

Licensing and Regulatory Committee



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title of Report:	LOCAL AIR QUALITY – PROGRESS REPORT 2016-2017	
Report No:	LIC/SE/17/012	
Report to and dates:	Licensing and Regulatory Committee	31 October 2017
Portfolio holder:	Councillor Alaric Pugh Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth Tel: 07930 460899 Email: alaric.pugh@stedsbc.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Matthew Axton Environment Officer Tel: 01284 757041 Email: matthew.axton@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	To report the work undertaken during 2016 to meet Local Air Quality regulations across the Borough.	
Recommendation:	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that the Committee:</p> <p>(1) Be asked to <u>note</u> the work undertaken in order to improve local air quality in West Suffolk; and</p> <p>(2) Gives consideration to the principle of designating an Air Quality Management Area on Sicklesmere Road, Bury St Edmunds based on monitoring and assessment carried out by council officers.</p>	
Key Decision:	<p><i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i></p> <p>Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p><i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)</i></p>		

Consultation:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation required with the Department of Environment (Defra) to approve technical elements of the Annual Status Report. • Consultation with those directly affected by the proposed Air Quality Management Area on Sicklesmere Road, Bury St Edmunds. 	
Alternative option(s):		•	
Implications:			
Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial costs in officer time, possible additional monitoring and possible commissioning of external studies or modelling if principle of air quality management area declaration is approved. 	
Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any additional work will be covered by existing officers. 	
Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	
Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If principle of air quality management area is approved, this is a legal declaration. Declaration will ensure policy consistency on air quality throughout West Suffolk. 	
Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	
Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
Statutory Responsibilities	Medium	Delivering the statutory responsibilities will help reduce the inherent level of risk.	Low
Reputational	Medium	The Councils' work will help achieve a credible pathway to improving air quality.	Low
Financial	Low	Cost-benefit of key work will continue to be reviewed and adjusted.	Low
Ward(s) affected:		All Wards are affected by air quality, but specific decisions regarding Southgate Ward	
Background papers:		None	

Documents attached:

Appendix 1 – Area affected by the proposed Air Quality Management Area on Sicklesmere Road.

Appendix 2 - 2017 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR).

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)

- 1.1 Air quality has direct implications for human health. Research shows that poor air quality can reduce the quality of life by causing health problems, especially in those who are more vulnerable such as children, the elderly and those with pre-existing health conditions. There is considerable research showing a link between exposure to air pollution and effects on health.
- 1.2 Improving the air quality will help to improve the long term health of our local communities, makes our towns more attractive places to visit and therefore improves the local economy.
- 1.3 The Air Quality Regulations 2000 require all local authorities in the UK to review and assess air quality within their area. The West Suffolk Councils are the lead regulators within their administrative areas with respect to the management of local air quality. Officers in Planning and Regulatory Services carry out various activities to fulfil these responsibilities. This includes monitoring local air quality, implementing any statutory and non-statutory actions for the purpose of improving air quality, providing advice on air quality and development.
- 1.4 The key pollutant of concern locally is Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), which is primarily caused by emissions from vehicle exhausts, for which the national annual mean objective (threshold) is 40 microgrammes per metre cubed to be applied at the façade of residential properties. An hourly objective also exists for NO₂, to be applied along busy shopping streets, and should be considered where the annual mean level is 60 microgrammes per metre cubed or greater. Currently there are 24 monitoring sites within St Edmundsbury.
- 1.5 Road transport is a major source of air pollution both nationally and locally. The Councils in West Suffolk work with other organisations to maintain and monitor the quality of air in the locality. Suffolk County Council and the Highways Agency are key partners and work with Council Officers to secure good air quality.
- 1.6 The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have continued to develop a national strategy "UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations", published July 2017. Twenty-eight Local Authorities with significant ongoing air quality problems are identified by (Defra) in this report and are required to develop local assessments and plans to achieve the statutory nitrogen dioxide limits in the shortest time possible. St Edmundsbury Borough Council is not one of the named authorities.

2. Outcomes for 2016-2017

- 2.1 For the majority of the Borough, air quality remains good and continues to show a long term trend of slight year on year improvement. However, we continue to undertake detailed monitoring and increased monitoring in Bury St Edmunds during 2016 (compared to 2015) to ensure that we our monitoring covers all areas of possible concern.

