

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
16 SEPTEMBER 2014

EXECUTIVE – 4 NOVEMBER 2014

Title:

AIR QUALITY ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2013/14

**[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Donal O’Neill]
[Wards Affected: All]**

Summary and purpose:

Waverley Borough Council is required to submit to Defra, annually, a Progress Report on Air Quality measures by the end of April. Every third year the report must take the form of an Updating and Screening Assessment (USA). This is the second Annual Progress Report (APR) in the current cycle – a USA report will be submitted in 2015.

The Environmental Protection Team’s Air Quality Officer has also submitted a Detailed Assessment to Defra seeking revocation of the Hindhead Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

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 Farnham studies now nearing completion have been additionally supported by Surrey County Council resources and £40,000 in Defra grants.

The next report due (USA 2015; due April 2015) requires specialist contractor input – a provisional sum of £2k is included in the AQ capital budget. The identified need for a Detailed Assessment (DA) of the area around Holloway Hill, Godalming may require funding from the existing budget.

Legal Implications:

Submission of an Annual Progress Report to Defra is a legal requirement under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995. Legal responsibilities and requirements are detailed in the body of the report.

Introduction

- 1 The completion and submission of the APR to DEFRA will help deliver Waverley's statutory duties as defined under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995. The AQAP is an opportunity for Waverley Borough Council to tackle local air pollution and help improve the health of the local community. The Council's AQAP is updated annually as part of our APR, and the format of the AQAP has been changed significantly in this year's revision / update.
2. The APR is attached at Annexe 1. It follows a template layout designated by Defra and is based on local monitoring data from 2013. Independent data ratification necessarily means the report cannot be produced earlier in the year.
3. 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. A revised APR will then be approved by the Executive for endorsement by the Council.
4. The duty to collect pollution data and report on them, plus the duty to publish an AQAP do not place requirements on the Council for undertaking the steps identified. Indeed, given the nature of the air quality issues in Farnham (all of which are traffic related), the ability for this Council to significantly influence and bring about air quality improvements is limited (being largely in the hands of the highways authority, Surrey County Council) Nonetheless, the Council has taken Air Quality issues very seriously and has concentrated in recent years on steps to bring together the responsible authorities that can provide engineered solutions to, in particular, Farnham's AQMA.
5. The outcomes of the projects arising out of this are referred to in section 9 below and will be the subject of a specific report to the Executive.

Air Quality Data

6. The overall picture last year was one of improving air quality; however, it was 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. In the majority of locations the 2013 data show slight increase in annual mean levels for NO₂.
7. The increase in annual mean concentrations across Waverley does not necessarily indicate an upward trend in concentrations and will continue to be monitored. During November and December 2013 the concentrations increased notably and are likely to have been affected by the adverse weather patterns seen across Southern Britain during that time. If the increases in concentration continue throughout 2014, they will be assessed through the

2015 USA report and consideration will be given for Detailed Assessments of any that regularly exceed the annual mean concentrations target.

8. The main points of note are:

- The Hindhead Air Quality Management Area monitoring results support the submission to Defra seeking revocation of the Hindhead AQMA (indeed, since the report was submitted to Defra, the Council has received confirmation that The Hindhead AQMA can now be revoked)
- Ratified 2013 PM₁₀ data indicates generally standard annual and daily mean PM₁₀ concentrations and are well below air quality objectives.
- Farnham Level Crossing - this area of concern continues to be monitored closely and exceedences have not occurred in 2013
- Haslemere High Street was being looked at robustly before proceeding to a possible Detailed Assessment. Throughout 2013 only Hasl 4 is on the threshold and therefore continued monitoring will be required before confirming that there is a likely exceedence at this location.
- 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

9. Also of note is the progress made on the actions arising out of the Farnham Air Quality and Low Emission Feasibility Study report of 2012-13. The Council's Officers and Portfolio Holder have been working closely with Surrey County Council, Specialist Contractors and Public Health agencies on this.

10. Final reports on the Farnham low emission modelling, the economic assessment and the health impact assessment have now been produced, and the recommendations from these reports are reported separately on this agenda.

Conclusion

11. Pending any feedback from Defra, the Council is clearly meeting its legal duties to monitor and report on Air Quality in the Borough in relation to UK National Air Quality Objectives. The Council has a good track record in delivering behavioural-change and awareness-raising projects; it is now working toward identifying more quantifiable, engineered solutions.

12. Further, the Council is undertaking positive steps to ensure relevant actions identified in the Air Quality Action Plan have been assessed and tested for efficacy prior to committing resources to them. The projects now coming to a conclusion have concentrated on areas where the gains in reducing pollution levels are most likely to be achieved and the recommendations coming out of the projects will be robust. The Action Plan has been reviewed and updated – any future steps taken will be in support of the elements identified by Defra as demonstrating local authorities' commitments, at all levels, to improving air quality.

13. The Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered this report at its meeting on 16th September and had no observations to forward onto the Executive.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Detailed Assessment seeking revocation of the Hindhead AQMA and the Annual Progress Report be noted.

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