

REPORT OF: HOUSING, HEALTH AND ENGINEERING SERVICES
MANAGER

TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

DATES: 26th NOVEMBER, 2020

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AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide Members with an update on Air Quality Management.

RECOMMENDATION

Note the content of the 2020 Annual Air Quality Status Report and the progress made against the Air Quality Action Plan.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- (1) To provide Members with an update on the Air Quality monitoring undertaken in the Borough of Pendle including the action which have been taken to improve air quality.
- (2) In 2019 the Borough of Pendle Council officially recognised the climate change as an emergency.

ISSUE

1. BACKGROUND TO REPORT

1.1 Under the Part IV of the Environment Act (1995) and associated Local Air Quality Management Framework, local authorities have a duty to review and assess air quality against National Air Quality Standards. When a pollutant fails to comply with an objective and there is relevant public exposure, an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) must be declared and an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) prepared, detailing measures which will be implemented to improve air quality in the designated area.

1.2 The Borough of Pendle declared an AQMA in 2011 encompassing the main road around the Town Centre of Colne. The main pollutant of concern is Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) which is largely attributable to road transport emissions.

1.3 The AQAP was published in 2015 since then progress has been made against a number of measures. Implementation of actions is monitored as part of the annual Air Quality Status Report (ASR), which the Council is required to produce and submit to Defra. The ASR also contains monitoring data and data trends related to results of NO₂ captured in 2019.

2. MONITORING DATA AND TREND

2.1 Passive monitoring of NO₂ using diffusion tubes was undertaken at 56 sites across the Borough in 2019. The monitoring site locations and data are detailed within the ASR. Air quality is improving across the Borough with no annual mean exceedance for NO₂ of 40µg /m³. Where the annual mean exceeds the National Standard of 40µg /m³ consistently, the LA is required to declare the area as an AQMA. There was a monthly exceedance in January 2019 at 43 of the 56 sites. The same pattern can be observed each year where January and February sees the highest level of NO₂. It is believed this is a result of more people feeling forced into less sustainable ways of travelling (in the car) to avoid the colder weather, causing more traffic and more congestion.

2.2 In comparison to 2015 data there is a downward trend across the majority of monitoring locations within the AQMA. Overall all 5 sites within the AQMA showed a decrease in concentrations in 2019 when compared to the previous 4 year's monitoring data. On the basis of these results we will look in the next couple of years to revoke the AQMA subject to these results continuing to consistently decrease.

2.3 On the whole this is the similar picture across the remaining 51 sites whereby levels of NO₂ are reducing.

3. PROGRESS AGAINST ACTIONS

3.1 Once an AQMA is declared, the Council has a legal duty to produce and adopt an Air Quality Action Plan to try improve air quality within the management area and hotspots.

3.2 The main actions in the current Action Plan to improve air quality are based upon:

- Improving traffic flow, easing congestion and reducing traffic idling.
- Encouraging modal shift away from car use, promoting alternative methods of transport.
- Working with the planning department to ensure where possible air quality/ climate change actions are considered during the development stage.
- Working with EON to install car charging points in Council car parks.
- Contribute to and influence forthcoming development policies for Lancashire County Council (LCC).
- Work in partnership with LCC to increase uptake and implement action of travel plans.

3.3 There is regular monitoring of the actions contained within the Action Plan, with progress reports being made within the ASR yearly.

4. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

4.1 While work continues with partners to provide co-ordinated approach, like many other local authorities work on air quality is complicated by separation between tiers of local government; while the Borough Council has responsibility for managing local air quality, transport is managed by County Council.

4.2 The AQAP was approved in 2015 and in 2019 the Borough of Pendle classed climate change as an emergency, as a result of this we hope to see more funding and political will on climate change issues, including air quality.

4.3 Work has commenced on the next ASR which will report on 2020 monitoring data. This is due for submission to DEFRA by June 2021.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy:

There is no policy implication arising from this report.

Financial:

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Legal:

The Local Air Quality Management (“LAQM”) regime was introduced by the Environment Act 1995. The Borough Councils duties under the Environmental Act 1995 are mandatory. The duties imposed on the Council are, to review air quality from time to time and, under Part IV of the Act, to develop and implement an air quality action plan to tackle air pollution.

Risk Management:

There are no implications for adopting an ASR however failure to work towards completion of the Air Quality Action Plan may instigate DEFRA and Secretary of State Involvement.

Health and Safety:

There are no health and safety implications arising from this report.

Climate Change:

In 2019 the Borough of Pendle Council officially recognised the climate change as an emergency. The Air Quality Status Report and Action Plan contributes to the reduction of air pollution across the Borough, whilst improving air quality.

Community Safety:

There are no community safety implications arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity:

There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1- Pendle Council Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) 2020

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS