



**OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE  
(WAVERLEY)**

**WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL'S AIR QUALITY ACTION  
PLAN**

**12 SEPTEMBER 2008**

**KEY ISSUE**

The Committee is invited to note, that following a period of consideration and consultation, Waverley Borough Council's Air Quality Action Plan has now been approved by the Borough Council and submitted to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). The Committee is now asked to consider implementation of the Plan and in particular to identify opportunities for actions across the Councils and across the Borough.

**SUMMARY**

Waverley Borough Council has produced its Air Quality Action Plan to demonstrate how exceedences of air quality standards are being tackled in Farnham, Godalming and Hindhead. Many of these measures involve joint working with Surrey County Council on transport measures and the final plan reflects this. In April 2009 and annually thereafter, the Waverley Borough Council is required to update Defra on the extent to which the partners have delivered the Action Plan measures. Delivery requires partnership working with Surrey County Council as the transport authority.

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Local Committee (Waverley) is asked to agree to:**

- (i) Endorse the continued joint working by officers of the County Council and Waverley Borough Council to develop proposals to deliver the necessary Action Plan improvements in Farnham and Godalming.

- (ii) Invite Surrey County Council and Waverley Borough Council officers to prepare an annual progress report on delivering the Action Plan – in the form of a draft of the Air Quality Action Plan Progress Report in advance of its required submission to DEFRA in April each year.
- (iii) Consider how it wishes to respond to the possible small-scale measures proposed in paragraph 3.3.

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Arising from the Environment Act 1995, Waverley BC, as a District Council, has a legal duty to monitor levels of local air pollution. Where pollutants exceed the objectives set by the Government, Waverley BC must declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and then produce an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) to show how it is addressing the air quality issues within the AQMA. Air pollution exceedences were identified in specified parts of Farnham, Godalming and Hindhead and as a result, Waverley designated these areas and produced a draft AQAP in January 2008.
- 1.2 Members are asked to note that the completion of the A3 Hindhead tunnel and bypass in 2011 are expected to deliver the necessary improvements in air quality. Hindhead is therefore not included in the focus of this report.

### ANALYSIS

- 2.1 Members commented on the Draft Air Quality Action Plan at the Local Committee meeting on 7 March 2008 as part of the formal consultation process.
- 2.2 Towards the end of the consultation period Surrey County Council published its 'Review of Major Schemes in Farnham', carried out by the Scott Wilson Group plc.
- 2.3 The Farnham Review Study proposed three options for improving traffic management in Farnham, including the area covered by the AQMA. These three options involve increasing levels of intervention including, in option 2b a part-time pedestrianisation of The Borough – the area with the highest level of pollution. This option, and its associated comprehensive package of complementary measures to assist pedestrians, bus-users, and cyclists, appears to have the greatest potential to address the air quality problem in the Farnham AQMA..
- 2.4 Surrey CC officers have advised that further detailed modelling of the effects on traffic would need to be undertaken, together with an

appraisal of cost-benefit and affordability, before any of these measures could be considered for funding.

- 2.5 Following a period of public consultation and consideration by Waverley BC's Environment and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Executive the final AQAP was approved by the Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2008.
- 2.6 During its passage through the borough Council, several Waverley BC members expressed concern that the necessary transport improvements may not be delivered in a timely manner such as to assist the goals of the Action Plan. They requested that officers from each of the Councils meet to discuss a joint approach to delivery of the goals of the AQAP. This meeting has now taken place and focussed largely on measures for the Farnham AQMA – and to a lesser extent on the Godalming AQMA, where exceedences of the air quality objectives are lower than in Farnham.
- 2.7 Surrey CC officers outlined funding issues that may affect the timely delivery of the Action Plan (2.8-2.9) as well as a series of opportunities (2.10).
- 2.8 Funding for large-scale transport improvements is allocated via the Regional Transport Board and is currently understood to be fully allocated to at least 2016. The Regional Transport Board mainly allocates funds to schemes which are consistent with the objectives of the South East Plan and of regional benefit rather than relatively localised schemes for smaller towns such as Farnham.
- 2.9 Surrey CC's Executive decided in January 2008 that the focus of Surrey's Local Transport Plan funding until 2011 is on road maintenance. As a result, less is being allocated for other types of improvement scheme.
- 2.10 Some Local Transport Plan funding is nevertheless available for funding smaller-scale schemes in Waverley via the Local Committee allocation. In addition Surrey CC officers have discussed the possibility of developing a strategy for delivering a series of minor transport and 'Smarter Choices' improvements for smaller towns. Farnham could be a priority for consideration as part of such a strategy. Waverley BC officers noted that Waverley is now eligible to bid for funding to support its AQAP under an annual DEFRA air quality grant. This funding, though limited in scope and with no definitive information yet available about the next round, is available to support measures that would not normally be funded by other Government funding streams, such as the Local Transport Plan.
- 2.11 Waverley is obliged to report annually from April 2009 to DEFRA on the progress towards delivery of the AQAP, which includes progress

