

Agenda Item No. 4(h)

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND
INFRASTRUCTURE**

8 September 2015

Report of the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment

AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREA, BRIMINGTON (CHESTERFIELD)

(1) **Purpose of Report** To advise the Cabinet Member of the declaration of an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) which places a statutory duty on the County Council to consider potential measures to address air quality.

(2) **Information and Analysis** Local air quality is recognised as a major influence on public health. Particulate air pollution (closely associated with road traffic emissions) is estimated to be responsible for tens of thousands of premature deaths each year in the UK. It has been estimated that removing all fine particulate air pollution would have a bigger impact on life expectancy than eliminating passive smoking or road traffic accidents. The economic cost from the impacts of air pollution in the UK is estimated to be comparable to that of obesity (over £10 billion per annum).

In this particular case, Chesterfield Borough Council has publicised its declaration of an AQMA for an area containing several residential properties in central Brimington. These are on a section of the A619 Principal Road which links Chesterfield with Staveley, M1 Motorway Junction 30, the A6192 to Markham Vale and M1 Junction 29a. This particular section comprises a one-way (gyratory) system within which eastbound traffic is subject to significant queues and delays. There is often stationary traffic outside the properties concerned, which are separated from the carriageway only by a narrow footway. As the AQMA is made on the basis of traffic pollutants, the County Council will need to carry out a review of possible measures to improve air quality and submit these to the Borough Council. It will be sensible to examine the potential roles to be played by:

- Sustainable transport interventions (encouraging walking, cycling and bus travel) which might reduce the volume of traffic.
- Ways to influence the vehicle fleet in the area for example, through assisting the uptake of low-emission vehicles.

- Traffic management options which would result in a smoother flow of traffic through the area.
- Traffic management options which would result in a re-routeing of traffic through or around the area.
- A more comprehensive solution in the form of a bypass.
- A combination of the above.

The Cabinet Member will note that the Council's duties include the provision of a delivery schedule for whichever measures it proposes and it will need to be clear these can be put in place through available resources. Therefore, whilst there are long-standing proposals for a bypass or regeneration route, the Council will need to be clear this would be deliverable in order for it to form the principal response to the AQMA.

Given the specialist nature of this area of work, it is likely that consultancy support will be required to help determine the effectiveness of potential solutions. Whilst it may be relatively simple to predict changes in traffic volumes, and even in queues and delays, the relationship of these with the emission of pollutants is complex. It is therefore anticipated that some support will be procured through the PSP2 framework (use of which was approved by Cabinet at its meeting of 14 April 2015) using existing transportation studies revenue budgets.

At this stage, it is anticipated that a further report to the Cabinet Member will be required to approve a County Council response to Chesterfield Borough Council over the AQMA. Any specific schemes recommended through this would need to be approved through the Economy, Transport and Environment Department's Service Plan 2016-17, or through a separate report to Cabinet.

(3) Financial Considerations Initial work on examining potential measures in pursuit of improving air quality within the declared AQMA will be undertaken by officers. Any external technical support required will be funded from the Transport Strategy Revenue Budget.

(4) Legal Considerations The process of air quality review and assessment is set out in the Environment Act 1995. This places duties upon Environmental Health Authorities (in two-tier areas, the district or borough council) to monitor air quality and, where required because of breaches of certain pollutant thresholds, to designate parts of their area as AQMAs. Wherever this takes place, the relevant authority must prepare a written action plan setting out its proposed response and a statement of the time or times by, or within which, the authority in question proposes to implement each of the proposed measures.

In two-tier areas, where a district or borough council is preparing an action plan, the relevant county council has a duty to submit to the district or borough

council its own proposals in pursuit of the achievement of air quality standards and objectives, under any relevant powers exercisable by a county council. The Act sets out the process to be followed should the county, district or borough council not agree on the required actions and empowers the Secretary of State, where required, to give direction to the county council (which has a duty to comply should this take place).

Other Considerations

In preparing this report, the relevance of the following factors has been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, legal, human resources, environmental, health, property and transport considerations.

(5) **Key Decision** No.

(6) **Call-In** Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

(7) **Background Papers** Held within the Economy, Transport and Environment Department. Officer contact details – Jim Seymour, extension 38557.

(8) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS** That the Cabinet Member:

- 8.1 Notes the declaration of an Air Quality Management Area within Brimington and the statutory requirement for the County Council to consider measures designed to improve local air quality.
- 8.2 Authorises the procurement through existing arrangements of specialist advice on the impacts of potential traffic and demand management measures.
- 8.3 Agrees to consider a further report recommending a formal County Council response for submission to Chesterfield Borough Council.

Mike Ashworth
Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment

