

## Air Quality Review and Assessment

# ACTION PLAN Progress report for Wycombe District Council – 2005

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## **Action Plan Progress Report Structure**

Wycombe District Council produced an Updating and Screening Assessment (USA) in April 2006, which reports all monitored data available to the end of 2005. It suggests that air quality in the District is generally good, although the objective for NO<sub>2</sub> is still being exceeded at some locations within the AQMA. It also highlights an area (West Wycombe village) where NO<sub>2</sub> levels are of concern and a detailed review and assessment will be undertaken in the spring of 2006.

Since the 2006 USA contains all currently available monitoring data and a discussion of the results, this report will only be concerned with progress on the Air Quality Management Area Action Plan.

## **Executive Summary**

Wycombe District Council declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) along the M40 in 2001. Originally extending 12 metres either side of the motorway carriageway, it was subsequently extended to its current size of 30 metres either side of the carriageway.

An Action Plan was submitted and accepted by DEFRA in September 2002 which identified areas where the Council needs to work to improve air quality or to avoid it deteriorating and failing to meet the standards set in the Government's Air Quality Strategy.

This report considers the progress made on the individual actions in the plan in 2005.

The implementation of many of the actions has begun, and some have already been completed. Some of the actions are to be carried out as part of the Bucks Air Quality Management Group programme.

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# PROGRESS ON THE DIRECT AND INDIRECT MEASURES

## 1 INTRODUCTION

39 actions have been proposed in the Action Plan to tackle the air pollution problem in the district area. This document reviews progress against these actions in 2005.

8 options have been proposed which if implemented would directly impact on pollution levels in the district's AQMA (Table 1). These options primarily involve external authority bodies that have control over the land within the AQMA. They have been prioritised according to their feasibility and cost effectiveness but the Council would have little direct involvement in implementing them. They generally relate to what is theoretically possible to abate air pollution on the motorway and they involve traffic and speed reduction, installation of a crawler lane as well as removing the population exposed to the pollution.

The Handy Cross project is one of these options (option 2) and the Council is actively involved in its development

## 2 ACTION PLANNING

### 3 DIRECT AQMA ACTIONS (INVOLVING EXTERNAL REGULATORY AUTHORITIES)

**Action A1:** - We will press for, and co-operate with Government/Bucks County Council, over implementation of improvements at Handy Cross.

**Action A2:** - We will work with the Highways Agency, neighbouring authorities and Bucks County Council in order to try and consider schemes in more detail and take note of findings from multi-modal studies (MMS) that reference air quality across the District and within the AQMA.

**Action A3:** - Following the small expansion of the current AQMA as recommended in Stage 4 we will meet with the Highways Agency again to discuss the possibilities of options 1 & 6 and will be in a better position to consider option 3.

**Action A4:** - We will actively support the larger National and South East schemes that may improve air quality along the motorway network and promote a modal shift to other forms of transport.

The Council has been involved at a very early stage with the Highways Agency on the Handy Cross project. We have been consulted on the air quality issues contained in the Environmental Statement submitted in the summer of 2003 and we were actively involved with the Agency's consultants on the modelling proposal that will look at the projected pollution level in and around the project area. The changes to the road layout at Handy Cross constituted Option 2 of the original AQMA action plan and this was preferred to options 1, 3 or 6, in terms of its cost effectiveness and the potential air quality improvements offered. The full list of options considered is shown in Table 1 below.

Option 1 was ruled out by the Highways Agency because it is not their policy to introduce speed restrictions for purposes other than traffic management. It was also thought that enforcement of speed restrictions would be difficult and costly.

Option 2 is preferred and ongoing. Expected completion date 29<sup>th</sup> January 2007

Option 3 is no longer being actively considered as the expansion of the AQMA in 2004 has meant the inclusion of additional properties, making CPOs prohibitive in terms of cost.

Option 4 is not being actively considered by the Highways Agency.

Option 5 is addressed by many other actions within the action plan and indeed, the main thrust of the action plan is concerned with reducing general background concentrations of NO<sub>2</sub>.

