

Select Committee on the Environment, 4th March 2010

Report of the Director of The Urban Environment

A report on progress with the Dudley MBC Air Quality Action plan.

Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report is to provide members with details of the Air Quality Action Plan proposed for Dudley MBC. It addresses the following issues;
- Areas identified as having poor air quality
 - Air Quality Management Area Declaration leading to the air quality action plan.
 - Air Quality Action Plan progress
 - Actions designed to improve air quality within the Dudley Borough

Background

- 2.1 Local Authorities have had a legal duty to control air pollution since the 1950's with the introduction of the Clean Act 1956. More recently Local Authorities under the provisions of the Environment Act 1995 have a legal duty to review and assess air quality in their areas. Since the publication of the first edition of the National Air Quality Strategy (NAQS) in 1997, Dudley MBC has either monitored or modelled concentrations of all NAQS pollutants (except for Poly Aromatic Hydrocarbon) where there is no requirement to do so) across the Borough. This work indicated that only nitrogen dioxide and fine particulates need to be monitored to comply with its obligations under Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) requirements.
- 2.2 The latest air quality data collected indicates that air quality in Dudley continues to be generally acceptable with concentrations of fine particulates meeting current NAQS objectives. However, breaches of the annual mean nitrogen dioxide objective have been confirmed at several roadside locations across the Borough.
- 2.3 Dudley MBC is legally required to declare one or more Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) for those parts of the Borough in which the air quality objective is likely to be exceeded. Declaration of The whole Borough AQMA was completed in December 2007, amalgamating the former AQMA of Brierley Hill and Sedgley.
- 2.4 In response to the declaration of the Borough as an Air Quality Management Area an Air Quality Action Plan has been prepared which identifies the areas within the Borough where known air quality objectives are being or likely to be exceeded and proposes measures to address the exceedences.
- 2.5 Exceedences of the annual mean objective for nitrogen dioxide were confirmed at the following locations:

- Netherton- Halesowen Road
- Cradley- Windmill Hill
- Wordsley- High Street
- Brierley Hill- High Street (prior to construction of new parallel route)
- Sedgley-High Street, Dudley Street
- Quarry Bank- High Street
- Pensnett- High Street
- Lye- Pedmore Road, Dudley Road
- Halesowen- Stourbridge Road, Dudley Road, Hagley Road
- Dudley- New Street,
- Lower Gornal- Himley Road

Additional concerns have been identified at residential properties along Birmingham New Road in close proximity to Burnt Tree Island and the Town Gate Retail Park.

- 2.6 The major source of air pollution in these areas has been identified as due to emissions from the exhausts of road vehicles. The source apportionment work undertaken as a part of the preparation for the AQAP has demonstrated that there is a larger contribution from heavy goods vehicles and passenger transport vehicles operating in the areas with poor air quality than other areas. Further research on this issue is required to determine how best to combat the problem.
- 2.7 The Dudley MBC AQAP will be submitted to DEFRA during February 2010 for comments. Full consultation will be undertaken with residents of the Dudley Borough and other interested bodies both within and outside of the Borough. It is our intention to undertake consultation via the Dudley MBC web site, through officer reports to all Area Committees, specific contact with residents living within all of the areas known to be exceeding the air quality objectives (as listed above in point 25 of this report), through contact with local centre regeneration consultation initiatives and events to publicise the AQAP at centres within the Borough with the assistance of Corporate Marketing & Communications officers.
- 2.8 The main purpose of the AQAP is to provide actions which can be undertaken to help prevent further increases in air pollution and where practicable reduce concentrations of Nitrogen Dioxide to below National Objectives. The actions proposed in the AQAP are listed under the following headings;
- Information & Education
 - Leading by Example
 - Reducing Vehicle Emissions
 - Improving Public Transport
 - Road Network Improvements
 - Land Use Planning Initiatives
 - Industrial, Commercial & Domestic actions
 - Encouraging Modal Shift to public transport
- 2.9 Actions currently identified as being a part of the AQAP include the following;
- Utilise the publicity currently being funded by the Healthy Towns initiative to promote good air quality, in particular the “alternative green corridors” aspect to the Healthy Towns Initiative which

provides for additional footways, cycle paths and associated facilities for users.

