

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 3 JULY 2012

Title:

THE 2012 AIR QUALITY UPDATE AND SCREENING ASSESSMENT

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Bryn Morgan

Wards Affected: All

Summary and purpose:

Every third year there is a statutory requirement to provide an Updating and Screening Assessment (USA) for Air Quality. The USA, as submitted to Defra in April, independently assessed and ratified the data collection and monitoring carried out within Waverley. An annual review of progress is also required in respect of the overall air quality measures in place, as contained in the Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP).

How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

This report relates to the Council's corporate priorities of 'Environment', by protecting the environment through the promotion of environmental sustainability and air quality, and 'Leisure and Lives', through the promotion of health and well-being via air quality standards.

Equality and Diversity Implications:

There are no equality and diversity implications.

Environment and Climate Change Implications:

National air quality objective standards were updated in 2002. Pollutants of concern in Waverley are Nitrogen dioxide and Particulates. The Local Air Quality Management process (LAQM) is designed to ensure local authorities in England & Wales monitor appropriate pollutants, identify those of concern and put into place a management regime where required. Failure to properly manage the LAQM process could lead to local increases in the identified pollutants.

Resource/Value for Money Implications:

The Air Quality (AQ) USA reporting cost is met within existing Environmental Services budgets specific to AQ. Any project work will be within current staffing allocated to local air quality management unless sourced elsewhere (e.g. via Defra funding).

The majority of additional costs arising out of the USA recommendations will fall during 2013-14. An indicative cost for the three Detailed Assessments required is £6-7k.

Legal Implications:

Submission of an AQ USA to Defra fulfils the requirement under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995. Waverley's USA report was submitted in accordance with this requirement.

Background

Waverley Borough Council is obliged to produce an Annual Progress Report as to how exceedences of air quality standards are being tackled in Farnham, Godalming and Hindhead. Every third year the requirement is to provide an Updating and Screening Assessment (USA), attached as Annex 1 to this report. The USA, as submitted, independently assesses and ratifies the data collection and monitoring carried out within Waverley. A review of progress is also required in respect of the overall air quality measures in place, as contained in the Air Quality Action Plan AQAP attached as Annex 2 to this report.

Waverley's approach to AQ Management, monitoring, data collection and associated measures are all confirmed as meeting the statutory requirements. The collected data shows three areas in need of further study: the USA recommends Detailed Assessments to be undertaken at 2 sites associated with the Godalming AQMA and one site in Haslemere.

The opening of the Hindhead Tunnel in 2011 occurred part-way through the period for analysis. Further roadworks and congestion in the vicinity of the monitoring station have subsequently influenced data in that area. To revoke the Hindhead AQMA, Defra will require Waverley to demonstrate that the annual average level will remain below the trigger point; a minimum of a further 6 months' data is required for this.

Introduction

1. The USA is produced to a template as required by Defra; the main sections of which look at new monitoring data, sources of pollution, conclusions and proposed actions. There are two main items of note in the new USA:
 - The Hindhead Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) requires further monitoring
 - Two of Waverley's other AQMAs require Detailed Assessments in specific locations
2. The annual update of Waverley's AQAP is mainly confined to receiving feedback from the lead agencies on a topic by topic basis and providing the new information in the tables appended. Of note is the progress made in relation to the Farnham AQMA since the Air Quality Officer's successful funding bid to Defra.

3. Although Hindhead Tunnel has been open for approaching a year it was some months afterwards that the roadworks and new layout in the vicinity of the old A3 / A287 crossroads were completed. In order to demonstrate the expected reduction in Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) levels the average annual levels for NO₂ must show both that the drop has occurred and that it is likely to continue at a level below the objective levels laid down in the The Air Quality (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2002. The objective for NO₂ is 40 micrograms per cubic metre of air (µg/m³) as detailed in the table on page 7 of the USA report.
4. The report's 2011 data for the Hindhead AQMA shows an annual mean of 38.9µg/m³ at the monitoring station and 49.7µg/m³ at the crossroads. The latter is the first time in four years that it has fallen below 50µg/m³ and at least a further 6 months' worth of data is required before the AQMA can be considered for revocation.
5. Three sets of data not currently part of any of Waverley's AQMAs show exceedences of the annual mean objective in Godalming and Haslemere. Two roads in Godalming, both immediately bordering the existing AQMA, show high levels of NO₂ – the diffusion tubes are located in Holloway Hill and Wharf Street. The Haslemere data is centred on the High Street between Cobden Lane and Church Road.
6. Once new exceedences are identified a Detailed Assessment is required. This study looks at whether the indications are correct and if further actions (e.g. the creation or amendment of AQMAs) are to be recommended. As the data is very localised the USA recommends further, more detailed diffusion tube monitoring in the areas concerned and additional, representative sites have been added to the monitoring regime. A full year's data is required prior to undertaking the Detailed Assessments.
7. The Defra-funded Farnham Traffic Management & Low Emission Feasibility Study is proceeding well. Key data has been supplied and modelling work undertaken. The consultants are drafting a report and looking into the feasibility elements of the work.
8. The AQAP update shows some further successes last year: the schools project whereby teachers can download curriculum approved classroom packs for teaching on Air Pollution and a joint success with colleagues in Sustainability via the production of a 2012 Clean Air Calendar using winning drawings from schoolchildren.

Comments from the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee

9. The Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the report at its meeting on 18th June 2012. The Committee endorsed the Action Plan and resolved that the following observations be forwarded to the Executive:
 - The Committee receive an executive summary setting out the main points of the air quality action plan at future meetings; and
 - Members welcome the efforts taken so far with air quality improvements and ask that the Executive encourage Surrey County Council and other bodies to

continue to try and make changes to improve air quality in the Borough and across Surrey.

Conclusion

10. The Updating and Screening Assessment 2012 has been submitted to Defra following statutory guidance and is publicly available. Waverley's LAQM processes have been shown to fulfil requirements under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995. The ongoing data collection and monitoring within Waverley has identified three locations for further scrutiny – detailed monitoring has commenced and Detailed Assessments will be undertaken in 2013-14.

Recommendation

The Executive is asked to receive the observations from the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee and endorse the report.

Background Papers

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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