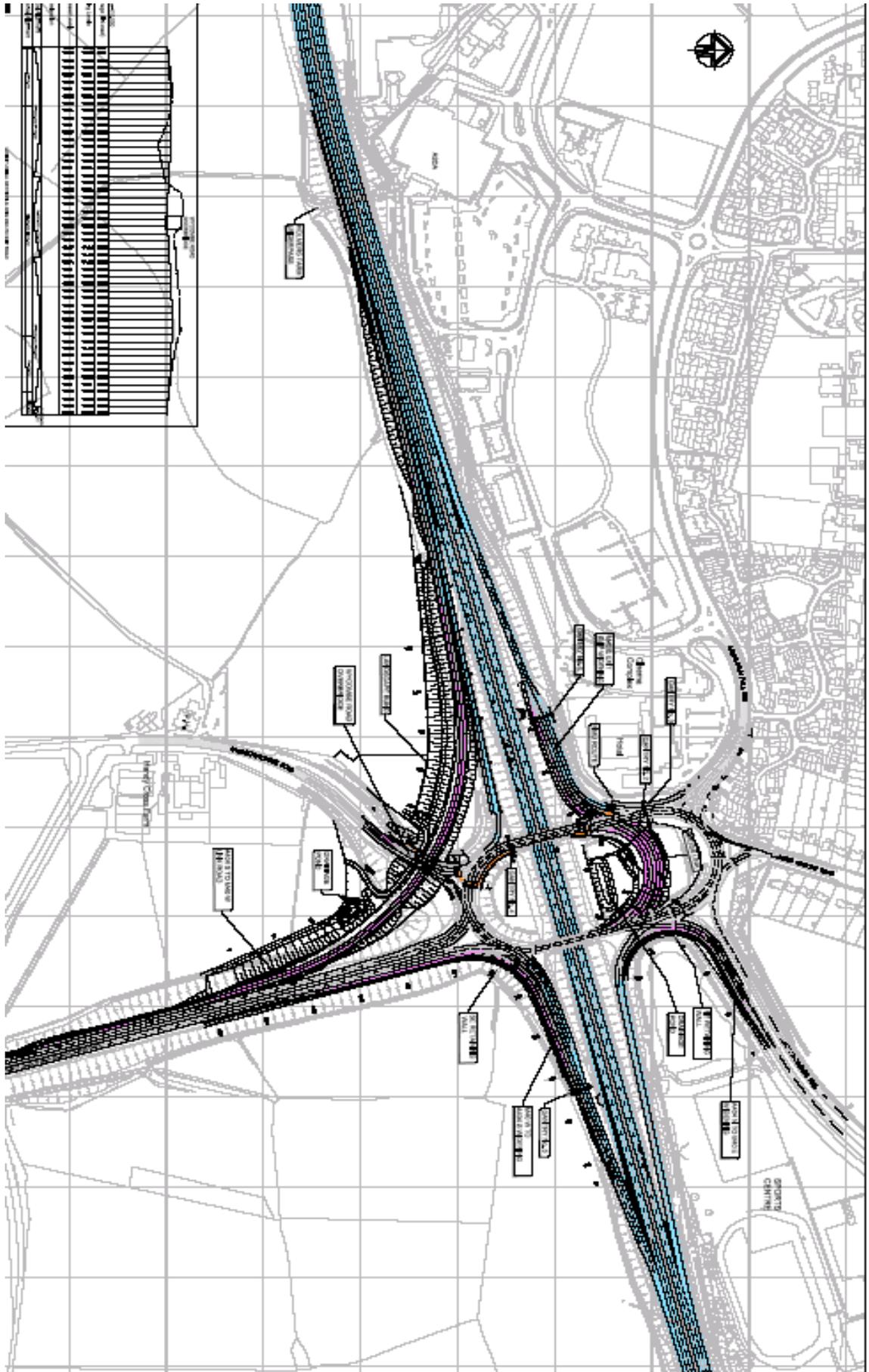
Option 6 is also addressed in many of the actions in the action plan. The Highways Agency have no proposals for reducing traffic volumes on the M40.

Options 7 and 8 are ongoing.

**Table 1 Direct AQMA Actions from the AQMA Action Plan**

ACTION	ACTION PLAN REFERENCE	Cost Effectiveness	Person/ Org. Responsible ?	Positive affect on people in AQMA	People positively affected by option in District	Date to be achieved	AQ Improvement	Other positive impacts?	Community Plan objective? or already in place?	RANK
	<b>DIRECT AQMA OPTIONS</b>									
<b>Option 1</b>	Motorway Speed Strategy	*	HIGHWAYS	****	*	Highways must implement	See Stage 4 & AP For exact reductions	Noise, Reduced CO2, Safety	NO	7 at this stage
<b>Option 2</b>	M40 Handy Cross layout changes	***** (as already agreed)	HIGHWAYS	***	**** benefit to most links	2005/6 see program	Positive impact on area	Safety Economic	NO	2
<b>Option 3</b>	Compulsory Purchase Order	**	HIGHWAYS	*****	*	Unable to specify	No improvements	May wish to move anyway	NO	6
<b>Option 4</b>	Introduction of crawler lane between J3 and J4	**	HIGHWAYS	NO LONGER VIABLE	NO LONGER VIABLE	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Option 5</b>	Reduce the general background concentrations	****	WDC	****	****	Ongoing	Minimal in AQMA, better in District	Benefits for whole District	YES	5
<b>Option 6</b>	Reductions in Traffic Volume	****	HIGHWAYS/ WDC	****	****	Ongoing	Would be very beneficial	Safety, Noise	LINKED	4
<b>Option 7</b>	Continue consultation with HA	*****	WDC	Currently Unable to specify	Currently Unable to specify	Ongoing	Unable to specify	Unable to specify	NO	3
<b>Option 8</b>	Actively support larger National / South East projects. E.g. Multi Modal Studies See Chapter 2.5 for examples	*****	WDC	Potential for large improvement	Potential for large improvement	Ongoing	beneficial	Unknown	LINKED	1

