

APPENDIX R

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL COMMUNITY O&S – 17TH JUNE 2013 EXECUTIVE – 2ND JULY 2013

Title:

AIR QUALITY – ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

[Portfolio Holder: Brian Adams]

[Wards Affected: All]

Summary and purpose:

The current Air Quality – Annual Progress Report review was submitted to Defra at the end of April 2013 in accordance with statutory requirements. The Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee has considered the report at its meeting on 17th June 2013 and its observations are noted towards the end of the report.

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

Value for money – progress on specific actions identified in the statutory Air Quality Action Plan, as included in this Annual Progress report, have been partially achieved through grant funding from Defra

Leisure and Lives – reductions in air pollution / improvements in air quality promote health and well-being for all

Environment – Measures designed to improve air quality often result in reduced carbon emissions; improving carbon reduction in Waverley

Financial Implications:

The Air Quality Annual Progress Report is prepared in-house within existing Environmental Services resources for Air Quality. Any project work will be within current staffing allocated to local air quality management unless sourced elsewhere (e.g. via Defra funding). For example, the current studies arising from the recommendations of the Farnham Air Quality and Low Emission Feasibility Study report of 2012-13 are additionally supported by Surrey County Council resources and £40,000 in Defra grants.

Legal Implications:

Submission of an Air Quality Annual Progress Report to Defra is a legal requirement under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995

Introduction

1. 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). The submission deadline set by

Defra for these annual reports is April each year. A USA report was submitted last year and this year's Annual Progress Report (Annexe 1) was submitted on 29 April 2013. The report also includes updates on progress of the overall air quality measures in place, as contained in the Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP).

2. This report relies on data for the calendar year 2012, as collated and ratified by independent specialist consultants. Defra will respond to the report and any comments received (and actions resulting from those comments where necessary) will be included in this paper or reported at a later date.
3. The overall picture is one of improving air quality and this is reflected nationally. It is too early to say that there is a downward trend in pollution levels as results over the last 5 years have tended to show increases.
4. The main points of note are:
 - The Hindhead Air Quality Management Area monitoring results now show a significant reduction since the opening of the Hindhead tunnel. It is therefore proposed to discuss with Defra the revocation of the AQMA in 2013
 - Farnham Level Crossing's area of concern continues to be monitored closely and exceedences have not occurred in 2012
 - Haslemere High Street was being looked at robustly before proceeding to a possible Detailed Assessment; results are now below the trigger level and monitoring is proposed to continue – a Detailed Assessment is not needed at present
 - Godalming 7 monitoring point (Holloway Hill) continues to show an exceedence of the annual average target – this should now proceed to a Detailed Assessment, which will determine whether the Godalming AQMA boundaries need revising
5. Also of note is the progress made on the outcomes of the Farnham Air Quality and Low Emission Feasibility Study report of 2012-13. This work will continue throughout 2013 and follows up on the recommendations to assess a traffic recirculation model for Farnham Town Centre and whether reductions in private diesel vehicle use in Farnham Town Centre could be achieved.
6. The Council's Officers and Portfolio-holder are working closely with Surrey County Council, Specialist Contractors and Public Health agencies on the above – an initial draft report is anticipated this summer.

Comments from the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee

7. The Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered this report at its meeting on 17th June and its comments are noted below:
 - The Committee encouraged officers to write to DEFRA to take away the air quality monitoring at the Hindhead junction now the tunnel was in place.
 - The Committee raised concern about the lack of understanding of the issues at the level crossing in Farnham by Surrey County Council and the action plan proposed. The Committee also question the length of waiting time noted in the report and whether this was correct.

Conclusion

8. Pending any feedback from Defra the Council can be assured that it is meeting its legal duties to monitor and report on Air Quality in the borough in relation to UK National Air Quality Objectives.
9. Further, the Council is undertaking positive steps to ensure relevant actions identified in the Air Quality Action Plan are being tested prior to looking at resultant actions and recommendations.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Annual Progress Report be endorsed.

Background Papers

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

CONTACT OFFICER:

Name: Colin Giddings

Telephone: 01483 523435

E-mail: colin.giddings@waverley.gov.uk