

TO: EXECUTIVE
16 APRIL 2013

AMENDMENT TO AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREAS
Director of Environment, Culture and Communities

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Council declared two areas within the Borough as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in February 2011 (see Appendix 1). This fulfilled the Council's statutory obligations under the Environment Act 1985 and the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) Framework.
- 1.2 This report seeks authorisation to amend the boundaries of the AQMAs following the Further Assessment Report.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **That the Executive agree the variation of the Orders made on 9 February 2011 to include the areas as shown in the maps in Appendix 2.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 Air Quality Management Areas must be declared where air quality monitoring has shown that there is, or likely to be, an exceedance of the annual mean objectives for certain pollutants. In the case of the two areas declared, the pollutants were Nitrogen Dioxide, which arise from vehicle emissions.
- 3.2 As required, following the declaration of the original AQMAs a Further Assessment was undertaken to provide more detail as to the cause of the exceedances. The Further Assessment also reviewed whether the AQMAs as agreed still covered the right areas.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 There are no alternative options. A failure to amend the AQMAs would be a breach of the Council's statutory obligations.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 The Council is under an ongoing obligation to protect public health through the regular monitoring and review of local air quality. Local authorities are required to submit their results to DEFRA for scrutiny. The Borough's first Air Quality Assessment (completed in 2000) highlighted a potential for the Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) objective to be exceeded in some locations, this situation has been closely monitored since that time. In 2010, DEFRA confirmed that a Detailed Assessment of air quality needed to be undertaken following which two AQMA's were declared. The AQMAs are Area 1, Bagshot Road (A322), Horse and Groom Roundabout,

Unrestricted

Downshire Way (A322) and Area 2, Bracknell Road (B3348) and Crowthorne High Street, Crowthorne.

- 5.2 The pollutant of concern within Bracknell Forest is still Nitrogen Dioxide. The relevant trigger levels are typically exceeded around the UK where traffic levels are highest and homes are closest to the road. All of the Borough's neighbouring authorities have declared AQMAs. The majority of the Borough does not give rise to any air quality concerns and fall within the standards set out in the National Air Quality Strategy. The first trigger level is set at just 40 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ as an annual mean and the results just exceed these at point of reception ie front garden of adjoining homes in the two relevant AQMA areas. It should be noted that there are no known health implications with these levels of nitrogen dioxide. The results confirm that there are no exceedencies in respect of other pollutants such as particulate matter.
- 5.3 As required further more detailed monitoring has been undertaken since the original AQMAs were declared. Having taken due account of the results minor changes are now required to the boundary of both AQMAs. Area 1 needs to be extended to include additional residential properties on Downshire Way and Bagshot Road. Area 2 needs to be amended to reflect a smaller area of exceedence and the fact that no relevant exposure exists north of the Bracknell road roundabout. This area also needs to incorporate some additional residential properties on Sandhurst Road. In summary there are 230 properties within Area 1, of which 115 are known to contain a residential element. There are 259 properties within Area 2, of which 162 are known to contain a residential element. The Further Assessment was undertaken before the Horse and Groom Roundabout works and the speed cushioning to Crowthorne High Street was completed.
- 5.4 In the period since the first declaration of the AQMAs we have been developing an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP). The measures within this plan will draw out those already agreed in the Local Transport Plan (LTP3). Under LTP3 we have already undertaken a number of measures that should have a positive effect on local air quality. Whilst we don't yet have an approved AQAP we are taking opportunities as they arise to try to improve air quality in these areas, for example the replacement of the speed ramp 'pillows' with 'cushions' in Crowthorne High Street. The AQAP will be produced as part of the update of the current LTP which is envisaged to occur in 2014. Should an Action Plan determine that there are practical measures that can be taken; funding will be sought through the LTP process.
- 5.5 We are currently monitoring the impact upon air quality at both the above mentioned sites and the results will be reported upon next year. From a practical perspective the ability of the Council to influence air quality is always going to be limited although the ongoing measures to reduce congestion and improve traffic flows around the borough will have a positive impact on air quality. The greater influence comes from the ever improving technology used in relation to motor vehicles relative to improving the quality of exhaust emissions.
- 5.6 Letters have been sent to all the households, informing them that their properties will now be within the AQMAs following the amendments.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 The relevant legal issues are addressed within the main body of the report.

Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 The ongoing review and assessment process of air quality will give rise to some revenue implications; however the costs can be contained within the existing budget.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 There are no changes to policy or plans that are proposed by this report; it is purely a statutory process to correct air quality levels at two specified locations in the Borough.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 There are no strategic risk management issues relating to this report as specified in the strategic risk register. It is anticipated there will be vocal concern from local public and interest groups who will see further growth and development as being contrary to the aims of an Action Plan associated with an AQMA. It will be important for BFC to show how the AQMAs are being taken into account in planning for new development and how that development will contribute to air quality improvements overall.

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 It is not a requirement to consult at this stage. However once the Action Plan is drafted, consultation will be undertaken with local residents.

Method of Consultation

- 7.2 The action plan will be published upon the council website to allow for comment.

Representations Received

- 7.3 Not applicable.

Contacts for further information

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