Figure 4: Proposed New Layout of Handy Cross Junction

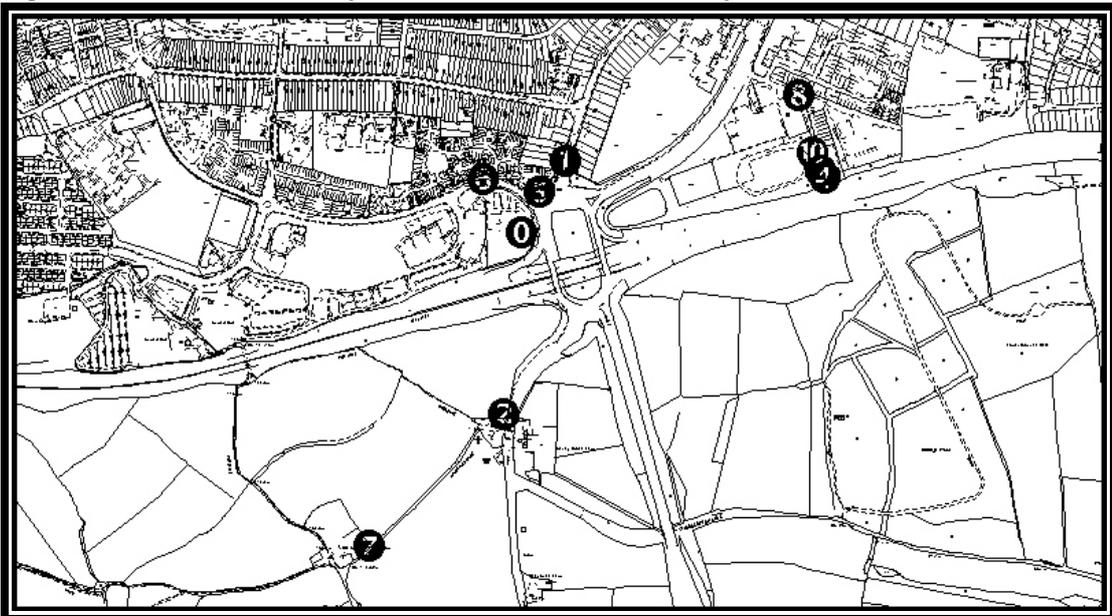


**Figure 5: Ariel View of Handy Cross Roundabout**



The Highways Agency has agreed to fund a diffusion tube survey of the area. Ten locations around the junction were chosen as monitoring sites and the scheme got underway in late 2004. The locations of the monitoring sites are shown in the Figure below.

**Figure 6: Location of Handy Cross Diffusion Tube Survey**



The data for 2005 (bias corrected) is shown in the table below.

**TABLE 2: Yearly Average Diffusion Tube Data for Handy Cross Area (2005)**

Site Number	NO <sub>2</sub> level (µgm <sup>-3</sup> , bias corrected)
1	46.2
2	36.8
3	40.4
4	46.5
5	43.6
6	38.7
7	26.8
8	42.3
9	43.4
10	43.8

The data show exceedences at most of the sites as might be expected, however there are very few sensitive receptors near these sites. Work to improve the layout and traffic flow at the Handy Cross junction will continue throughout 2006, and the above data will provide a baseline from which to measure any consequent improvement in air quality.

The Council was consulted on the proposition by the Highways Agency to install AQMA signs and more specifically on the content and siting of these signs, however, the Highways Agency has no plans to pursue these options at present.

The Council has participated in the new Bucks Freight Quality Partnership launched in February 2004. The partnership will look at reducing the impact of freight transport across the Buckinghamshire area.

**ACTION 1: - In those instances where pollution and/or traffic issues have been identified, the Council intends to investigate how these issues can be tackled in partnership with local communities. In the course of time action plans will be prepared to tackle these issues where necessary.**

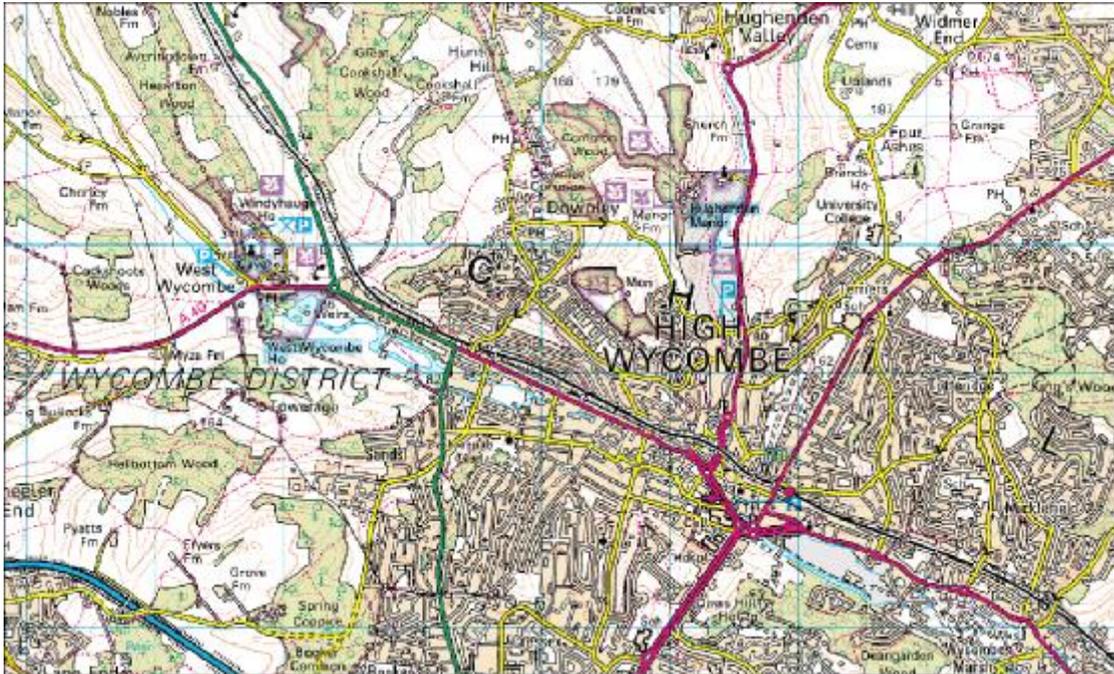
Since 2002 a number of schemes and action plans have been proposed and completed that would directly and indirectly impact on Wycombe's air quality. These plans were prepared by various departments of the council and their outcomes and progress will be discussed later in this document.

The 2004 Review and Assessment procedure highlighted a potential air quality issue in West Wycombe village. WDC has also identified the potential for this problem to be exacerbated by the introduction of a new set of traffic lights situated at the Eastern End of the A40 as it passes through the village. The traffic lights were due to be operational in February 2006.

At the end of 2005, Wycombe District Council commissioned Netcen to undertake a detailed review of air quality in West Wycombe village. The results of this are expected early in 2006. The Council also propose to site additional diffusion tubes in the village. This will be part of a larger review of the siting of diffusion tubes within the district, since in other locations, we have data for many years showing that there are no problems with NO<sub>2</sub> levels.

