

**Halesowen Area Committee – 21 March 2012**

**Report of the Director of the Urban Environment**

**Cradley/Windmill Hill – Air Quality**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To update the Committee on air quality issues in Cradley / Windmill Hill in response to a question raised by a member of the public.

**Background**

2. The Committee considered an update report on this matter at their meeting on the 9 November 2011. At that meeting a question was raised with respect to air quality issues associated with vehicle emissions in the Centre, with respect to the development of small public spaces with seating along Windmill Hill.

**Air Quality Issues**

3. Routine monitoring of air quality is undertaken in various locations across the whole of the Dudley Borough, including Windmill Hill.
4. Monitoring at some **kerbside** locations on Windmill Hill has shown nitrogen dioxide levels to be in excess of the national objective, which is a precautionary level set well below that at which even the most sensitive person should be adversely affected. **Kerbside** measurements present a worse case scenario, it is known that nitrogen dioxide levels fall rapidly with distance from the source, in this case, traffic.
5. The precise locations for the proposed seating have not yet been determined, air quality issues will be considered when making decisions concerning location in order that the distance from the highway is adequate so as not to adversely impact upon persons using the seating.
6. In addition it is anticipated that people using the seating will only spend occasional short periods of time at the location thereby further minimising any potential adverse impacts.
7. Notwithstanding this, the Council is pursuing a variety of actions to improve air quality. The Council's Air Quality Action Plan sets out the

actions the Council hopes to take to address the Air Quality issues. For Cradley the action plan includes :

- Improvements to road junctions and traffic signals (upgrade of the pedestrian crossing at the top of Windmill Hill is complete) to ease the flow of traffic, subject to funding availability
  - General measures include:
    - The promotion of low emission vehicles including HGVs and buses
    - An awareness raising campaign, funded by a grant from DEFRA, at schools to publicise the message to firstly consider alternative ways of getting to school but if a car is to be used then to ensure the engine is switched off when the car is stationary.
    - Working with the 6 other West Midlands Local Authorities on a feasibility study for Low Emission Zones.
    - The promotion of walking and cycling in the Local Transport Plan
    - Working with the planning system to minimise the impact of new development.
8. There is no instant solution to the Air Quality issue but it is anticipated that a combination of the action plan measures and the general improvement in emissions from vehicles will control the air quality situation in Cradley and allow progress towards compliance with the national air quality objective for nitrogen dioxide at roadside locations.

## **Finance**

9. All spend incurred to date has been funded by appropriate Council budgets. All future spending on Council assets relating to the regeneration of the Cradley/Windmill Hill local centre will be included in the Capital Programme as necessary.

## **Law**

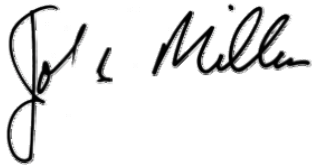
10. Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 enables the Council to do anything which it considers likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social and environmental well being of its area.

## **Equality Impact**

11. This work has been conducted in full accordance with the Council's equality and diversity policies and should in no way have any prejudicial impact on different racial groups, disabled people, both genders and/or other relevant groups. The needs of children and young people are considered in the planning process for centres

## **Recommendation**

12. It is recommended that Committee note the contents of this report



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## **List of Background Papers**