg/m³)



Graph 2: Hertford AQMA – annual average NO₂ levels (µg/m³)



Graph 3: Sawbridgeworth AQMA – annual average NO₂ levels (µg/m³)



4 National Clean Air Day

4.1 On 15th June 2017, the first ever National Clean Air Day (NCAD) is being organised by the environmental charity Global Action Plan. The Day is being supported by over 50 organisations, councils and universities, including the Royal College of Physicians, the British Lung Foundation, and various NHS Trusts, together with financial support from DEFRA.

4.2 The Day aims to raise public awareness of air pollution and promote practical steps that everyone can take to help improve air quality.

4.3 East Herts Council is participating, concentrating on:

- children and schools
- raising awareness of in-car pollution

- encouraging people to avoid short trips in private transport.
- 4.4 Officers are working closely with County Council colleagues on actions aimed at local schools, with a special focus on primary schools in or adjacent to the three AQMA's. Activities include:
- participating school pupils will be encouraged to wear something green
 - a clean air pledge is being developed for the children to sign together with information that will be circulated via parent mail and newsletters. This will be under the banner of 'walk green and keep your air clean' and aims to encourage walking to school
 - some schools will also be participating in a before and after the campaign 'audit' of the number of cars idling outside their premises. All participating schools will be presented with East Herts Clean Air Champion certificates.
- 4.5 A parallel campaign with the slogan 'turn your key, be idle free' will encourage drivers to turn off their engines when stationary. Social media/twitter will form an important element of the campaign.
- 4.6 Clean Air Day activities in Hertfordshire as a whole are being led by East Herts Council and our promotional materials will be available for use by other districts in Hertfordshire should they wish to engage with the campaign.
- 4.7 If the events are successful this year it is hoped that further initiatives involving more schools and the wider community can be developed for 2018.

5.0 Successful DEFRA bid

- 5.1 As noted above, in November 2016 the council made a bid to DEFRA's Air Quality Grant Scheme. In February, we learnt that the bid for £163,100 was successful. Of note, East Herts and Cornwall are the only two non-London or largely urban authorities to have been successful.
- 5.2 The aim of the proposal is to enable the council to take the lead in promoting greater uptake of electric, low emission vehicles. The bid includes kick-starting an electric car club with four vehicles supported by the installation of ten additional charging points across the District in Bishop's Stortford, Hertford, Ware and Sawbridgeworth.

5.3 The bid includes two high speed rapid chargers (providing four points) – including one at a site in central Stortford. Such rapid chargers may allow the Council to investigate the future opportunity, together with private partners, to potentially establish an electric taxi scheme within the District.

6.0 A new Air Quality Action Plan 2017/18 to 2019/20

6.1 To date, the council has participated in drafting the Hertfordshire-wide Air Quality Action Plan led by Hertfordshire County. Given the growing attention on air quality locally, East Herts Council officers are keen to thoroughly review and revise the local approach and so are now taking the lead on devising an East Herts-focused action plan covering the coming three years. The plan would, of course, encompass actions for which other organisations, notably the County Council, would take the lead.

6.2 Work has commenced on this, with following interventions set to be included:

- extension of electric vehicle charging network in East Herts
- establishment of electric vehicle car scheme for public use in Hertford and Bishops Stortford
- work with local schools to expand promotion of anti-idling campaign
- work in close liaison with HCC to encourage public transport providers to use Euro 6 compliant vehicles wherever possible.

6.3 Scrutiny members are invited to suggest possible actions for inclusion in the Action Plan.

6.4 It is envisaged that the draft will be finalised early in 2017/18 with consultation then taking place before approval of the final version is sought.

7.0 Implications/Consultations

7.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) 2016

Air Quality Updating and Screening Assessment 2015

Air Quality Progress Report - April 2014

All available at <http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/article/9550/Air-Quality>

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