Subject to funding being available, the Council would also like to carry out some continuous monitoring in the village. Options for doing this are currently being evaluated, and the

Wycombe District Council are working with West Wycombe Parish Council to identify suitable sites for the location of a continuous NOx analyser.



#### 4 AIR QUALITY AND HEALTH

**ACTION 2:** - We will collate health information and begin mapping this on to our GIS system. We will then compare the relevant information to that of air quality hotspots and the AQMA and consider any links. To be completed by August 2004.

The Council has contacted the Health authorities of the Wycombe area to discuss the possibility of implementing this. The view of the PCT is that there is not sufficiently detailed information available to demonstrate any link between air quality and health. Conditions affected by air quality, such as respiratory illness, are only recorded in extreme cases such as hospitalisation or death. In such extreme cases, the numbers are so small that it would be difficult to show a statistically significant correlation with air quality. Therefore the PCT feel that this action is not possible at this time.

#### 5 THE CORPORATE ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY CENTRE AND GREENER FUELS

**ACTION 3:** - The Council and CEAC (Corporate Environmental Advisory Centre) will develop partnerships with business and major fleet operators to encourage the accelerated use of cleaner vehicle technologies and cleaner fuels, and promote improved maintenance and considerate and economical driving.

This action was on hold pending the results of the survey to be undertaken as action 4.

**ACTION 4:** - We will commission CEAC to survey companies in the District to investigate their existing use of alternative fuels and their attitude towards using these fuels in the future.

**ACTION COMPLETE**

**ACTION 5:** - The Council will introduce a policy of replacing its own fleet with 'greener' types of vehicle (such as those with particulate traps) or LPG if suitable.

**ACTION 6:** - The Council will seek to improve the availability of cleaner fuels by encouraging new service stations to stock alternative fuels with reference to the results of the survey.

The Council has commissioned the CEAC to carry out the survey and a postgraduate student will be responsible, under CEAC supervision, for producing a database of Wycombe companies. We will use this data base to look at the possibility of creating a partnership of businesses and look at ways of promoting the reduction of car use and the shift from petrol to greener alternatives. Following the survey we will look at the possibility of encouraging more service stations to distribute LPG.

The survey was undertaken in 2004 and its conclusions were as follows:-

***“This survey of businesses in the Wycombe area was undertaken by Wycombe District Council (WDC), in partnership with the Wycombe based Corporate Environmental Advisory Centre (CEAC) as part of the Council’s implementation of its Air Quality Action Plan. The survey results have enabled WDC to understand the nature and structure of vehicle fleets in the area, these being primarily small fleets (50%: 1-5 vehicles only), comprised of cars and light vehicles. Businesses in the area are primarily from the service sector and plan to reduce the size of their fleet in the future. These findings are positive, in terms of the impact of future vehicle fleets on air quality.***

***Business users are aware, to some extent of more economic and sustainable alternatives to conventional vehicles and fuels; the use of LPG for example has been established. Opinions of alternative fuels however, have yet to be formed by many Wycombe businesses. There is also little awareness of the Government assistance available for businesses wishing to invest in alternative fuels. The Local Authority has a duty to promote these alternatives to conventional vehicles.”***

There are over 1200 refuelling stations currently offering LPG for sale in the UK. Buckinghamshire has nine LPG refuelling stations. Planning permission was granted to ASDA stores at the beginning of 2004 to open a new LPG delivery facility and this became operational during the course of 2005.

No greener fuels other than LPG are available to Wycombe District residents at present.

The Council has renewed its lease contract for two of its vehicles to continue to run on LPG and the Contracts Manager has been informed of the decisions of the Treasury regarding tax incentive for greener fuels and pollution control devices for the years to come. The remainder of the fleet will not be upgraded to LPG at the present time, primarily because of the lack of local servicing facilities.

**ACTION 7:** - The Council will support the County Council with its aim to achieve traffic reduction by improving the infrastructure needed to encourage sustainable travel and reduce unnecessary car use.

The Council has contributed to the Buckinghamshire's local transport plan annual progress report for 2002-2003<sup>1</sup>.

More specific targets are reported later in this document. Further work in this area is being undertaken in the Bucks Air Quality Management Group, of which Wycombe District Council is an active member.

## 6 CLEANER, BETTER DRIVING

**ACTION 8: - We will produce and distribute leaflets and advice to individual drivers on how emissions can be reduced through better driving practices and choice of vehicle/fuels. We will be utilising the new Environment Centre (WDC stakeholder) to help achieve this. We will achieve this by August 2003.**

Information is readily available online, and the council will consider producing a new leaflet containing the relevant information. The information can be viewed at <http://www.bucksairquality.net/baq/default.html?pid=76&step=4>

The Council is undertaking further work in this area as part of the Bucks Air Quality Management Group.

Currently, the use of cleaner fuel type vehicles is being encouraged throughout the County by the promotion of e.g. use of LPG vehicles and refuse vehicles with cleaner Euro 3 engines with added particulate traps, and the use of "green diesel".

In order to encourage the use of cleaner fuels, the group will also:

- Develop partnerships with businesses and major fleet operators;
- Encourage local companies to consider using cleaner fuels technology;
- Encourage the adoption of a council wide policy of replacing existing fleet with "greener" vehicles where appropriate;
- Seek to improve the availability of cleaner fuels at service stations;
- Review Buckinghamshire for gaps in the alternative refuelling infrastructure.
- The Energy Saving's Trust is helping to increase the uptake of clean vehicle technologies and we will support and promote any discounts or initiatives.

