

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

7 February 2012

Report of the Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Executive Non Key Decisions

1 SCRUTINY REVIEW OF THE LOCAL AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT REGIME

To receive and endorse the recommendations arising from the above review.

1.1 The Review

1.1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report to its meeting of 10th January 2012 outlining the conclusions and recommendations from the review of the local air quality management regime. A Scrutiny Committee Panel had been established to investigate this matter in detail.

1.1.2 The following recommendations were agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration by the Cabinet:

1. The Borough Council writes to DEFRA expressing serious concern about the burdensome nature of the air quality reporting regime and the lack of statutory powers to achieve air quality improvements, specifically:
 - (a) suggesting that the reporting regime be reviewed/reduced, including reducing the frequency that USAs are produced, to every five years and that, in the interim years, DEFRA looks at the Council's website for the annual monitoring results. The Council would be happy to ensure that the results are presented in a standard format/table;
 - (b) organisations that are identified within the AQAP as a "Lead Authority" for undertaking an action, should be under a legal obligation to report back on their progress for the AQAP Update Report ;
 - (c) seek confirmation that borough/district councils are the most appropriate level of authority to be carrying out this extensive monitoring programme; and
 - (d) obtain clarification about the criteria that will be applied to the disposal of EU fines to local authorities.

2. There may be benefit in joint working initiatives with local authorities with whom we share a boundary, and officers are to initially identify options for joint working with Maidstone Borough Council as our shared border includes the M20, A20, A26 and Forstal Road. The possibility of a joint application for funding from DEFRA will also be investigated.
3. Officers will review the number of measures in the AQAP with a view to reducing/prioritising them into a small number of achievable/attainable targets.
4. It is recommended that a letter is written to KCC requesting that they consider any resultant impacts of measures identified in the AQAP on areas where there is not an AQ issue/problem currently and where any might have an adverse affect on other residents.
5. A formal approach be made in writing to Kent County Council requesting a review and understanding of the traffic light network in the Borough with particular emphasis on locations within Watlingbury AQMA and Tonbridge High Street AQMA to see if the sequencing could be altered to improve traffic flow in those areas.
6. Local Members should be involved in the process in order to make full use of their local knowledge.
7. The Borough's two MPs should be included in the correspondence that is produced as a result of this Scrutiny Review.

1.2 Recommendation

1.2.1 That the above recommendations **BE ENDORSED**.

Background papers:

contact: Mark Raymond

Nil

David Hughes
Chief Executive