



Update on Progress with Stevenage Road AQMA Action Plan Measures

Introduction:

The Action Plan to identify measure that could be implemented to address elevated concentrations of nitrogen dioxide at properties along the Stevenage Road, Hitchin was published in September 2013.

The Action Plan grouped those measures into broad categories and this short report provides a summary of the progress that has been made in implementing those measures as at September 2015.

The Appendix summaries the progress to date and in particular enables the progress made in the last 12 months to be identified.

Progress to date:

1. Partnership Working:

Measure 1.1 – Inclusion of Air Quality in the developing Local Plan

Policy D4: Air Quality was included in the Draft Local Plan.

An Air Quality Supplementary Planning Guidance Document has been produced to support the Policy D4. This SPGD will remain in draft until the Local Plan is finalised at which point it will also become a final document. The SPGD has been circulated for comment to the planning officers involved in the development of the Local Plan, the Principal Transport Planning Officer, line managers within EP&H and the Herts and Beds Air Quality Working Group. Where comments have been received they have been reflected in the SPGD.

Measure 1.2 – Respond to planning consultations

Using the approach established in Policy D4 and the AQ SPGD, both of which reflect the National Planning Policy Framework guidance on air pollution, air quality issues are now being routinely considered on an application by application basis.

2015 has seen the inclusion of planning conditions requiring the inclusion of electric vehicle charging points into developments for the first time. Furthermore, attention is being paid to the content of s106 agreements where Travel Plans are being proposed and detailed advice is being provide at pre-application and scoping assessment stages of consultation on developments.

Measure 1.3 – Liaison on Transport Plans

Established a bi-annual meeting (minimum) with the Principal Transport Planning Officer to ensure continued engagement with this process and also Local Plan related issues.

Measure 1.4 – NHDC Community Services Links (walking and cycling promotion)

Not progressed



Measure 1.5 – Link with the Public Health Agenda

Air Quality is included in the JSNA.

NHDC has an active and vocal presence on the HCC Air Quality and Public Health working group.

This group has resulted in the following:

- Awareness raising seminars for public health professionals
- HCC wide air quality strategy
- Funding for PM2.5 monitoring

Measure 1.6 – Defra Funding to Support Action Plan Measures

Successful bid in 2013/14 – HGV survey and road layout air quality modelling

Unsuccessful bid in 2014/15 – extension of air quality modelling project

Successful bid to OLEV for 6 x EV recharging points 2013/14 – project completed 2015 and re-charging points in use

Unsuccessful bid to OLEV for funding for detailed fleet review and 75% off of cost of EVs to replace diesel vehicles.

2. Ongoing Monitoring:

Measure 2.1 – Monitoring local air quality

Diffusion tube network retained

NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} (HCC PH funded) real-time analysers have been established at Stevenage Road since end of July 2015

Measure 2.2 – Annual traffic counts at Stevenage Road

DfT source of traffic data identified for Stevenage Road

3. Publicity and Education:

Measure 3.1 – Utilise NHDC media resources to raise awareness

EV usage press release drafted and with Communications

Measure 3.2 – Engage with local schools to raise awareness

Junior school and senior school Air Quality education resource packs are available. Need funding to implement and time to identify schools and support implementation.



Measure 3.3 – Engage with local business to raise awareness

NHDC engaged with working group involving HCC and a private company investigating the establishment of a rapid EV charging network across Hertfordshire for taxis. Possible OLEV bid associated with the project.

4. Improve Infrastructure for alternative transport:

Measure 4.1 – Support public transport uptake

No progress

Measure 4.2 – Support cycling infrastructure

No progress

Measure 4.3 – Support improvements to pedestrian links and crossing at Stevenage Road

No further progress due to unsuccessful bid to Defra. However, pedestrian crossing at Stevenage Road remains a short/medium term project for HCC Highways

Measure 4.4 – Installation of EV charging point infrastructure

OLEV funded project complete

OLEV/HCC/Private company Taxi charging point project at early stages

Measure 4.5 – Gas or biomethane refuelling facilities for industry/commerce

No progress as no appropriate developments, but AQ planning policy and supporting guidance document highlights the principle.