## 7 WYCOMBE'S LOCAL PLAN TO 2011

**ACTION 9: - We have made proposals for more specific policies on air quality for our Local Plan and we will adopt these policies following inspection. To be completed by Oct 2002**

**ACTION COMPLETE**

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<sup>1</sup> Buckinghamshire County Council (2003). Local Transport Plan, annual progress report for 2002-2003, Aylesbury

**ACTION 10:** - Within the emerging Local Plan, Transport policies target a number of areas such as public transport, travel plans and accessibility for example. This will also contribute to improving air quality. We will adopt these policies following inspection. To be completed by Oct 2002

**ACTION COMPLETE**

Wycombe's Local Plan to 2011 was adopted in January 2004 and new specific policies on air quality were included.

**Policy G14<sup>2</sup>**

- (1) Proposed development which, by its nature, location, extent or generation of road vehicle traffic would be likely to cause measurable deterioration in local air quality, as established by the Council's periodic reviews, will not be permitted.
- (2) Planning permission will not be granted for any form of development that would have a similar adverse impact on the amenity of nearby or previously authorised land uses, by virtue of smell or other forms of atmospheric pollution.
- (3) In an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) which has been designated as a result of periodic or other surveys of road traffic, industrial or other forms of pollution which would be likely to cause an increase in such pollution will not be permitted.

A number of schemes and initiatives have been implemented and although principally aimed at reducing car travel, these have a positive impact on local air quality.

The new CressExpress programme<sup>3</sup> launched in January 2004 provides an alternative mode of transport for commuters wanting to reach the Cressex area from the train station without taking their car. It also provides a park and ride scheme for people wishing to travel to the town centre, the hospital or the train station.

**8 AIR QUALITY AND PLANNING WITHIN WYCOMBE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**ACTION 11:** - We will continue to work with the planning directorate with regard to new developments and ensure that air quality is taken into account when located in or close to the AQMA.

**ACTION 12:** - We will add the exact location of the AQMA to the 'site constraints database' used by the Planning Department to ensure that any developments in or close to the AQMA are flagged up for further consideration by August 2003.

**ACTION COMPLETE**

The exact location of the AQMA has been added to Wycombe's GIS system and has been part of the planning constraints database since early 2003. The Land Charges department also issue this information.

<sup>2</sup> Wycombe District Council (2004). *Wycombe District Local Plan to 2011*. High Wycombe

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.cressexpress.co.uk>

Planning applications for development in or adjacent to the AQMA are routinely passed to the Air Quality Officer for consideration and comment.

**ACTION 13:** - The Council will look for evidence that developers have taken appropriate steps to minimise any increases in air pollution. This will include an assessment of the air quality implications where applicable.

The Environmental Services division is consulted on all developments that are proposed within the district area and likely to have an environmental impact. When the planning department is satisfied with the comments made by control of pollution officers a consensus decision is made in accordance with the local plan.

The Wycombe District Local Plan January 2004 Policy G13.1.b states that planning permission will not be granted for **“developments which would be at an unacceptable risk from existing or potential sources of pollution.”**

Planning Policy Statement 23 section 1G.1 “The impact on ambient air quality is likely to be particularly important:

**– where the development is proposed inside, or adjacent to, an air quality management area (AQMA) designated under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995”**

On all occasions when a planning proposal had limit boundaries within or adjacent to the AQMA the air quality officer was consulted. On most occasions no more contacts were made with the Council by the developers when it was understood that we would oppose any development likely to increase the number of cars with the AQMA or expose more residents to the risk of elevated pollution levels.

To date only one major development has required a thorough EIA and remediation measures were included in the report to tackle air pollution problems arising from the construction phase. The proposed development will be located outside of our AQMA and therefore no formal objections have been made on air quality grounds. This project is the redevelopment of the town centre, and developments reports are available from the WDC web pages.

## **9 TRAVEL PLANNING**

**ACTION 14:** - We will encourage businesses through promotion and existing local travel groups to implement Travel Plans, and promote more sustainable travel to their staff. We will also ensure that new development meeting criteria set out in PPN 05/02 will implement effective Travel Plans.

**ACTION 15:** - We will encourage appropriate businesses, through promotion and existing local travel groups, to implement measures within the Instant Travel Plan.

**ACTION 16:** - The Council will continue to provide advice, encouragement and support to businesses in the development of travel plans through the Cressex-Link travel group which meets quarterly.

**ACTION 17:** - We will continue to extend the ‘travel group’ approach to other business parks in the district.

During 2004, the Cressex link scheme and a number of other travel schemes were all amalgamated into the Wycombe-Link scheme. At the year end, the scheme had some 30 members, including local businesses and major employers such as the police and local hospital

etc. Wycombe District Council continues to work with businesses directly and through the --- Wycombe Link scheme to encourage take up of travel plans and improvements in staff travel choices.

Wycombe District Council will continue to promote Wycombe Link to local businesses. The target to involve 30 local businesses in producing green travel plans was met in 2005.

**ACTION 18: - The Council will continue working with the County and local schools to provide encouragement and support to increasing the uptake of Safer Routes to Schools Schemes**

In 2001/2 there were no schools in the Wycombe area with completed school travel plans. Bucks County Council have made headway with this over 2002/3 and currently have 9 schools with completed active school travel plans with many more working towards this.

The Council has worked in partnership with South Bucks, Aylesbury Vale and the Chiltern District to introduce air quality signs designed to raise awareness with parent drivers and encourage them to switch off their engine while waiting for their children outside of school gates. The scheme has seen the first sign up at Burford School, in Little Marlow, and has been well received.

County Council have a PSA target to cut car use on the home to school run by 30% by 2008 and the short term target was 42% by the end of 2003. The reduction achieved in 2004 was 35%.

**ACTION 19: - The Council will continue to give its support to the Bucks Carshare scheme.**

The Bucks Carshare programme continues to expand and now has almost 100,000 registered members. It is being upgraded to give an 'instant match' where one is available, rather than reliance on manual data handling and processing as previously. More information about the scheme is available at [www.buckscarshare.co.uk](http://www.buckscarshare.co.uk)

**ACTION 20: - The Council will continue to support the Cressex Link scheme.**

The Cressex Link Scheme has been amalgamated into other similar schemes, see above.

