

## County Council 22 September 2016

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## Responses from the Transport Strategy Team to Cllr Avril Davies' Questions to Full Council

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### General comments from Cllr Davies:

- Bucks County Council are equal partners with Aylesbury Vale District Council in the Bucks Air Quality Management Group.
- In 2010 an action plan was published for the three air quality management areas (AQMA) in Aylesbury town. <http://www.aylesburyvalecd.gov.uk/air-quality-management-areas>
- Public Health England has recently published that air pollution is responsible for 40,000 early deaths per year in England.

### Questions and responses:

#### What proportion of that 40,000 occur in Bucks?

The figure of 40,000 has been estimated using data from the Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants report: "The Mortality Effects of Long-Term Exposure to Particulate Air Pollution in the United Kingdom" ([here](#)). As the public health study was using national figures it isn't possible to calculate the proportion within Buckinghamshire.

The nearest equivalent figures that could be found was a study by Public Health England in 2014 "Report on local mortality associated with particulate air pollution" which estimated 25,000 deaths in England could be caused by particulate air pollution. Within Buckinghamshire approximately 214 deaths occurred, which represents 0.86% of the 25,000 deaths within England. This is broken down into District areas as follows: 70 deaths in Aylesbury Vale; 66 in Wycombe; 42 in Chiltern; and 36 in South Bucks. However, the report caveats these figures and states that the actual figures could be between one sixth and double the estimates.

#### What progress has been achieved in the last five years in reducing air pollution in the areas in the Bucks Air Quality Management Group action plan?

The AQMAs were put in place because they were areas that were in danger of exceeding acceptable levels of air pollution. From the data that we have accumulated we can see that in Aylesbury Vale and Chiltern the levels of air pollution have not increased over the past 5 years. In South Bucks the levels of air pollution have reduced so much so that they are calling into question whether an AQMA is still required for the area.

However, in Wycombe District the AQMA along the M40 corridor continues to exceed acceptable levels and the District Council has plans to implement further AQMAs in Marlow and High Wycombe, although this has not been actioned as yet. Therefore over the past 5 years, although there may not have been a measurable reduction in air pollution within the whole of Buckinghamshire, the levels have at least remained stable.

#### How many other AQMAs are there in the County and what action is being taken on them and with what results?

AQMAs are designated by the District Councils (who monitor and report on progress). There are currently 5 AQMAs within Buckinghamshire. 3 in Aylesbury Vale, 1 in Wycombe, 1 in Chiltern and 1 in South Bucks (please see map below). At present each of the District Councils have stated in their previous reports that they will provide an update on air quality in 2016, so at present we cannot confirm what the current actions are. However we do know

that in South Bucks they are planning to assess whether an AQMA is still required and in Wycombe they are planning to implement more AQMAs in High Wycombe and Marlow.

The most recent report for Chiltern District is from 2013 which listed the actions that needed to be undertaken as follows:

- Implementing a Green Wall to absorb air pollutants (such as the one outside Edgware Road Station)
- Sat-Nav rerouting work – aiming to ensure freight is directed to suitable routes
- School Pack education – Change for Chesham Packs that include air quality information to be taught as part of the curriculum
- Identify polluting buses – this involves working with local operators to encourage them to use greener services
- Highway improvement to traffic flows

As there is no published report since that time it is unclear whether these actions are ongoing or not.

In terms of BCC's involvement, BCC is proactively working to reduce emissions caused by motor vehicles through traffic management, encouraging sustainable travel and alternative fuel vehicles, and a range of other measures detailed in the Local Transport Plan 4 ([here](#)).

The following map is taken from the BCC Local Transport Plan 3 and highlights the locations of the current declared AQMAs (for South Bucks and Wycombe areas these are shown as the motorways).