- Interactive work with the Dudley Borough Schools on air quality issues, providing education to minimise vehicle journeys to and from schools and where practicable the participation of the school in assisting with the air quality monitoring network within the Borough. This work is to be undertaken in partnership with the Dudley MBC Transport officers.
- Involvement with the Dudley MBC Green Project focusing on reduction in carbon across the community where practicable, also include reduction in emissions of any other pollutants with national objectives to reach.
- Offer advice on the air quality implications for the DMBC vehicle fleet to ensure that as well as best value for money the best environmental option for air quality is also considered when replacement or new vehicles are purchased or leased.
- Consider incentives to encourage the use of alternatively fuelled vehicles in areas of poor air quality.
- Developing voluntary partnerships with key stakeholders to deliver enhanced bus and passenger services thereby reducing vehicle emissions and improving the public transport offer.
- Provide air quality information to support the improvements to rail freight initiatives to move freight from the road network onto rail.
- Identify and assist in prioritising road network improvements on the current highways within the Borough to reduce nitrogen dioxide concentrations at those critical locations listed in paragraph 2.5 in this report, including traffic management initiatives.
- Improve and monitor the effectiveness of air quality requirements for new development within the Borough with the objective of assisting regeneration to provide acceptable buildings which are future proofed against air quality issues. To be undertaken in partnership with Elected Members, Development Control Officers and Strategic Planning Officers.
- Continue to monitor air quality in the areas identified within the AQAP in order to demonstrate the improvements made through the implementation of the AQAP requirements.

2.10 Examples of two ongoing projects with positive air quality implications;

- The Brierley Hill Sustainable Access Network (SAN) project has provided new traffic routes around Brierley Hill and numerous improvements to the highway network in the vicinity of Brierley Hill to assist good traffic flow. Air quality monitoring has now demonstrated a significant improvement in air quality in Brierley Hill High Street and elsewhere in the area previously designated as the Brierley Hill AQMA. All air quality monitoring locations in the affected area are currently compliant with the National air quality objective for nitrogen dioxide.
- Through partnership working with Planning Officers a Section 106 agreement for the sum of £67K has been secured to monitor air quality in the vicinity of Tesco & Burntree Island, Dudley. This will enable the accurate determination of any air quality issue in this location which need to be addressed in the future through the AQAP.

2.11 The work carried out on air quality monitoring and the declaration of a whole

Borough Air Quality Management Area and a subsequent Air Quality Action Plan is designed to reduce concentrations of specific pollutants to within National Objectives. This will have a positive impact on the environment, the health of all people residing and working within the Borough and the long term regeneration of the Borough.

Finance

- 3.1 Air Quality Monitoring work is funded from within existing budgets. There is no direct funding for the implementation of any part of the Air Quality Action Plan. The financial implications of activities identified within the Air Quality Action Plan will need to be monitored closely. Many of the initiatives will be delivered in partnership and will be funded by realignment of existing resource

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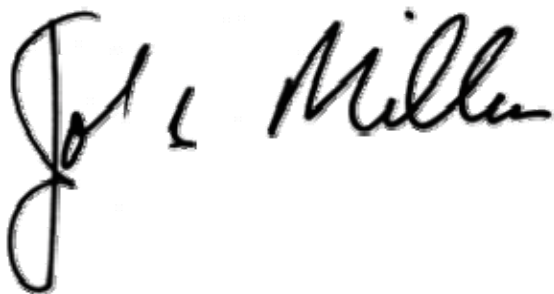
- 4.1 Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council has a statutory duty under the provisions of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 to review and assess air quality in its area.

Equality Impact

- 5.1 The content of this report complies with the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy. There is no specific effect on children and young people.

Recommendation

- 6.1 It is recommended that members note the progress made with developing the Air Quality Action Plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Millar'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'John' and the last name 'Millar' clearly distinguishable.

John Millar
Director of Urban Environment

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List of Background Papers

The Environment Act 1995, Part iv
Air Quality Limit Values Regulations (as amended) 2001
Local Air Quality Management Guidance
Local Air Quality Management Policy Guidance
The United Kingdom National Air Quality Strategy