**ACTION 21: - The Council will continue to support the Wheels 2002 Project.**

Renamed *Wheels*, the project is very much in place and provides full reimbursement of tickets for anyone travelling to the District Councils sports centres by bus or train.

**ACTION 22: - The Council will work with the County Council to encourage meeting the PSA targets for bus reliability, and encourage further QBP.**

The Council has agreed to the release of £400k development contributions towards a new quality bus partnership based on the 326 service; this could also bring about cascaded benefits for other services. Introduction of these improvements has been delayed as a result of legal issues, however it is hoped that these will be resolved by the end of summer 2006.

## 10 ALTERNATIVE FUELS

**ACTION 23: - The Council will promote the uptake of LPG by offering a reduction of 25% in Private Hire and Hackney Carriage vehicle licence fees upon the conversion to LPG fuel.**

The proposal to offer a 25% reduction in the licence fee upon conversion to LPG has not been approved.

The Council currently licence 426 private hire vehicles and 50 Hackney Carriages the latter of which are exclusively running on diesel for obvious financial reasons. Diesel conversion is not currently approved by the LPG Association and the Powershift programme and therefore no grant is available at present for such conversions. There are also 11 TX II London cabs which are also not approved for LPG conversion.

Following the Council's decision on numeric deregulation, Hackney Carriage licences will be issued without any limitation on their numbers. However, this is dependant on more rank space being made available. The type of vehicle to which licences will be issued will need to be specified. At present, any new vehicles licensed would have to meet the Public Carriage Office Metropolitan Conditions of Fitness. The two vehicles currently meeting this standard are the LTI TXII and the metrocab.

The new LTI's TX II model and Metrocab have not been approved for LPG conversion by the Powershift programme and can therefore not receive any grant towards the cost of conversion. The Council cannot therefore pursue Action 23 for newly issued licenses.

## 11 WALKING AND CYCLING

**ACTION 24:- The Council will positively feed into the development of the Southern Buckinghamshire Pilot Walking Project.**

**ACTION 25: - The Council will positively feed into the development of proposed cycle routes and work with the County Council to expand the network.**

The Simply Walk project has continued to grow successfully, in terms of number of walks, trained walk leaders, and weekly walkers.

Currently (May 2006) there are 11 walks in the Wycombe Area and 13 in the South Bucks / Chilterns area, including walks set up in conjunction with local mental health service and learning disability teams. There are also a number of "buggy" walks set up across both areas for post natal women with their babies, facilitated by the professional health teams.

The total number of people walking each week averaged approximately 300, and the number of trained walk leaders is currently 90 including a number of health professionals.

Funding has been secured until March 2007.

Simply Walk continues to be a partnership comprised of Wycombe District, Chiltern District and South Bucks District Councils, together with the joint Primary Care Trusts of Wycombe and Chiltern/South Bucks.

Along with the existing "East-West" cycle route a newly completed route is running across the Cressex area and a new proposal, "The Cressex Link" is expected to be operational by the end of April 2005 with a dedicated pedestrian and cycle path.

The planning department has aims to gather extra funding under s106 agreements to put to the County Council to provide for another cycle route but no definite plans have yet been finalised.

## 12 POLLUTION MONITORING AND CONTROL

**ACTION 26:** WDC will begin to roll out the "Cut your Engine" project by January 2003. Specific attention will be given to schools close to the AQMA and those that have the worst problem.

The final design of the sign was produced in mid-2003.

Burford School in Little Marlow has been approached and has since installed the sign at the front of the entrance gates.

The project is funded by County Council who will provide the signs free of charge to any school with a current school travel plan and puts forward a bid along with an assessment on what the sign will achieve.

**ACTION 27:** We will expand our promotion of the reporting of smoky vehicles with the introduction of new vehicle emission watch leaflets with freepost envelopes.

The Council provide advice to members of the public who enquire about smoky vehicles. We have not yet put in place a leaflet or a procedure to formally report smoky vehicles although the details are specified on our website within the air quality pages.

**ACTION 28:** We will expand our monitoring network to incorporate a new continuous monitoring site for Nitrogen Dioxide, to be installed close or within the AQMA by August 2003.

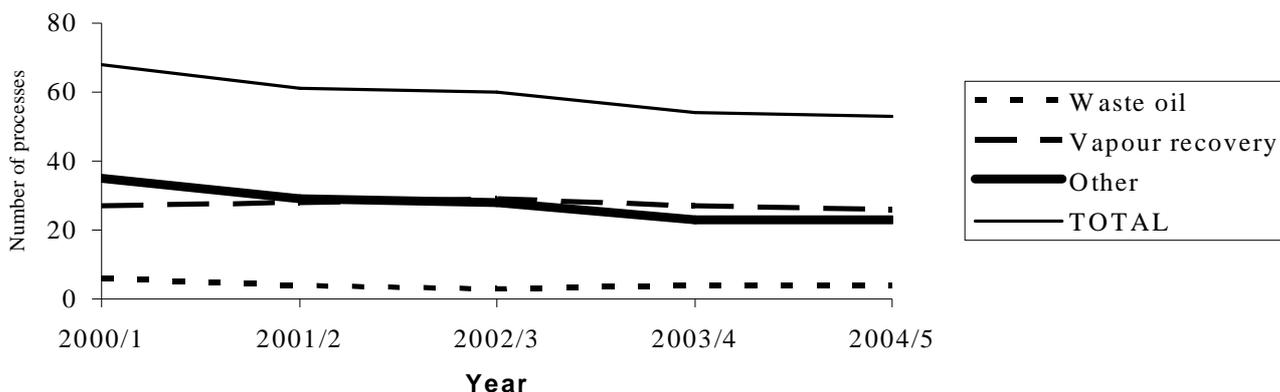
The stage IV report concluded that the AQMA should be expanded and the Council has installed a new analyser to monitor real time pollution level at an AQMA location. The new analyser was installed in May 2003 and has been fully operational since November 2003. The data is managed and ratified by Netcen. 2005 data is available in the 2005/6 Updating and Screening Assessment.