towards meeting the necessary emission reduction targets as well as associated targets, such as a reduction in congestion.

## **OPTIONS**

- 3.1 **No action.** The local air quality duties and objectives set out by the 1995 Environment Act are intended to help the UK deliver its air quality objectives required under EU air quality legislation (recently updated as Directive 2008/50/EC). The Act requires local authorities to monitor local air quality and take steps where national air quality objectives are not being met. It should be noted that air quality may improve even with the “do nothing” option – as EU standards for cleaner engines continue to reduce pollutant emissions. However, the extent of such improvements in specific locations cannot yet be predicted.
- 3.2 **Large-scale measures.** A local authority is not expected to take steps to address air quality problems where this is not cost-effective or feasible. The large-scale measures required to deliver the necessary improvements for Farnham and Godalming may prove too costly, though more work would be needed to draw this conclusion.
- 3.3 **Small-scale measures.** Members might wish to support the development of a strategy for Farnham that starts with an agreement to allocate funding via the Local Committee (Waverley). Examples of this type of action have been outlined in the AQAP and the Farnham Review Study:
- Developing travel plans for major employers in Farnham and Godalming
  - A road freight partnership
  - Variable messaging signs at the entrances to Farnham indicating availability of nearest car parks
  - An awareness campaign to encourage sustainable travel
  - Review and retuning of traffic signal installations in Godalming
  - A campaign to discourage domestic bonfires and promote alternatives, such as composting at home
  - Higher levels of on-street parking enforcement in targeted areas to help avoid congestion
  - A policy for promoting electric vehicles
  - Roadside vehicle emission checking
  - ‘Turn off engine’ signage at Farnham railway crossing

It should be noted that individually many of these options would have a small impact on air quality in the AQMAs, but may have significant combined impact on influencing behaviour, raising awareness of air quality issues and thereby improving quality of life.

- 3.4 County and Borough Council officers will continue to work together to develop proposals to deliver the necessary Action Plan improvements in Farnham and Godalming.
- 3.5 Members may also wish to invite officers of both Councils to prepare an annual progress report on delivering the Action Plan – in the form of a draft of the AQAP Progress Report in advance of its required submission to DEFRA in April each year.
- 3.6 The Committee is reminded that it resolved, at its meeting on 7 March 2008, to request that its area-based Transportation Task Groups should bear the provisions of the AQAP in mind when developing proposals.

### **CONSULTATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no consultation responses required.

### **FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are potential resource implications for the County Council associated with the responsibilities set out in sections 3.2 to 3.6 above.

### **EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no specific implications.

### **CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Traffic-related matters are prominent amongst those concerns raised by Waverley residents in relation to community safety. Measures designed to improve air quality are also likely to improve overall quality of life in those parts of the borough which are most affected.

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 The Local Committee (Waverley) is asked to consider supporting options 3.4 to 3.5 of this report and to consider the focus of work in line with the suggestions detailed in 3.3

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 The proposed measures will have an impact on quality of life in Waverley and relate to certain County Council services.

### **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT**

10.1 Officers will develop an outline set of proposals for early delivery as requested by the Committee.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS:** Air Quality Action Plan: full documentation available at [www.waverley.gov.uk/airquality](http://www.waverley.gov.uk/airquality) .