

## Air Quality

- 4.156 The 2008 Ambient Air Quality Directive sets legally binding limits for concentrations in outdoor air of major air pollutants that impact public health such as particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5) and nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>). As well as having direct effects, these pollutants can combine in the atmosphere to form ozone, a harmful air pollutant (and potent greenhouse gas) which can be transported great distances by weather systems.
- 4.157 The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs carries out an annual national assessment of air quality using modelling and monitoring to determine compliance with European Union Air Quality Limit Values. It is important that the potential impact of new development on air quality is taken into account in planning where the national assessment indicates that relevant limits have been exceeded or are near the limit.
- 4.158 The local air quality management (LAQM) regime requires every district to regularly review and assess air quality in their area. These reviews identify whether national objectives have been, or will be, achieved at relevant locations, by an applicable date.
- 4.159 If national objectives are not met, or at risk of not being met, the local authority concerned must declare an air quality management area and prepare an air quality action plan. This identifies measures that will be introduced in pursuit of the objectives and can have implications for planning. Air quality can also affect biodiversity and may therefore impact on our international obligations under the Habitats Directive.
- 4.160 As set out in the supporting text to Policy DM 2 the health of the Epping Forest SAC is sensitive to, amongst other things, air-borne pollutants, including those generated as a result of traffic. In addition the Council was required to declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in the area of Bell Common, Epping in 2010. This is still being monitored as nitrogen dioxide levels are still elevated and the Council is required to reduce them by 2020.

## Key Evidence

- Habitats Regulations Assessment (AECOM, 2017); and
- Memorandum of Understanding on managing the impacts of growth within the West Essex/East Hertfordshire Housing Market Area on Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (2017).

## The Approach

- 4.161 Local Plans can affect air quality in a number of ways, including through what development is proposed and where, and the encouragement given to sustainable transport. Therefore in plan making, it is important to take into account air quality management areas and other areas where there could be specific requirements or limitations on new development because of air quality.
- 4.162 The approach to the location of development in the Local Plan has included the consideration of the sustainability of sites in respect to accessibility, or potential accessibility to facilities, services and jobs, by means other than the car. The reduction in levels of car use can have a significant positive effect on the air quality in an area, as can the provision of infrastructure which supports the use of new technologies, such as electric vehicles. This approach is taken forward through Policy SP 2 (Spatial Distribution) and Policy T 1 (Sustainable Transport Choices). As set out within the Memorandum of Understanding the Council is working with the City of London Corporation, Natural England and other Housing Market Area authorities to address both the requirement to avoid, or effectively mitigate, adverse impacts on the integrity of the SAC from Local Plan led development and the requirement to prevent deterioration of the SAC features. As set out in Policy DM 2 and DM 22 development proposals within the District which give rise to a net increase in annual average daily traffic movements will need to have regard to the most up to date Air Quality Mitigation Strategy for the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation as adopted by the Council as a material consideration in the determination of

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies.

planning applications and other development related decisions.

4.163 In addition to the above policies it is important that the effects from development, both individually and cumulatively, are assessed where they have a potential effect on the health of people and biodiversity within the District, and that appropriate mitigation and monitoring measures are secured. As traffic is a major contributing factor to effects of humans and habitats, all new development which requires the submission of a Transport Assessment or Transport Statement (as set out in the Council's Local Validation Checklist) will be required to submit an assessment of air quality impacts which may arise as a result of the development. This is in addition to other developments which will require the submission of such assessment where the proposal has the potential to impact on air quality. This includes, for example, proposals for biomass burning for heat or where development proposals introduce new receptors to areas with existing pollution sources. Further guidance is set out in the Council's Local Validation Checklist.

appropriate, contributions towards air quality monitoring. Assessments shall identify mitigation that will address any deterioration in air quality as a result of the development, having taken into account other permitted developments, and these measures shall be incorporated into the development proposals. This will include an assessment of emissions (including from traffic generation) and calculation of the cost of the development to the environment. All assessments for air quality shall be undertaken by competent persons.

## Policy DM 22 Air Quality

- A. The Council will seek to ensure that the District is protected from the impacts of air pollution. Potential air pollution risks will need to be properly considered and adequate mitigation included in the design of new development to ensure neither future, nor existing residents, workers, visitors, or environmental receptors including the Epping Forest SAC are adversely impacted as a result of the development.
- B. Mitigation measures required will be determined by the scale of development, its location, the potential to cause air pollution, and the presence of sensitive receptors in the locality. Such requirements will include, where appropriate, measures identified within the most up-to-date Air Quality Mitigation Strategy for Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation adopted by the Council as a material consideration in the determination of planning and other relevant development related applications and proposals.
- C. Larger proposals or those that have potential to produce air pollution, will be required to undertake an air quality assessment that identifies the potential impact of the development, together with, where