### **ACTION COMPLETE**

**ACTION 29:-** We will continue to provide comprehensive control over Part B processes

Wycombe currently licenses 54 Part B premises but the trend has been that fewer and fewer processes have been operating in the district area.

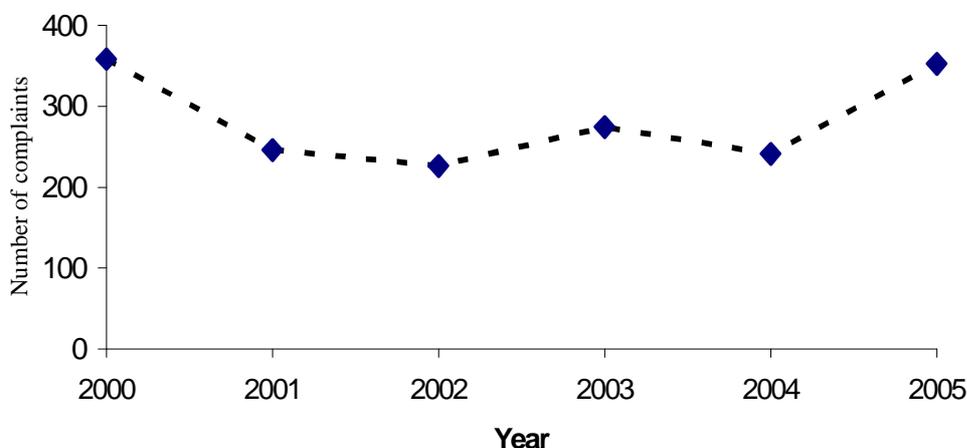
**Figure 6: Authorised Processes in Wycombe District**



**ACTION 30:** - The Council will continue to investigate complaints about nuisance, monitor air quality and relate this to the air quality strategy.

The Council continues to investigate smoke or any statutory nuisance complaints and the trend showing the evolution of the number of cases investigated is shown below.

**Figure 7: Air Quality Complaints Handled by WDC**



The Council has not actively linked complaints with the Strategy. The nature of the complaints does not relate strongly enough with serious global air quality issues. However, the subjects of complaints are advised of air quality consequences whenever it is considered relevant.

**ACTION 31:** Improved information and advice to residents and companies in the area about problems caused by bonfires, and enforcement action for persistent offenders who breach the Clean Air Act and Environmental Protection Act. We will also encourage residents to compost waste rather than burning it on bonfires.

The Council has produced a leaflet explaining what can be done to tackle air pollution and avoid creating statutory nuisances. This leaflet is distributed to all households and companies that are

the subject of nuisance complaints. We also use NSCA leaflets that further explain air quality legislation.

A two bin domestic waste collection system is being phased in with residents being asked to separate green waste for composting from other domestic waste, as well as separating out other recyclable materials. Phase 1 of the scheme was introduced in July 2004, and phases 2 and 3 were introduced in June and September 2005. Phase 4 is planned to be introduced in October 2006. The introduction of further phases will be dependant on the provision of additional capacity at the composting facility.

**ACTION 32:** - We will continue to ensure that only authorised fuels are used in the smoke control area.

Complaints fall into several categories and the Council continues to take appropriate action to control domestic premises and companies that give little regard to the environment. Additionally the Council enforces both the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Clean Air Act 1993. The Council also take action to enforce the Smoke Control orders in place in the Wycombe District area. The exact location of each smoke control area is on the GIS system.

### 13 ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**ACTION 33:** - The Council already has a policy in its Local Plan to allow the development of renewable energy projects. It will work with TV Energy to encourage 1 renewable energy project in the district by March 2003.

TV Energy has conducted a survey of 10 public buildings in the Wycombe District. These results are still being considered by those bodies responsible for the identified buildings which include schools and village halls. The Council is continuing to investigate the opportunities for installation of renewable energy technology in forthcoming major development within the district on their own land. It is unlikely that building work on these projects will start before 2007.

A wind turbine has been installed at Carrington School, Flackwell Heath, together with solar heating for their swimming pool. Consideration is being given to the installation of a wind turbine at John Hampden School. Wycombe District Council has commissioned TV energy to conduct a feasibility study for the use of renewable energy in the Cressex Gateway Project. It is unlikely this will be developed before 2008.

**ACTION 34:** - The Council will continue to monitor the efficiency of its housing stock and council buildings using the standard assessment procedure (SAP) and try to improve the rating wherever possible.

The results of the continuing promotion of energy efficiency within the private sector housing stock indicates an 2% increase in SAP ratings over the last year from an average of 53 to 54. The Council's own housing stock has increased its SAP rating average by 2%.

The % improvement in the energy efficiency (SAP rating) of the housing stock for 2004/5 is:

- 6% for owner occupied property
- 3.7% for local authority owned
- 0% for private rented
- 1% for housing association property

**ACTION 35:** - The Council will develop an Affordable Warmth Strategy and begin implementation by Sept 2004 to increase energy efficiency in households on low incomes and so reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

A Fuel Poverty Co-ordinator has been appointed for the County with funding from the County Council Social Services department. Training of staff from a number of agencies working with the public in energy efficiency has been carried out. Mail shots to 10,000 people of energy efficiency and grant aid information have been carried out in 5 wards in the district. Approximately 200 dwellings in the district have had grant aided energy efficiency work carried out in 2005/6.

