

Ref: PRG-084-10

Progress Report Appraisal

Report Prepared by: **North West Leicestershire District Council**

Date Progress Report Issued: **14th April 2010**

The Progress Report sets out new information on air quality obtained by North West Leicestershire District Council, as part of the Review & Assessment process required under the Environment Act 1995 and subsequent Regulations.

This Appraisal Report covers the air quality Action Plan aspects of the Progress Report submitted by the Council. The Review and Assessment elements are appraised separately.

The Action Plan Progress Report provides an update on the implementation of the Air Quality Action Plan adopted in November 2006. It covers measures aimed at reducing NO₂ concentrations in the AQMAs which include:

- Reducing vehicle emissions;
- Improving the road network to reduce congestion;
- Using area planning measures to reduce traffic volumes;
- Reducing air pollution from industry/commerce and residential areas; and
- Changing levels of travel demand / promotion of alternative modes of transport.

On the basis of the information provided by the local authority, the action plan aspects of the Progress Report are **accepted**.

Following the completion of this report, North West Leicestershire District Council should submit a Progress Report by April 2011.

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Commentary

The report uses the template and covers most of the requirements on reporting action plan implementation as specified in the Guidance.

1. Regarding measures aimed at reducing vehicle emissions the Council has clearly made some progress through the introduction of new low fuel consumption refuse vehicles. In addition it is reported that fixed penalty notices are issued for vehicle idling and reduction in speed limit to optimum for NOx emissions from vehicles, using the M1 is currently under review as part of the options appraisal for phase 2 of the M1 improvement programme. In future progress reports the Council is encouraged to provide more detail for example how many fixed penalty notices have been issued and to what extent has this decreased idling in the AQMA.
2. NWLDC indicates that a number of improvements to the road network are currently being planned. To date actions that have been completed include improved signage on the M1 providing advance notification of miles time information aimed at reducing congestion. It is indicated that a number of other improvements are ongoing and are subject to review as part of the options appraisal for phase 2 of the M1 improvement programme and results of the M40 study. The Council is encouraged to report the outcome of these reviews in the progress report 2011.
3. The Council comments on progress with using area planning measures to reduce traffic volumes. It indicates that air quality impacts of developments are considered when assessing all new planning applications. Assessing the impacts of new developments in the vicinity of or in AQMAs is important in terms of air quality management. However in future reports the Council is encouraged to elaborate on the information provided, for example reporting on the impact of these initiatives in terms of how many developments have been influenced and to what extent.
4. Under changing levels of travel demand / promotion of alternative modes of transport the Council has clearly made some good progress indicating that some measures have already been completed for example, the Ratcliffe-on-Soar railway station has now opened connecting the airport with bus services.

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Other measures are described as ongoing, for example the Council is still to adopt a Green Travel Plan and is working with partners to promote Travel Plans for employers and schools. Although progress has been reported for a number of these measures the Council is encouraged in future reports to provide more detail for example for Travel Plans, how many schools already have school travel plans and what has been the effect on modal shift. Can this be related in a relatively basic manner to emission changes? In addition as car parking charging can often lead to reduced congestion in town centres, the Council is encouraged to include more details on how this parking enforcement within the AQMAs has impacted on traffic, where possible.

5. Overall, the progress report includes most information required. However the council is advised to differentiate between progress made since the action plan was published and progress in the past year. The Council should also indicate what their priorities will be for the year ahead. Future progress reports would benefit from more detail being provided as previously mentioned in the above commentary. The Council is clearly making steady progress on a number of fronts and is encouraged to report outcomes of the upcoming reviews in the next progress report 2011.

This commentary is not designed to deal with every aspect of the Progress Report. It highlights a number of issues that should help the local authority in maintaining the objectives of its Action Plan, namely the improvement of air quality within the AQMA. Issues can be followed up through the Air Quality Action Plan helpdesk as follows:

Action Planning Helpdesk telephone: 0870 190 6050

Action Planning Helpdesk email: lasupport@aeat.co.uk

Action Planning Web-site: www.airquality.co.uk/archive/actionplan.php