

CHAPTER THIRTEEN - AIR QUALITY

Each chapter in the draft Neighbourhood Development Plan is under constant review and refinement. Not all of the Appendices are yet available but they will be posted on the website as and when they are ready. The text in the chapters should be sufficient, however, to enable you to respond to the questions which are in the leaflet and repeated at the end of the section for your convenience.

Objectives

- To improve air quality and, as a consequence, the health of residents.

Why is action needed?

Central government, local authorities and the courts have all flagged this as a critical threat to health.

“Air pollution is a national health emergency resulting in an estimated 40,000 early deaths each year, costing the UK £20 bn annually”. (A report to the Environment, Health, Transport and Environmental Audit Committees, 2018).

“Planning policies and decisions should sustain and contribute towards compliance with relevant limit values or national objectives for pollutants..... And cumulative impacts for individual sites in local areas”(. (NPPF, paragraph **)

“Air pollution is associated with a number of adverse health impacts. It is recognised as a contributing factor in the onset of health disease and cancer. Additionally, air pollution particularly affects the most vulnerable in Society: children and older people, and those with lung and heart conditions”. (UDC 2017 Air Quality Status Report)

Ella Kissa-Debrah was the first person in the United Kingdom for whom air pollution has been recognised by the Courts as a cause of death. Ella was just nine years old when she suffered a fatal asthma attack in 2013. She lived just yards from the busy and congested London South Circular Road and the coroner in her case concluded that air pollution made a material contribution to her tragic death.

The High Court ruled against the UK government in 2018 over plans to tackle air pollution. The Judge in the case said the government plan was “unlawful” and that more action was needed in 45 English local authority areas.

All of these sources demonstrate that there is a serious and rising threat to health and life with this trend likely to be worsened by the respiratory damage caused by Covid-19.

The responsibility for tackling this situation is laid out in the Environment Act 1995 which requires all local authorities to review air quality within their districts. If any air quality objective set out in the regulations under the Act is not likely to be achieved, then the local authority must designate the affected area as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The Act then requires an Action Plan to be produced for these designated areas, setting out the actions to maintain levels below the objective for the life of the plan.

The air quality objectives in England were laid out in the Air Quality Annual Status Report

Pollutant	Air Quality Objectives ⁶	
	Concentration	Measured as
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO ₂)	200 µg/m ³ not to be exceeded more than 18 times a year	1-hour mean
	40 µg/m ³	Annual mean
Particulate Matter (PM ₁₀)	50 µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 35 times a year	24-hour mean
	40 µg/m ³	Annual mean
Sulphur Dioxide	350 µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 24 times a year	1-hour mean
	125 µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 3 times a year	24-hour mean
	266 µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 35 times a year	15-minute mean

Air quality in the centre of Stansted Mountfitchet gives cause for concern. The table below shows recent numbers for NO₂ as monitored By Uttlesford District Council. (see Appendix 25 for map of locations).

Location Reference	Location Description	NO ₂ Bias Adjusted Annual Mean for 2018 (Micro Grams per Cubic Meter of Air)
UT009	Burton End	30.1
UT018	Stansted 17 Cambridge Road	24.4
UT019	Stansted Silver Street	31.9
UT020	Stansted Grove Hill	30.7
UT033	Stansted Chapel Hill	23.8

Data for Silver Street, Burton End and Grove Hill shows results as exceeding the WHO level several times in the monthly figures. The UDC Environmental Health Officers has stated: "An annual mean over about 35 at a residential location is a cause for concern". On this basis signals are flashing red for the locations identified above, with Grove Hill and Silver Street causing particular concern.

Two points should be noted:

- As nitrogen dioxide is heavier than air then the actual level at street level will be greater than that shown at the height of the position of the monitors with the unit at Grove Hill three metres above ground level.
- In 2017 the 'bias' coefficient was reduced from 0.94 (94%) to 0.76 (76%) with a consequent effect on the numbers. The reason for making the figures less concerning is not clear.

Although NO₂ is the only gas routinely monitored in the District other oxides of nitrogen will be present as well as vehicle related pollutants such as particulates which may be considered even more dangerous to health.

What is needed in the next fifteen years?

The major contributor to street level pollution is the volume of traffic particularly where vehicles are queuing or are starting from cold. Large and heavy vehicles including buses pose serious problems and are particularly relevant in certain locations in Stansted Mountfitchet. The contribution of Stansted Airport is of concern although quantifying pollution from this source is beyond the expertise of the Parish Council. So what means are available not only to prevent pollution arising but to reduce it particularly in the critical locations.

The road infrastructure, if left unchanged, should be sufficient reason to prevent new planning permissions being granted particularly in Elsenham and Henham. Such developments will lead to additional traffic using the B1051 with particular concern to the impact on Grove Hill, Chapel Hill and Silver Street (B1383). Recent appeal decisions favouring developments in Elsenham and Henham (totalling 450 dwellings) only heighten these concerns. UDC Policy EN15 (in the last draft Local Plan) summarises the necessary action needed. However, this requires both UDC and Essex Highways to take the appropriate action.

Encouraging free flowing traffic, where possible, on Cambridge Road, Silver Street and Lower Street and Grove Hill (see chapter 10 on Road & Mobility).

Removing heavy and large vehicles to be prevented from using the centre of the village as a through route (under consideration by Essex County Highways).

Facilitating the change to electric vehicles in line with central government targets by installing charging points in carparks (UDC and Parish Council responsibility) and to require the provision of such points in new developments (if planning permission is to be granted).

POLICIES

- | | |
|--------|--|
| SMAQ 1 | Development proposals for ten or more dwellings should require an Air Quality Impact Assessment and a Transport Assessment to be submitted, Adverse impacts will require effective mitigation measures to prevent any additional pollution with evidence produced to substantiate this effect. |
| SMAQ 2 | Any development proposals will need to be considered in relation to the cumulative impact of related vehicle movements taking into account the impact of other relative permissions relating to the Plan area. Travel plans, if offered as a solution, need to demonstrate substance. |
| SMAQ 3 | Highway changes need to be implemented in the centre of Stansted Mountfitchet by Essex County Highways in order to allow traffic to flow more freely. |
| SMAQ 4 | Large and heavy vehicles need to be redirected away from the centre of the Plan area for reasons of pollution and safety. |
| SMAQ 5 | AQMA status should be applied to Grove Hill and Silver Street |

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

- 1** Which locations should be monitored to quantify air pollution levels?

2

Air quality would be improved if we drove less unless in electric cars. Would you be prepared to cut back your car use at least on short journeys in the village?

ADD

RELEVANT POLICIES IN ULP AND UDLP

RELEVANT EVIDENCE BASED DOCUMENTS

DRAFT