

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

MEETING 19 AUGUST 2020

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3

QUESTION from Mr Dobbs an Ashbourne resident.

Why is Air Pollution (particularly with respect to Air Quality Objective exceedances in Ashbourne) not a regular agenda item for this committee?

"In all the time that NOx measurements have shown that the air on Buxton Rd in Ashbourne has been significantly over the limit of 40ugm-3, not once has the matter been discussed by this committee.

Scrutiny of decisions made on behalf of residents is an essential part of the democratic process. I believe a careful analysis of the whole air pollution monitoring process currently carried out by DDDC is needed and this committee is logically the one to carry out that analysis.

It should not take three years to decide to do something about damaging levels of NOx. It is no good making promises in a corporate plan that are not delivered. Residents' health should not be put at risk because of unnecessary delay in siting sample tubes. Choices have been made on behalf of this committee (whether they knew it or not) and they have not been in the interests of residents.

And could this committee request the removal of a clearly incorrect statement from the DDDC website? In the section 'Air Quality Monitoring – nitrogen dioxide'; it reads "There are no predicted exceedances of the air quality objective for nitrogen dioxide". This has been untrue for almost 3 years."

RESPONSE:

Local air quality management is an activity prescribed in Part 4 of the Environment Act 1995 and is undertaken on behalf of Derbyshire Dales District Council by its Environmental Health team. The most basic responsibility under the Act is to review local air quality and to assess whether health-based air quality objectives will be achieved. If it is predicated that these will not be achieved and Air Quality Management Area must be declared and an Air Quality Action Plan put in place, to improve air quality to acceptable levels.

The Council produces an annual Status Report in relation to air quality and has to agree this with Defra. The reports are then published on the Council's website and are available for scrutiny by all. Whilst review and assessment is an operation issue, officers are available to discuss issues with elected Members or members of the public.

Where review and assessment indicates that a problem is likely to exist then a report is submitted to the relevant Committee for approval to declare an Air Quality Management Area, as this function is not delegated to officers.

In relation to Buxton Road, Ashbourne, officers have consulted with the Defra helpdesk throughout the process and are following the recommendations given to the Council. The next step required by Defra is the undertaking of a Detailed Assessment, which is currently being procured. If this indicates that an Air Quality Management Area should be declared, then a report will be submitted to Committee in relation to that declaration.

Thank you for pointing out the out-of-date text on the Council's website. This has now been updated.