

Meeting of the Cabinet - 14th September 2011

Report of the Director of the Urban Environment

Dudley MBC Air Quality Action Plan

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of the report is to present the details of the Dudley MBC Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) to Cabinet to seek approval for the formal adoption of the AQAP.

Background

2. The air quality in Dudley is generally good, however there are some roadside locations within the Borough where breaches of the annual mean nitrogen dioxide objective have been confirmed. The purpose of the AQAP is to set out the actions that the Council intend to take to help prevent further increases in air pollution and where practicable reduce concentrations of nitrogen dioxide to below national objectives.
3. The draft AQAP was presented to the Select Committee for the Environment in March 2010. Following a subsequent full internal and external consultation process required by the Select Committee the final draft AQAP was submitted to the Department for the Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) for comment in April 2011. The AQAP has been approved by Defra and includes the following statement:

“Overall, it is clear that much work has gone into the production of this Action Plan. The Council should be commended for their robust approach in producing this report and are encouraged to provide similar detail in future progress reports and action plans”.

A report on the final version of the AQAP was presented to the Environment Scrutiny Committee on 16th June 2011. The recommendation to support the final version of the AQAP being reported to Cabinet for formal adoption by Dudley MBC was approved.

The full version of the AQAP as approved by Defra and supported by the Environment Scrutiny Committee and an Action Plan Summary can be accessed via the hyper link below and a hard copy is available in the Members Room.

www.dudley.gov.uk/airqualityconsultation

4. The AQAP lists the actions to be undertaken under the following headings;

- Road Network Improvements
- Information & Education
- Leading by Example
- Reducing Vehicle Emissions
- Improving Public Transport
- Land Use Planning Initiatives
- Industrial, Commercial & Domestic actions
- Encouraging changes in travel behaviour

5. Numerous actions have already been completed or are currently being progressed, they include many which utilise a partnership approach;

- Highway network improvements (for example, Brierley Hill SAN, Netherton junction improvements & a new puffin pedestrian crossing in Cradley)
- Involvement with the Healthy Towns project on alternatives to private vehicles, the “green corridors” initiative.
- Working with DMBC Education service to provide an air quality on line resource
- Operating with Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) with respect to reporting Smokey commercial vehicles operating on the Boroughs highways
- Support for regeneration through the development control process to ensure we do not introduce people to areas of poor air quality
- Advising CENTRO on air quality issues to assist in the strategic provision of enhanced public transport & associated facilities
- Working with industry to identify & minimise emissions to the environment
- Attracting a Defra grant of £100,000 in 2010 as part of a West Midlands Metropolitan Boroughs bid to progress air quality resolutions.

6. There are still many further challenges to safeguarding good air quality within Dudley Borough which are addressed by the AQAP;

- Identifying incentives to encourage increased usage of alternatively fuelled vehicles
- Utilising air quality data to support regional bids to improve rail freight capabilities and the Midland Metro extension
- Identifying ways to reduce exhaust emissions from heavy goods vehicles using the Boroughs highways
- Supporting travel plan requirements for new commercial, residential & industrial developments
- Securing funding through air quality opportunities for additional road

network improvements

- Initiating a new air quality planning obligations strategy

7. The work carried out to progress the AQAP 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, working and visiting the Dudley Borough and assist with the long term regeneration of the Borough. The AQAP specifically contributes to the Council Plan themes and corporate priorities regarding the environment and health.

Finance

8. There is no direct funding for the implementation of any part of the AQAP other than routine air quality monitoring, which is funded from within existing revenue budgets. The financial implications of activities identified within the AQAP will need to be met from external funding sources. Funding for both Dudley MBC and West Midlands air quality initiatives have previously attracted Defra funding.

Law

9. 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.

Dudley MBC is legally required to declare one or more Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) for those parts of the Borough in which the national air quality objective is likely to be exceeded. In response to this duty the whole Dudley Borough has been declared as an AQMA for concentrations of Nitrogen Dioxide. (As have all other West Midlands Metropolitan Boroughs other than Solihull)

In response to the declaration of the Borough as an AQMA an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) is legally required to be 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.

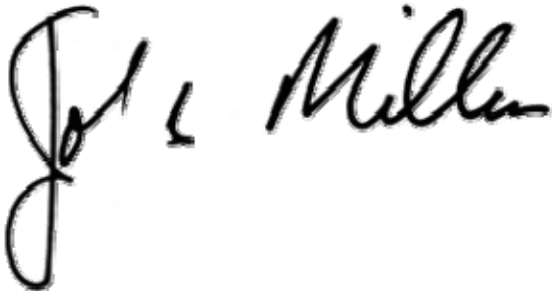
The proposed adoption of the AQAP detailed in this report will address this duty.

Equality Impact

10. The content of this report complies with the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy. There is no specific effect on children and young people.

Recommendation

11. It is recommended that the Cabinet support and formally adopt the Dudley Metropolitan Borough Air Quality Action plan as detailed by this report.



.....
John Millar
Director of the Urban Environment

Contact Officer: Tim Glews (Environmental Protection Manager)
Telephone: 01384 814606
Email: tim.glews@dudley.gov.uk

List of Background Papers

The report to Environment Scrutiny Committee on 16th June 2011
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