

**READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES**

TO:	Strategic Environment Planning and Transport Committee		
DATE:	15 JULY 2015	AGENDA ITEM:	10
TITLE:	Air Quality Action Plan Update		
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The existing Air Quality Action Plan which has been in place since 2009 has been reviewed, as some of the actions have either been completed or superseded.
- 1.2 The revised Air Quality Action Plan contains measures to improve air quality across Reading, specifically targeting action on the key pollutants of concern - Nitrogen Dioxide and Particulate Matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}). Delivering actions to reduce levels and exposure of them will help to safeguard public health and improve quality of life for all.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That Committee notes the work that is being undertaken to improve air quality and endorses the update to the action plan.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Council are under a statutory duty to regularly 'review and assess' air quality in their areas, and to determine whether or not air quality objectives are likely to be achieved. Where exceedances are considered likely, the Council must then declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and prepare an Air Quality Action Plan setting out the measures it intends to put in place in pursuit of the objectives.

In September 2006, the Council declared six Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA's). In September 2009, monitoring indicated additional areas where nitrogen dioxide levels were being exceeded. As a result the six AQMA's were revoked and replaced by a single management area which covers perceived and actual exceedances.

4. THE ACTION PLAN

- 4.1 The Action Plan sets out a series of interventions and ways to provide education/promotion of the issues.
- 4.2 These interventions include work with colleagues and partners in Transport, Planning, Sustainability, Public Health, Licensing and Parks.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 The delivery of the Air Quality Action Plan helps to deliver the Corporate Plan Service Priority: Keeping the town clean, safe green and active. Within which it is a key action to narrow the gap by reducing particulate matter mortality to the national average of 5.3%.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1 Once the Action Plan has been through SEPT it will be published on the website and circulated to partners and stakeholders.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 No equality impact assessment is required as part of this action plan.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The UK is failing to meet EU limit values for nitrogen dioxide. This has led to the EU commencing infraction proceedings. If fined for failing to meet these targets, the fines can potentially be handed down to local authorities if they are unable to demonstrate that they have taken the appropriate action. The Localism Act contains reserve powers to enable the Government to passport EU fines to local authorities and public bodies.

On 29th April 2015 Client Earth won a legal battle against the UK government. The Supreme Court ruled that plans to cut illegal levels of air pollution in Britain are insufficient. The ruling means that the Government must start work on a comprehensive plan to meet pollution limits as soon as possible.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Air Quality Action Plan combines actions from different services for which in the main capital grants have been secured to deliver the outcomes.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Air Quality Action Plan Update