

Response to draft Air Quality Action Plan from the Ashbourne Town Team

Strategic Comments

For the Air Quality Action Plan to meet its strategic and legal objectives practical proposals need to be implemented as soon as possible. Air Quality improvement in Ashbourne needs to start now with the AQAP fully implemented by 2026.

Improvement of air quality in Ashbourne will only be improved in one of two ways:

- ❖ By reducing the number of vehicles (particularly HGV's) travelling up and down Buxton Hill
- ❖ By changing the movement of traffic on Buxton hill.

The draft AQAP does not include sound actions which can tackle the current air pollution problems in Ashbourne.

The majority of the AQAP's proposed actions are unfunded and provide little or no benefit to resolving the air quality pollution in Ashbourne.

Therefore I have to conclude that the draft AQAP is not fit for purpose.

A new draft AQAP is therefore required before it can be considered by Derbyshire Dales District Council. **This new plan needs to focus on practical proposals by reviewing the existing draft AQAP actions 2 and 6 which appear to be the principal actions to tackle air pollution in Ashbourne.** Actions 4 and 10 are also beneficial but of less importance.

All other draft AQAP actions will have no major impact on reducing air quality pollution to safe levels by 2026.

Detailed comments on the draft AQAP.

Action 1

The bypass currently is unfunded and does not have planning consent or a Local Plan site allocation.

There is no development programme for the bypass from Derbyshire County Council (DCC) that even indicates when a planning application may be submitted.

DCC state that the earliest date of completion is estimated as 2027. Even this date is considered optimistic considering it is known that there will be considerable local opposition to any planning submission along the current anticipated route.

Given the implementation date for the bypass exceeds the statutory implementation date for the AQAP it should be removed from the AQAP.

Action 2

This action now seems to include many different aspects.

It is possible to improve the flow of traffic of Buxton Hill by good use of UTMC although in order to control the traffic flow additional traffic lights would need to be installed to the south bound traffic on the north side of Ashbourne to enable free flow of HGVs on Buxton Hill, this should be investigated further.

However there is no evidence that the Derbyshire wide UTMC system is considering traffic control in Ashbourne as a priority.

Other matters now included in the action, which have been promoted by the Ashbourne Town Team, should be taken forward immediately, including:

- ❖ Introduction of weight limits on all routes within Ashbourne, other than the defined principle route through town. This would reduce the number of HGVs choosing Ashbourne town centre as a convenient shortcut. Mayfield Road, Compton, Dig street, Windmill Lane , North Avenue should all be weight restricted in 2023
- ❖ A 20 mph speed limit through Ashbourne town centre which would reduce emissions and make Ashbourne a less attractive short cut for long distance traffic. 2023
- ❖ Consideration should be given to restricting vehicles leaving Ashbourne Industrial estate/Dales Park from turning right into Ashbourne town centre. All vehicles should be directed to turn left onto the A52 bypass.
- ❖ Consideration should also be given to restricting HGV overnight parking on Ashbourne Industrial estate. It is estimated that up to 100 vehicles are currently parking overnight which then pass through the town centre and use Buxton Hill in the morning and evening to complete their journeys.

Action 3

This is required but will have minimal effect on the AQAP as it only impacts south bound traffic.

Action 4

This is required but needs both use of mobile phone application and roadside signs to encourage alternative routes. A suggestion would be a sign at Newhaven and Sudbury on the A515 and Markeaton on the A52 to notify traffic of congestion in Ashbourne.

Action 5

Some benefit by this but this does not correspond to the area where Air Quality is at its worst.

Action 6

This work is essential and would considerably help to make Ashbourne a less attractive shortcut for HGVs and provide a much improved pedestrian experience. This work should be part of the Ashbourne Reborn LUF programme and implemented regardless of whether the LUF bid is successful.

Action 7

I do not consider this will have any impact on the AQAP. It is interesting to note the DDDC currently only owns 2 hybrid vehicles and no electric vehicles, consideration should be given to run hybrid or electric vehicles only for all DCC, DDDC, and bus company's vehicles as is now the case in many cities.

Action 8

More work is required on this, DCC efforts should be focussed on Ashbourne due to the Air Quality problem.

Action 9

I agree with this action but the impact to this problem will be minimal

Action 10

ATT has requested in each meeting that a study is undertaken in the wider Derbyshire/Staffordshire region to identify non trunk roads which could be weight restricted to prevent the long distance vehicles choosing Ashbourne as a convenient shortcut. This should be undertaken with Staffordshire County Council which has already taken action to ensure the A50 is the principal east-west highway across this part of the Midlands.

A recently opened dual carriageway bypass in Manchester has further encouraged vehicles from Manchester to take this route. The action has not been adequately recorded. No detailed study has been undertaken.

No notes or details of any meeting with logistic companies have been provided to the AQAP group.

Action 11

Considerably more work needs to be done to facilitate greater use of cycling before there is any impact on Air Quality, other authorities, including Staffordshire County Council have invested considerably more on this matter.