

Scrutiny and Overview Committee 10 January 2012

Recommendations following the review of Air Quality in the Borough

Extract from Annex 1 of the Report to the Committee

Full report is available on:

<http://egenda.tmbc.gov.uk/akstonbridge/users/public/admin/kab12.pl?cmte=OSC&meet=3&arc=71>

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Borough Council writes to DEFRA expressing concern about the burdensome nature of the air quality reporting regime and the lack of statutory powers to achieve air quality improvements, specifically:
- 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;
 - 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 ;
 - seek confirmation that borough/district councils are the most appropriate level of authority to be carrying out this extensive monitoring programme; and
 - obtain clarification about the criteria that will be applied to the disposal of EU fines to local authorities.
- 9.2 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.
- 9.3 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.
- 9.4 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.

- 9.5 Local Members should be involved in the process in order to make full use of their local knowledge.
- 9.6 The Borough's two MPs should be included in the correspondence that is produced as a result of this Scrutiny Review.

The recommendations of the Committee, following the officers report were:

(1) the recommendations arising from the review of the Local Air Quality Management regime be commended to the Cabinet for further consideration, subject to strengthening the wording in paragraph 9.1 of the annex to reflect 'serious concern' ; and

(2) 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 Watlington AQMA and Tonbridge High Street AQMA to see if the sequencing could be altered to improve traffic flow in those areas.