5. Encourage use of Alternative Fuels/Reduce emissions:

Measure 5.1 – investigate incorporation of emissions element to parking policy /charges

No progress other than establishing parking fee exempt parking spaces for recharging bays and no fee for electricity use

Measure 5.2 – Changing company fleets

Energy Saving Trust has been commissioned to carry out survey of NHDC fleet for feasibility of replacement of diesel with EV. Business case report due September 2015



6. Traffic Infrastructure Alterations:

Measure 6.1 – Alternative routes for HGV access to Hitchin industrial estate

HGV survey complete and data with HCC Highways as supporting evidence for future considerations. Data with NHDC Development Control.

Measure 6.2 & 6.3 – Relocation of bus-stops and review of on-street parking at Stevenage Road

No progress made. Would have been considered further if Defra bid for modelling of road layout changes at Stevenage Road had been successful

Measure 6.4 – Modelling of road layout improvements at Stevenage Road

No progress due to unsuccessful Defra bid, but road layout changes remain under consideration by HCC due to housing pressure in the south of the district, so the intention is to remain involved as those considerations progress

David Carr (Environmental Protection Officer)

8th September 2015

North Hertfordshire District Council Progress against Air Quality Action Plan 2013 Summary of Measures at September 2015

<i>Summary of Action Plan Measures</i>					<i>Progress since September 2013</i>		
Measure Number	Description of Measure	Lead Responsibility	Timescales	Indicator of Success	Progress to date	Progress in last 12 months	Estimated Completion date
1	Partnership Working (Liaison & joint working with: NHDC colleagues, other Local Authorities, Hertfordshire County Council and Defra)						
1.1	Inclusion of Air Quality in NHDC's Local Plan (LP) and development of a Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) for Air Quality	NHDC - Environmental Protection (EP)	2013	Air quality included in Local Plan and SPG produced	- Air Quality Policy agreed for inclusion in Local Plan - Air Quality SPG document agreed in principle & draft completed	Same as progress to date	Dependant on the Local Plan timescales
1.2	Respond to planning consultations arising from air quality SPG, including considering S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	EP	Ongoing	Air quality impacts considered on relevant planning applications & appropriate S106/ CIL contributions obtained	- Air quality issues being routinely considered on an application specific basis - EV charging point infrastructure condition is being included on some planning permissions	- EV charging point infrastructure condition being included on some planning permissions	Ongoing
1.3	Liaison on Urban Transport Plans (UTPs) and Local Transport Plans (LTPs)	EP & NHDC Planning Policy (PP)	Ongoing	Air quality issues considered in developing UTP and LTP initiatives	- Contacts & liaison with transport planning professionals	- Established quarterly meetings with NHDC Principal Transport Planning Officer	Ongoing
1.4 (see also 3.2)	Investigate possibility of linking with NHDC Community Services (CS) to promote cycling/walking	EP	2013	Establish link between change to transport mode and exercise and health	- No action to date	Same as progress to date	2016/17

