
REPORT TO THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE 11 JULY 2012

PORTFOLIO: ENVIRONMENT

REPORT FROM HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

SUBJECT: AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN RAYLEIGH TOWN CENTRE

1 DECISION BEING RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 To agree the deferral of the public consultation exercise with regard to an Air Quality Management Area in Rayleigh to allow joint action by Rochford District and Castle Point Borough Councils.

2 FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE No: 13/12

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 To allow for Castle Point Borough Council (CPBC) Officers to fully determine the extent of any air quality issues on the Southern side of the Rayleigh Weir junction, thereby allowing the Councils to jointly declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) if this is considered the most appropriate course of action.
- 3.2 To present a more robust and co-ordinated case for certain actions to improve air quality in the area, particularly with respect to highway-related changes, in any resulting joint Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP).
- 3.3 To address this issue jointly in a more cost efficient use of both officer time and financial resources.

4 SALIENT INFORMATION

- 4.1 Officers last reported this issue to Members on 21 September 2011. At that meeting it was agreed that officers would commence a consultation exercise with relevant stakeholders in order to define a boundary for the proposed AQMA. The consultation exercise has not yet been undertaken as the area of Rayleigh that might be in the AQMA includes Rayleigh Weir and as any traffic management scheme would have implications for Castle Point it was considered subject to Member's Approval that a more robust approach would be to include both sides of the A127.
- 4.2 Officers recommenced detailed monitoring of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) levels in High Street, Rayleigh in January 2012. This monitoring will continue until December 2014.
- 4.3 The Councils have shared an Environmental Services Manager since January 2012, with the local air quality management remit falling within the postholder's responsibilities at both locations.

- 4.4 CPBC is close to completing the six months' of monitoring at key locations within its borough that would be required for modelling purposes. Officers expect the modelled data to be available by the end of September 2012. This information would be compared to the Council's prior to a joint consultation exercise.
- 4.5 By acting jointly to address elevated levels of nitrogen dioxide associated with Rayleigh Weir and its environs, the Council, CPBC and Essex County Council will be able to create a more robust approach to providing solutions within the subsequently required AQAP.

Monitoring Data

- 4.6 The annual average level of nitrogen dioxide that triggers the air quality management process is $40\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ at points of relevant exposure (e.g. facades of homes).
- 4.7 Latest monitoring data from 2011 shows that estimated façade concentrations at the High Street/Eastwood Road junction is $41\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, whilst Eastwood Road to Websters Way is $44\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. This data has recently been submitted to the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) as part of the annual reporting cycle. It is therefore likely that Defra will reconfirm that the Council will need to declare an AQMA.

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 The Council could declare an AQMA for Rayleigh town centre independently of CPBC as soon as possible following public consultation. This could then be followed by the creation of a Rochford-only or Rochford-Castle Point AQAP. However, any results from work carried out by CPBC Officers may result in changes being made to Rochford Council's AQMA Order, potentially leading to re-consultation of the public and increased expenditure of resources.

6 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council is required to declare an AQMA and develop an AQAP where national air quality objectives are exceeded.
- 6.2 There may be implications for businesses, residents and their properties within the designated area.
- 6.3 The process will have a bearing on any future Rayleigh Town Centre Action Plan.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 National air quality objectives are based upon effects of pollutants upon human health. As such, there are no wider environmental implications.

8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 No additional resources are required.

9 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Secretary of State for Defra has overall responsible for the attainment of national air quality objectives.
- 9.2 The Council has a duty in law to monitor the air quality in its district.
- 9.3 The Council is required to declare an AQMA where a national air quality objective is exceeded. It must consult with the public and other relevant parties in order to create and implement an Action Plan to improve the air quality within that AQMA.
- 9.4 If any of the national limits for air quality are exceeded and the local authority does not declare an AQMA for any reason then DFRA has the powers to require a Council to carry out its statutory duty.

I confirm that the above recommendation does not depart from Council policy and that appropriate consideration has been given to any budgetary and legal implications.

SMT Lead Officer Signature: _____

Head of Environmental Services

Background Papers:-

2011 Detailed Assessment of Air Quality in Rayleigh for Rochford District Council, May 2011, Air Quality Consultants.

2012 Updating and Screening Assessment for Rochford District Council, May 2012, AMEC Environment & Infrastructure Ltd.

www.essexair.org.uk

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