

Report on	Air Quality Report 2020
Date of Meeting	13 th April 2021
Reporting Officer	Fiona McClements

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To update members on the current air quality in the Mid Ulster District Council area, and of the ongoing monitoring currently being undertaken in relation to this.
2.0	Background
2.1	Air quality in the UK is generally good and getting better. However, more needs to be done, especially in the cities, to reduce the harmful effects of air pollution. Air pollution has negative impacts on human health and the natural environment. Air pollution has declined significantly over recent decades through measures to reduce pollution from transport, industrial and domestic sources.
2.2	Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) provides the framework within which air quality is managed by Northern Ireland's local authorities. The LAQM process places an obligation on all local authorities to regularly review and assess air quality in their areas, and to determine whether air quality objectives are likely to be achieved. Where exceedances are considered likely, the local authority must declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and prepare an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) setting out the measures it intends to put in place improve air quality in its District so that these objectives are achieved.
2.3	In Northern Ireland Local Authorities report annually on air quality within their districts via Progress Reports and Updating and Screening Assessment Reports. Updating and Screening Assessment Reports are required to be submitted every three years. The Progress Reports are required to be submitted in each of the other two years Their purpose is to maintain continuity in the LAQM process.
2.4	Air Quality Progress Reports have been submitted by the former Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council, Cookstown District Council, and Magherafelt District Council since 2002.
2.5	These initially looked at a number of pollutants listed under European Directives and examined whether or not air quality objectives were likely to be met in each of the three districts. A list of the pollutants and the relevant air quality objectives are set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

2.6	After the initial assessment it was determined that air quality objectives for four of these seven pollutants would be comfortably met within each of the three Districts. However it was felt that further examination would need to be undertaken for the remaining three pollutants.
2.7	These pollutants were Nitrogen Dioxide (NO ₂), Sulphur Dioxide (SO ₂) and PM10. For a number of years the levels of SO ₂ and PM10 were monitored at areas identified as worst case scenarios in each of the Districts. These areas were chosen due to the relatively high number of solid fuel burning properties near by the monitoring sites. After several years of monitoring it was found that all the areas chosen were well within the air quality objectives and were extremely unlikely to exceed the objectives in the future. As a result monitoring was discontinued for these two pollutants. The only remaining pollutant that is routinely monitored in the Mid Ulster District is Nitrogen dioxide.
2.8	Air Quality monitoring has been carried out for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO ₂) in Magherafelt, Cookstown and Dungannon since the initial reports were submitted in 2002. Monitoring is also undertaken in the villages of Moneymore and the Moy. NO ₂ is associated with road traffic and unsurprisingly the monitoring has taken place on congested traffic routes in the District. Mid Ulster District Council currently has three AQMA's within the District. The AQMA's within the District are located in Moy, Dungannon and Magherafelt and maps of their location can be found in Appendix 2.
2.9	Mid Ulster District Council has recently submitted its Progress Report for 2020. This provides an update on monitoring results in the District from throughout 2019.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	Mid Ulster District Council has 20 non-automatic monitoring sites for Nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂). These sites are monitored using 43 diffusion tubes supplied by SOCOTEC, Diffusion Tube Laboratory in Didcot, Oxfordshire. The reason that there is a greater number of diffusion tubes than monitoring sites is that some sites are monitored using three diffusion tubes to produce an average result. This ensures results that are more accurate. These tend to be at the sites within the AQMA's.
3.2	The Air quality monitoring takes place along the roads that are more heavily congested throughout the District, and that run close by occupied residential properties. This generally occurs along the main North-South transport route identified in the Local Development Plan 2030 – Draft Plan Strategy. The roads in question link the three main towns of Magherafelt, Cookstown and Dungannon. Two of the smaller villages that this traffic passes through are also monitored, namely Moneymore and Moy. The chosen sites tend to be located close to residential dwellings at points where the traffic is slowing down or idling at busy junctions or traffic lights.
3.3	The results of the diffusion tube monitoring for 2019 are indicated in Appendix 3. As can be seen from the table 2 of the 20 sites exceeded the air quality objective of 40 µg/m ³ . These sites are located at Newell Road in Dungannon and

	Charlemont Street in Moy. The results for these two sites are 50 and 55 µg/m ³ respectively. These two monitoring sites are located within the air quality management areas (AQMA) for Dungannon and Moy.
3.4	As noted above one of the monitoring sites located within the AQMA for Moy shows an exceedance of the air quality objective in Charlemont Street. However, the other site within the AQMA nearby in Killyman Street shows a level of 26µg/m ³ a figure well within the objective level. This trend is consistent with recent years. This would indicate that pollution from these sources are very localised in nature.
3.5	This year marks the first year when all the monitoring sites in the Magherafelt AQMA have recorded levels below the air quality objective. This is encouraging and would seem to indicate a general downwards trend and the reduction is likely to be largely as a result of the recently completed bypass of the town.
3.6	Results for the Cookstown and Moneymore areas continue to show levels well in compliance with the air quality objective. This is most likely due to the wide streets in the main thoroughfares of these areas as there is a significant traffic throughput at each of these locations. Monitoring of these areas continues due to the high volume of traffic through these areas and in order to monitor any longer time trends.
3.7	As can be seen from the results air quality monitoring has indicated an exceedance for Nitrogen dioxide at two of the AQMA's. The third AQMA has shown compliance with the air quality objectives at all monitoring sites for the second year in a row. It is hoped that this AQMA can be revoked if this trend continues for a further year. The Council has an action plan to help reduce Nitrogen Dioxide levels within the district as a whole, and the AQMA's in particular.
3.8	A meeting to review the air quality issues in the District will be held via Teams in May. It is hoped that a number of stakeholders from other agencies will be able to attend this meeting. Interested members who wish to attend this meeting, and deliver some input are also welcome.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: £9,030 (of which 50% grant funded)
	Human: 287 staff hours
	Risk Management: N/A

4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	It is recommended that Members note the content of the report.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix 1 – Air Quality Progress Report 2020.