

# Report to Place Scrutiny Board

<b>Meeting Date</b>	Thursday 24 February 2022		
<b>Subject</b>	Petition for an Air Quality Management Area in West Vale		
<b>Wards Affected</b>	Greetland & Stainland		
<b>Report of</b>	Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods		
<b>Type of Item</b> (please tick ✓)	<b>Review existing policy</b>		<b>x</b>
	<b>Development of new policy</b>		
	<b>Performance management (inc. financial)</b>		
	<b>Briefing (inc. potential areas for scrutiny)</b>		
	<b>Statutory consultation</b>		
	<b>Council request</b>		
	<b>Cabinet request</b>		
	<b>Member request for scrutiny (CCFA)</b>		<b>x</b>

<b>Why is it coming here?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A Petition has been received entitled "Make West Vale an Air Quality Management Area".</li> <li>In line with the Council's Petition Scheme, it needs to be considered by a Scrutiny Board as it has attracted more than 500 signatures (and less than 2000).</li> </ul>

<b>What are the key points?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The petition calls for an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in West Vale.</li> <li>An Air Quality Management Area is put in place when local air quality is not meeting the Government's national air quality objectives.</li> <li>Based on current monitoring West Vale does not meet the threshold for it to be declared an AQMA.</li> </ul>

<b>Possible courses of action</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Scrutiny Board is requested to consider and make recommendations on how the Council should respond to the issue raised in the petition.</li> <li>The Panel may decide to recommend (to the Council, Cabinet, officers, or partners) that the action the petition requests should be taken, to take no action for reasons put forward in the debate, to commission further investigation into the matter, for example by a relevant Service, or to refer the matter to Ward Councillors or a Ward Forum for consideration.</li> </ul>

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<b>Should this report be exempt?</b>
No

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council has received a petition calling for West Vale to be made an Air Quality Management Area. The petition has attracted between 500 and 2000 signatures and so, in line with Council's petition scheme, will be considered by a Scrutiny Board. The wording of the petition is:

*West Vale is unique because it sits on a junction of several roads that merge there. There is also a primary school, West Vale Academy, that also sits right on the road edge next to these junctions. Air pollution from traffic is a health risk for people living there and for the children attending this school. The housing plans put forward as part of Calderdale Council's Local Plan will make this problem worse. We are calling on the Council to declare West Vale an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) which means it will have to take positive steps to protect people and these children from the adverse effects of air pollution. We are also calling on the Council to halt plans to build 600+ houses off nearby Saddleworth Road as part of their Local Plan.*

## **2 Background Information**

- 2.1 Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 places duties on Local Authorities to review local air quality to assess whether air quality standards and objectives are being met, or likely to be achieved.
- 2.2 Designation of an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) only follows when there is an exceedance, or likely exceedance, of an air quality objective within a relevant period. Designation is therefore not something that arises for any reason other than the strict criteria of exceedance, or likely exceedance, of the air quality standard within a relevant period.
- 2.3 Statutory Guidance is provided to local authorities to assist them in carrying out their duty to assess air quality. This includes LAQM PG(16) and LAQM TG(16). The Air Quality (England) Regulations 2000 set out the objectives to be assessed, and two are of specific concern - nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>).
- 2.4 Calderdale Council currently operates 3 real-time air quality monitors, 2 of which measure nitrogen dioxide and PM<sub>2.5</sub>, and 1 which measures nitrogen dioxide and PM<sub>10</sub>. It also has 62 passive diffusion tubes in place throughout the Borough which measure nitrogen dioxide.
- 2.5 Nitrogen dioxide levels are measured at two locations in West Vale, on the B6112 Stainland Road between the junctions with the B6113 and B6114 roads, in accordance with statutory guidance.
- 2.6 The annual mean levels for 2020 were 33ug/m<sup>3</sup> measured on the northbound carriageway, and 26ug/m<sup>3</sup> on the southbound.
- 2.7 These two locations are therefore not currently exceeding the government's Air Quality Objective of an annual mean level of 40ug/m<sup>3</sup>, and modelling carried out as part of the Local Plan process does not suggest they are likely to in the future.
- 2.8 All monitoring results are published in the Annual Status Report 2021 (see [Air quality reports | Calderdale Council](#)) and the results in West Vale do not support declaring an Air Quality Management Area with respect to levels of Nitrogen Dioxide. Further information on Air Quality objectives is contained in the Air

- 2.9 Calderdale currently has eight AQMAs, all declared because of an exceedance of the annual mean objective for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>). Much NO<sub>2</sub> is attributed to road traffic and this is behind the Government's decision to end the manufacture of new cars with internal combustion engines (ICE) in 2030, with all new cars then being ultra-low emission (ULEV). Remaining ICE cars will be allowed on roads until 2040. There are other initiatives to minimise emissions from commercial vehicles and buses/coaches, and therefore it is hoped that these measures together will help to reduce NO<sub>2</sub> levels across the country, including in Calderdale.
- 2.10 The proportion of ULEV vehicles on our roads and the miles they travel is therefore expected to progressively increase towards 2030 and thereafter. It was recently announced that sales of electric vehicles in 2021 were greater than that for the previous 5 years. This trend may suggest that the numbers of new AQMAs yet to be designated nationwide may well be low, and that existing AQMAs may either be able to be revoked or their boundaries reduced in size as air quality improves overall.
- 2.11 Another factor to consider for the future is whether the recent change in people's working patterns and other behaviours will be sustained post-Covid, with more people continuing to work from home (rather than commuting) and more on-line shopping reducing numbers of vehicle movements overall.
- 2.12 In line with this national picture, the assessment carried out as part of preparation of the Local Plan concluded that future development will not cause air quality objective exceedances in West Vale – indeed air quality is forecasted to improve across the Plan period to 2032/33.
- 2.13 However, it is of course understandable that communities will feel anxious about the atmosphere surrounding them, given the well documented link between poor air quality and the risk to public health, as long-term exposure to air pollution can cause chronic conditions such as cardiovascular and respiratory diseases as well as lung cancer, leading to reduced life expectancy.
- 2.14 Therefore, the Council will continue to monitor air quality in West Vale (and other areas across the Borough) and strive to reduce airborne pollution through its Air Quality Improvement Strategy, with interventions such as:
- Continuing promotion of active travel through infrastructure improvements and educational campaigns, so that people understand the benefits of walking and cycling and can choose to do so safely.
  - Leading by example, with 30 new electric vehicles now on the council's fleet, including the Mayoral car, and an ongoing replacement policy of 'electric by default' (where operationally viable).
  - Developing a wider electric vehicle charging infrastructure, with facilities now in several council car parks and neighbourhood locations.
  - Ice cream operators at Manor Heath and Centre Vale Parks are now required to use an on-site electricity supply to power their equipment, not the diesel engine.
  - Extensive tree planting schemes at Shibden Park and various other sites throughout the Borough, often involving volunteers and young people to further promote the air quality message.

- Action by Community Safety Wardens to prevent cars/taxis idling in town centres and around schools.
- Promoting 'school streets' to take cars away from schools and encourage parents and children to walk as much as possible.

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**For further information on this report, contact:**

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