- 2.2 All but three monitored locations in St Edmundsbury Borough Council were below the national objectives for nitrogen dioxide in 2016. Two of these exceedances were recorded on Sicklesmere Road, Bury St Edmunds, including the highest recorded value, where an annual average value of 42.1 microgrammes per metre cubed was recorded. The other exceedance was located at the junction of Parkway and Kings Road. However, when adjusted to the façade of the closest residential structure (which is the specified receptor location for the annual average), this location is below the objective and therefore no further assessment is required in this location.
- 2.3 Monitoring began at Sicklesmere Road in 2015 in order to assess the impact of the south-east Bury St Edmunds strategic development site. Given that an exceedance has been recorded on Sicklesmere Road for two consecutive years an Air Quality Management Area should, in line with statutory guidance, be in place at this location. Although a significant improvement of the local air quality is anticipated at this location when the Bury St Edmunds south east strategic development site delivers its planned 'spine' road, it is considered that the declaration of an Air Quality Management Area would be beneficial so that interim solutions can be explored. A designation would also ensure that a legal framework for action would be in place should the strategic development site not progress at the rate initially planned.
- 2.4 The area for which it is proposed to designate is shown in the full Annual Status Report (**Appendix 1**) and is limited to three properties. Given the relatively small area and limited number of dwellings your officers are recommending a 'fast track' declaration (as described in the Local Air Quality Management statutory Guidance and Policy Documents, April 2016) which does not require a full scale consultation, but requires direct engagement with those directly affected together with key stakeholders. Subject to the engagement, a declaration will be brought to this Committee for consideration in a separate report.
- 2.5 This committee approved the declaration of the Great Barton Air Quality Management Area (Report No: LIC/SE/17/005, April 2017). This declaration covered a small number of dwellings adjacent to the A143 in the village and has now been enacted through an official order and the details accepted by Defra.
- 2.6 Further to this declaration, your officers have organised an action plan steering group meeting with key local stakeholders in June 2017, with additional meetings planned. The results of these steering group meetings will help to produce the action plan required as part of the regulations. It is possible that actions will come forward as a result of housing developments in the immediate locality.
- 2.7 Monitoring within the Great Barton designation for 2016 indicated levels to be slightly below (compliant with) the national objective, however, a number of months at this monitoring location during 2016 showed unusually low readings and this may not necessarily represent a long term trend of compliance.
- 2.8 Although levels of measured pollutants in all other areas of St Edmundsbury remain in compliance with the national objectives, your officers are aware

that there are negative health impacts related to lower concentrations of certain pollutants, especially particulates. Therefore, work will continue to improve air quality further, as detailed in Section 3 below.

2.9 Other actions taken by your Officers over the past year included:

- Commenting on and influencing planning applications to ensure that they have minimum impact on Local Air Quality.
- Requesting new developments are suitably equipped with electric vehicle charge points to encourage the faster uptake of zero emission vehicles and to ensure developments in the area are suitably futureproofed for the proposed ban of petrol and diesel only vehicles in 2040.
- Promotion of internal and external grants to assist companies (including taxi companies) in converting their fleet to low and zero emission vehicles.
- Promotion of zero emission electric vehicles to the general public.

3. Next Steps

3.1 Your officers will continue to undertake the following activities:

- Continue monitoring levels of nitrogen dioxide throughout the Borough.
- Complete the Action Plan for the Great Barton Air Quality Management Area with input from the Steering Group.
- Engage with key stakeholders with a view to developing the legal order for the Sicklesmere Road Air Quality Management Area, if approved by this Committee, and begin work on an Action Plan in line with the statutory guidance.
- Work with air quality and planning colleagues across Suffolk to ensure standardised requirements for electric vehicle charging for new planning applications across the County.
- Continue to promote grants for business fleet improvements.
- Produce business cases for further investment in electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- Engage with stakeholders in areas where there may be concern to explore the need for further action.

4. Additional supporting information

4.1 **Appendix 1** - 2017 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) In fulfilment of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 Local Air Quality Management. Provided separately.