Measure Number	Description of Measure	Lead Responsibility	Timescales	Indicator of Success	Progress to Date	Progress since last 12 months	Estimated Completion date
1.5 (see also 1.4)	Link into the Public Health agenda via the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)	Hertfordshire Local Authority officers	2013 and ongoing	Establish presence & profile of air quality within JSNA and with the HCC Health and Wellbeing Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Air Quality in JSNA - ongoing liaison with working group - HCC AQ Strategy developed - Raised awareness of AQ impact on Public Health with PH professionals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Active role on HCC Air Quality and Public Health working group. Resulted in development of HCC wide AQ strategy and presentations at AQ related seminars to PH professionals 	Ongoing
1.6	Apply for Defra funding to help implement selected Action Plan measures	EP	Annual applications from 2013 onwards	Successful grant applications and utilisation of funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Defra grant: HGV survey in Hitchin & layout survey of Stevenage Rd completed - Olev grant for EV infrastructure completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No additional progress because 2014/15 grant application unsuccessful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2013 grants completed Ongoing for future grants
2	Ongoing Monitoring of Air Quality & Levels of Traffic						
2.1	Monitor air quality in the District to keep suitability of monitoring locations under review with particular focus on the AQMA	EP	Jan. 13 - NOx monitor in Stevenage Rd Annual review of diffusion tubes & report to Defra	Automatic analyser at Stevenage Rd for start of 2013 Relevant diffusion tube network Annual reports accepted by Defra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stevenage Rd NOx Analyser supplemented by PM10 & PM2.5 analysers in 2015 - Diffusion tube network retained - Defra reporting as required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utilised a grant award obtained through engagement with HCC Public Health obtained funding for PM10/2.5 & NOx at Stevenage Rd 	- Ongoing
2.2	Establish annual traffic count location at the Hitchin Hill roundabout, Stevenage Rd	EP	Sep. 12 with annual follow up counts	Traffic data obtained including vehicle types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual traffic counts completed for 2012 – 2014 - identified a DfT source of road traffic data for Stevenage Rd 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located a Dept. for Transport source of appropriate road traffic data negated need for annual counts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complete - Ongoing without need for funding

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3	Publicity & Education						
3.1 (see also 3.3, 4.8)	Utilise NHDC media resources to raise awareness within NHDC & among the community	EP	Ongoing	Publish at least one AQ related article in NHDC News and in Outlook per year; appropriate info. on website	- Action Plan & AQMA press release - Press release for Electric Vehicle (EV) charging project - EV usage press release	EV usage press release	- Ongoing
3.2 (see also 3.3)	Engage with local schools to raise air quality awareness in general & specifically with regard to travel to school	EP	Short-term(st) and Medium term (mt) targets	(st) - identify schools in vicinity of AQMA & understand current status of travel plans & general awareness (mt) – utilise outcome and identify funding streams Overall reduction in school commutes by car due to change in mode of travel	- Both Junior and Senior school education packs are completed	- Both Junior & Senior school education packs are completed	- Ongoing
Measure Number	Description of Measure	Lead Responsibility	Timescales	Indicator of Success	Progress to Date	Progress since last 12 months	Estimated Completion date
3.3 (see also 3.1, 3.2, 1.5, 1.6, 4.4, 4.5 5.2)	Engage with local business, particularly haulage companies, public transport & taxi companies but also any companies that show an interest in improving efficiency & reducing emissions from vehicle fleet or travel planning for staff that commute	NHDC - EP & Transport Planners	(st), (md) (lt)	(mt) - NHDC engage with Green Travel Planning & changes to vehicle fleet (st) - awareness raising within the business community (mt - lt) uptake of travel plans & change to private company vehicle fleets	- Commissioned survey of NHDC fleet by Energy Saving Trust - involved in working group looking at OLEV funding bid in combination with local company to establish an EV charging network for Taxis	Same as progress to date	- not specified

4 Improve infrastructure for alternative transport							
4.1	Support measures to improve bus and rail usage including Intelligent Transport System (ITS), Bus Strategy, and Intralink Strategy	HCC	Ongoing	Improved journey times; increased bus and rail patronage;	- No action to date, no specific help or involvement requested	Same as progress to date	- not specified
4.2	Improve cycling infrastructure in Hitchin area, including provision of off-carriageway cycle route between Stevenage & Hitchin, and improved cycle network & cycle parking in Hitchin	HCC & PP	Hitchin- Stevenage cycle route 2014/2015 Hitchin cycle network & parking facilities ongoing	Cycle route implemented More cycle routes & integration with other transport modes; Improve mapping & signage	- No action to date, no specific help or involvement requested	Same as progress to date	- not specified
4.3	Consider the quality & provision of footways & pedestrian links & signage in vicinity of Stevenage Rd in relation to key destinations	NHDC Transport	Ongoing. Contribute to 2015/16 & future targets for increasing % journeys on foot	Improved pedestrian priority and footpath continuity to key destinations e.g. local shops, schools, town centre, public transport. To include pedestrian crossings	- Defra funding Stevenage Road layout changes funded project considered pedestrian routes. Project on hold after further Defra bid unsuccessful	Same as progress to date	- not specified

