

WORCESTERSHIRE AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN 2013

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Debbie Taylor
Portfolio Holder Consulted	19 th September 2013
Relevant Head of Service	John Staniland
Ward(s) Affected	ALL
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	N/A
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	Key Decision

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 Under the requirements of the Local Air Quality Management Process as set out in Part IV of the Environment Act 1995, the Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland 2007 and the relevant Policy and Technical Guidance documents, local authorities have a duty to prepare an Action Plan where an Air Quality Management Area has been declared.
- 1.2 Air Quality Management Areas are declared where the air quality objectives applicable to Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) have been exceeded. The objective of most importance to this Committee is the annual mean NO₂, which should not exceed 40 microgrammes per metre squared. Traffic is the main source of NO₂ in Redditch and Worcestershire generally.
- 1.3 Currently there are no AQMA's in the Redditch Borough. However, increasing traffic and large scale redevelopments have the potential to significantly affect air quality in the Borough. Whilst the development of Redditch as a new town with purposefully designed road infrastructure across much of the town has provided little opportunity for residents to be exposed to traffic related poor air quality, some of the original roads and housing suffer from poor layout which may become a problem in the future. For example, Nitrogen Dioxide diffusion tube monitoring at Other Road continues to be reviewed closely due to elevated measurements. It is possible that this area may require declaration as an AQMA in the future.
- 1.4 Poor air quality can affect peoples' health, causing problems such as heart disease and breathing problems. Up to 24,000 people per year die prematurely because of its effects (DETR 2000). Nitrogen Dioxide in particular is known to cause respiratory illnesses and possibly increase the risk of lung infections. Young children and asthma sufferers are most sensitive to this pollutant.
- 1.5 The adoption of the Air Quality Action Plan will permit WRS to act on behalf of Redditch Borough Council in identification and implementation of the most effective measures to reduce nitrogen dioxide levels so that Air Quality Management Areas are not required in Worcestershire.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Committee is asked to RESOLVE that

the Countywide Air Quality Action Plan be adopted and agreement be given to supporting and assisting progress of the measures identified in the Plan that will provide effective resolution to areas of poor air quality and assist in preventing the requirement to declare any Air Quality Management Areas in Redditch.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial implications with adoption of the Countywide Air Quality Action Plan. Work on progression of the measures contained in the Air Quality Action Plan is proposed to be facilitated by WRS staff within the current budget.

Legal Implications

- 3.2 There are no legal implications with the adoption of the Countywide Air Quality Action Plan. There similarly is no requirement for Redditch Borough Council to adopt the Plan.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.3 There are no service or operational implications envisaged. Some procedures or policies may be developed on the back of some of the Air Quality Action Plan measures to the betterment of air quality and a consistent approach across Worcestershire.
- 3.5 The progression of the Plan is a large piece of work currently proposed to be completed within existing budgets (subject to future funding alterations).

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.6 The Committee will ensure it has regard to the desirability of exercising its functions concerning the need to eliminate discrimination and to increase equality of opportunity. All LAQM work and procedures will be delivered in accordance with Redditch Borough Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.
- 3.7 The LAQM process focuses attention on areas of poor air quality which generally coincide with areas of poor socio-economic quality. The aim of the LAQM process is to target delivery of improvements in air quality where they are most needed which should have a positive impact on areas of poor socio-economic quality. It is the Action Planning process that targets how the improvements are to be delivered.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) reports to Defra (on behalf of Redditch Borough Council) at least annually, on progress with Local Air Quality Management (LAQM). In the event that a Local Authority mismanages the Local Air Quality Management process, Defra may choose to pass on a portion of any fine given to the UK by the European Commission for non-compliance with the EU Directive which is translated into UK legislation by the LAQM process. There is no requirement for Redditch to produce an Action Plan currently but contributing towards a Countywide Action Plan would reduce financial risk and ensure a consistent approach to any improvements to air quality.

5. APPENDICES

- 5.1 Appendix 1 – Air Quality Action Plan

Available on the Worcestershire Regulatory Services website

<http://www.worcsregservices.gov.uk/pollution/air-quality/air-quality-action-plan.aspx>

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 6.1 2012 Updating & Screening Assessment for Bromsgrove District Council; available on the Worcestershire Regulatory Services website
<http://www.worcsregservices.gov.uk/pollution/air-quality.aspx> .

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