

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet **DATE:** 24th January 2011

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WARD(S): All

PORTFOLIO: Environment and Open Spaces – Councillor Parmar

PART I **NON-KEY DECISION**

AIR QUALITY UPDATE

1. **Purpose Of Report**

1. To advise Cabinet of two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) to be declared in the Town Centre, caused by a likely breach of health based standards for nitrogen dioxide. The areas in question are:
 - (a) A4 Bath Road from the junction with Ledgers Road/Stoke Poges Lane, in an easterly direction, along Wellington Street, up to the Sussex Place junction.
 - (b) A355 Tuns Lane from junction 6 of the M4 motorway in a northerly direction to just past its junction with the A4 Bath Road and A355 Farnham Road, known as the “Three Tuns”.
2. To advise Cabinet that the breaches of the health based standards are caused by road traffic, and that any action plan to address the breaches will therefore be part of the next revision of the Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Slough.

2. **Recommendations**

Cabinet is requested to resolve:

- (a) That the declaration of the two AQMAs be noted.
- (b) That continued air quality monitoring in the town centre area be endorsed, so that information is available to determine progress in mitigation of the AQMAs.
- (c) That officers be instructed to lobby for air quality to continue to be a key consideration when long term infrastructure projects are discussed or consulted upon.

3. **Community Strategy Priorities**

A cleaner, greener place to live, work and play

The UK Air Quality Strategy requires declarations of AQMAs where the health-based standards are breached. Air Quality action plans are a statutory requirement

if AQMAs are declared. Poor air quality can exacerbate respiratory or cardiovascular conditions in some people.

Introducing measures to control or reduce traffic will reduce air pollution, traffic related congestion and also potentially noise, making for a better quality of life for those in affected areas.

4 **Other Implications**

(a) Risk Management

The declaration is mandatory once it has been determined that the exceedences of the air quality standard are being breached. Continuation of monitoring will provide data that tracks progress with mitigation actions and once nitrogen dioxide levels fall below the health based standard for an extended period, allow the removal of the declaration order.

(b) Financial

None to this report, but existing budgets will be used to allow essential monitoring activity to continue as per the recommendations.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no direct Human Rights Act implications to this report. The actual declaration of Air Quality Management Areas is a designated process and requires the production of sealed documents by Legal Services, following this report.

5 **Supporting Information**

- 5.1 Under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 all local authorities must review and assess the current, and likely future air quality in their areas. Where a local authority considers that one or more of the air quality objectives as prescribed in regulations is not likely to be met, it must declare an AQMA, covering the area(s) concerned.
- 5.2 The Local Authority must then draw up an action plan setting out the measures it intends to take in pursuit of the air quality objectives in the area. The air quality objectives are health based and were advised by two committees (Expert Panel on Air Quality Standards and Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants).
- 5.3 Two air quality management areas are to be declared, and an action plan will be included in the next revision of the LTP as road transport has been identified as the primary source of the air quality problem. The possible need for these air quality management areas was foreseen and first mooted in 2005, when the Brands Hill and M4 AQMAs were declared, and the opportunity was then taken by the Council to include measures to also help improve or at least control town centre air quality, in LTP2.

7. **Conclusion**

- 7.1 AQMAs in the places described above are a legal requirement because the health-based limits have been monitored and breaches have been recorded. The breaches

are caused by congestion on the town centre road network. At Tuns Lane, Junction 6 of the M4 is also a significant factor in terms of queuing and congestion, although measures to control or manage traffic on the Highways Agency's roads lie with that organisation.

8. **Appendices**

Appendix A – Map showing the intended Air Quality Management Areas.

9. **Background Papers**

2009 Air Quality Updating and Screening Assessment for Slough Borough Council.