Measure Number	Description of Measure	Lead Responsibility	Timescales	Indicator of Success	Progress to Date	Progress since last 12 months	Estimated Completion date
4.4 (see also 3.1, 3.3)	Installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure to encourage uptake of electric vehicles	NHDC & HCC	2013 include charging infrastructure requirements in SPD & associated planning docs 2013 ongoing	Inclusion of electric charging points in new builds via planning regime Presence of electric charging points in NHDC car parks	- Office of Low Emission Vehicle grant obtained for 6 (2 plug) charging points to be installed in NHDC car parks is complete	Same as progress to date	- EV taxi project is ongoing – early 2016 - EV potential for NHDC fleet is ongoing. Due end 2015
4.5 (see also 1.1, 1.2, 3.3)	Consider potential for gas or bio-methane refuelling facilities at supermarkets or large commercial developments	NHDC & HCC	Include in AQ SPD for adoption in 2013	Presence of gas or Bio-methane refuelling facilities within North Hertfordshire	- No action to date	Same as progress to date	- not specified
5	Encouraging Use of Alternative Fuels & Reducing Emissions						
5.1	Investigate incorporation of emissions element to controlled parking zone changes	EP, PP & Parking	Ongoing	Implementation of new parking charges scheme including emissions criteria	- No action to date, other than agreement that EV recharging bays will be exempt from parking charges & no initial charge for electricity usage	Same as progress to date	- not specified
5.2	Changing company fleets (inc NHDC's) to encourage use of lower emission vehicles by use of procurement and other levers	NHDC Transport, PP, EP & Legal	2013 Secure agreement to principle within NHDC; 2014 Implement proposals	Principle accepted; establish baseline; improvements secured;	- Principle for EVs agreed if adequate business case - Baseline data established & sent to EST for business case report	Same as progress to date	- Report due Sept. 2015

Measure Number	Description of Measure	Lead Responsibility	Timescales	Indicator of Success	Progress to Date	Progress since last 12 months	Estimated Completion date
6	Traffic Infrastructure Alterations						
6.1	Investigate an alternative route of access for HGVs from the east/south east to the Cadwell/ Wilbury/ Burymead industrial area of Hitchin	HCC and PP	Not known	Assessment of practicality	- Defra funded HGV survey completed & good data available to inform future HCC transport planning decisions on new roads/routing etc	- Same as progress to date	- HCC Transport planners and NHDC planning and political decision making necessary. No timescale
6.2	Investigate impact of altering current bus-stop locations on Stevenage Road to disperse impact of idling & reduce congestion	HCC transport planners	Not known	Assessment of practicality Implementation or not	- No progress to date & not able to influence progress any further due to lack of Defra funding to pursue modelling	Same as progress to date	- not specified
6.3	Review parking provision and restrictions along Stevenage Road with the aim of reducing congestion	PP	Not known	Assessment of practicality Implementation or not	- No progress to date and not able to influence progress any further due to lack of Defra funding to pursue modelling	Same as progress to date	- not specified
6.4	Investigate improvements to layout of Stevenage Road to ease congestion	HCC & PP	Not known	Assessment of practicality Implementation or not	- No progress to date and not able to influence progress any further due to lack of Defra funding to pursue modelling	Same as progress to date	- not specified