**ACTION 36:** We will introduce an Environmental Appraisal as part of our procurement procedure and begin implementation of it by December 2002.

Wycombe District Council is now fully registered for ISO14001. The Environmental Procurement Procedure has been amended to cover contracts of a value of not less than £15000 (reduced from £50,000) to ensure that more projects will require environmental appraisal.

**ACTION 37:** - We will apply for Grant funding for an energy efficiency project in association with the new Environment Centre. Target date December 2003.

An application was been made for funding through the Public Service Agreement for an energy efficiency project within the county, but the application was not taken forward. Funding has been received for a fuel poverty coordinator for the county, who will assist in the implementation of the affordable warmth strategy, including introducing a target for energy efficiency measures in residential accommodation.

**ACTION 38:** - In association with TV ENERGY we will produce a 'sustainable design guide', promoting high levels of energy efficiency. Target date January 2003.

TV Energy has produced a "Sustainable Design Guide". However, this will not be introduced, pending the introduction of the Local Development Framework for the Council, until 2007.

Wycombe District Council is now considering the development of a supplementary planning document, which will incorporate some aspects of the Sustainable Development Guide, and should come into force by 2007.

**ACTION 39:**

To achieve accreditation in ISO14001 in 4 business units by March 2003 and full accreditation in EMAS by March 2005.

All service areas within the Council are now registered for ISO14001. The following targets have been set for the organisation within the Environmental Policy which are also included in the Council's Carbon Management Strategy, developed in 2005/6 through the Carbon Trust Local Authority Carbon Management Programme.:

A reduction in gas use by 8% by 2011 - new energy efficient boilers recently installed have achieved a 10% reduction in the past year

A reduction in electricity use by 8% by 2011 - recent installation of a Powerperfector system has brought about a projected saving of 20% for 2006/7

A reduction in business mileage of 20% by 2011 - there was a reduction of 30,000 business miles claimed for 2005/6, a reduction of 7%.

A reduction of 12% in home to work mileage by 2011 - a biannual staff survey indicates that a 3% reduction was achieved for 2005/6

## APPENDICES

### 1. Monitoring results quality assurance and control

The Council uses CASELLA CREAIR laboratory for the diffusion tube analysis. The following statement has been given on their QA/QC procedure.

#### **The Quality System**

Casella CRE Air has a defined quality system, which forms part of the UKAS accreditation that the laboratory holds. All accredited methods are fully documented. UKAS assessors visit on an annual basis and review all aspects of the analysis from sample handling to analysis and reporting.

As a condition of accreditation the laboratory is required to participate in any suitable external proficiency schemes in operation. Casella CRE Air participates in the WASP scheme organised by the Health and Safety Laboratory.

Any result from such a scheme that falls outside the relevant limits is immediately investigated and steps taken to rectify the situation. All external proficiency scheme results are also assessed by the Quality Manager at Casella.

The Quality Manager also carries out internal audits.

#### **AQC and Calibration**

##### Calibration

The instrument is calibrated daily, using a series of calibration standards to ensure a satisfactory linear response is obtained. A standard check is analysed after every fifty samples to ensure that the calibration is still valid.

##### Quality Control

A series of ten quality control check solutions are analysed before any samples in order to check system stability and performance.

A quality control check is run after every ten samples and is assessed against warning and action limits defined in the method. Quality control solutions are prepared from standards supplied by a different vendor to that of the calibration standards.

Any samples with associated AQC exceeding the action limit or two consecutive warning limits is repeated. If this is not possible the results are internally assessed and reported to Wycombe District Council as an AQC failure.

An external quality control check solution prepared by NETCEN is analysed once per month in order to check our internal QC, results of this check are reported back to NETCEN.

##### Blank

The travelling blank is analysed at the same time as the samples, any blank exceeding the currently prescribed maximum is investigated and reported to the client.

##### **Reviews (AQC)**

The quality policy demands annual reviews of AQC data, the limits may be revised after such a review.

##### **Quality Control limits as at 01/01/04**

Nitrogen dioxide as nitrite in solution ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ )

Warning 96 - 106 % at the  $0.5\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  level

Action 94 - 108 % at the  $0.5\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  level

Blank 0.11  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$

### **Proficiency schemes**

As part of the Quality System and under ISO 17025 the laboratory is required to take part in any suitable external proficiency schemes available.

For NO<sub>2</sub> diffusion tubes there are two schemes operating in the UK at present, these are now administered by the Health and Safety Laboratory under the WASP scheme.

One scheme consists of a spiked tube sent out monthly which is analysed as a normal sample and reported back to WASP, this is designed to assess the extraction and analysis process.

The second scheme consists of three tubes and a blank prepared in the laboratory and sent to WASP for exposure in the field alongside a continuous monitor on a monthly basis, these are then sent back to the laboratory for analysis. This scheme is designed to assess the overall performance of the tubes in the field. This scheme has taken over from the annual field comparison exercises organised by NETCEN.

The previous annual field trials have produced acceptable results

### **Tube preparation and analysis**

The NO<sub>2</sub> tubes are prepared and analysed in a separate, designated part of the laboratory within the main laboratory building, ambient nitrogen dioxide concentrations within the laboratory are monitored routinely. Tubes are prepared by spiking with 10% TEA in water. Blanks from each batch of tubes prepared in the laboratory are retained for verification.

Incoming samples are stored in a fridge used solely for this purpose. Calibration standards, QC solutions and other reagents are stored in a separate fridge.

Tubes are extracted and analysed in this isolated area, the equipment used is dedicated to this analysis and is not used for general samples.

Data is checked by the analyst as it is generated, QC data is plotted immediately after it is obtained. All raw data and data transfer is checked by a supervisor, data entry into the Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) is also checked and the final reports are checked before signing.

