



RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

17 JANUARY 2008

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MINUTE OF REVIEW BOARD – 6 DECEMBER 2007

AIR QUALITY

The Board was informed of the outcome of a detailed assessment of air quality in the Borough.

At its Meeting on 12 October 2006, the Board had agreed to receive a further report on air quality including an analysis of the final report on sites within the Borough where annual mean nitrogen dioxide concentrations had exceeded the air quality "objective" (target). The Board had been notified in February 2007 that DEFRA had accepted this final report subject to a detailed assessment being carried out by Runnymede's consultants, and that the outcome of this assessment would be reported to the Board. This detailed assessment from the Environmental Research Group (ERG), King's College, University of London, had taken longer to complete than anticipated, and had been received on 30 October 2007. The Executive Summary of the detailed assessment was noted by the Board and the full report was available on the Council's internet site. The detailed assessment had been submitted to DEFRA for approval.

Runnymede had statutory duties under the Environment Act 1995. The detailed assessment which had been carried out was part of the process of discharging those duties. Where areas within the borough were identified as not achieving, or not likely to achieve, the necessary air quality standards, then those areas had to be designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA)s. The assessment indicated that the Station Road /High Street area of Addlestone should be so designated and that further assessment was required for the New Haw area.

The Board asked about the effect of the M25 motorway on air quality in Addlestone and New Haw. It was noted that the main problem was local traffic, in particular stationary vehicles with engines running which caused substantially more pollution than vehicles being driven at high speeds. An Air Quality Consultant had been appointed to provide assistance to Officers with regard to implementing the requirements of the report. Officers were not yet in a position to give a detailed report on the implications for public health and it was agreed that a further report be presented to the meeting of the Review Board on 16 April 2008, once the work of the consultant had been completed. The Board agreed that the report in April should also outline the involvement of local groups in the further assessments as outlined below and provide a general summary report on air quality across the borough.

The consultant would be liaising with officers from Surrey County Council and other interested parties, and planning for monitoring of nitrogen dioxide (the primary pollutant of concern) in Addlestone and also in New Haw, as this area also had potential to exceed the national air quality standards. The findings had not been that the air quality had worsened in these areas but rather that it had not improved by a sufficient amount to meet the "objective" or target. New vehicle technology with engines that emitted less noxious substances should improve the position over the next few years. This would apply to both cars and planes. More sustainable buildings would also have a beneficial long term effect. Large buildings could have a "canyon effect" of trapping pollution. It was noted from the full detailed assessment report that some areas in the north of the borough (e.g. in the vicinity of Egham Sports Centre) had worse air quality results than the south of the borough. It was noted that an AQMA had already been declared for an area in Egham in the north of the borough near the M25 and enhanced monitoring had already been undertaken as part of this AQMA. The Board considered that further monitoring should also be undertaken in Egham and Officers agreed to add this to the work that would be done in Addlestone and New Haw.

Levels of nitrogen dioxide were already monitored by "diffusion tubes" at various sites in the borough, as part of a Surrey wide monitoring network in which costs were shared amongst the Surrey districts, and this would be expanded to include more intensive monitoring. It was agreed that Officers should liaise with local community groups and Ward Members on arrangements for further monitoring, in order to raise public awareness of the issue.

It was suggested by a Board Member that, as Addlestone was predominantly downwind of the M25, that there should be a detrimental effect arising from the motorway, and that as parts of New Haw were in very close proximity to the M25, this should also have a worsening effect on air quality. Levels of pollution decreased considerably even a short distance away from the location being monitored. It was suggested that the consultant might be able to differentiate between M25 and non-M25 pollution. It was also noted from an analysis of the full detailed assessment report, that air quality results for the borough had improved for a period during 2004 and 2005. A Board Member suggested that M25 widening roadworks might have been a contributory factor to this. It was agreed that Officers would advise Board Members on the reasons why experts considered that this temporary improvement had occurred.

In view of the problem with stationary traffic, it was possible that the additional pedestrian crossings installed in Addlestone which had improved facilities for pedestrians had exacerbated the air quality problem by slowing traffic down. It was therefore agreed that Officers should investigate with Surrey County Council Highways Officers whether there was scope to alter the phasing of traffic lights in Station Road, Addlestone.

Runnymede spent approximately £3,000 per annum on consultancy work plus Officer time totalling approximately 0.2 full time equivalent member of staff carrying out air quality work. The cost would be somewhat higher in this financial year because of the additional work that would be carried out. The work that arose from the further monitoring might require additional resources in future years. Unlike real time analysers, diffusion tubes were not expensive.

M25 enhanced monitoring had been paid for by the Highways Agency, with the Council providing the staff resources. The Council would meet the cost of the extra monitoring now required as a result of the Detailed Assessment. Costs could be met from existing provision, including from a vacant post which was also funding the air quality consultant. The monitoring would begin as soon as possible for a time period of at least a year.

While the Board agreed to recommend to the Leisure and Environment Committee that further monitoring should take place, it asked about steps that could be taken to improve air quality. It was noted that some local authorities in urban areas had taken on powers to prevent the public from lighting bonfires and that some local authorities had taken action to require motorists to switch off car engines when they were in traffic and their car was not moving. Any action on bonfires or fireworks might lead to a negative reaction from the public unless explained carefully. The Board agreed that Runnymede Officers should liaise with Pollution Study Group Officers at neighbouring Councils on the possibility of action being taken against bonfires and the failure to switch off car engines.

RESOLVED that -

a further report be submitted to the Board's April 2008 meeting outlining the findings of the Air Quality Consultant.

RECOMMEND TO THE LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE that -

- i) an Air Quality Management Area be designated in Addlestone; and**
- ii) further monitoring be undertaken for the New Haw and Egham areas.**

2007 Detailed Assessment of Air Quality for the Runnymede Borough Council



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Acknowledgements

The assistance of Denis Speight and Aileen Baker from the Runnymede Borough Council is gratefully acknowledged in the production of this report.

Executive Summary

This is the Detailed Assessment of air quality for the Runnymede Borough Council (“the Council”). This assessment fulfils the Council’s next step of the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) process and is required as a result of the findings of the Council’s 2006 Updating and Screening Assessment report.

This earlier screening assessment identified that the government’s annual mean nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) objective might be exceeded in part of the Council’s area, specifically close to areas with public exposure by the junction of Station Road and High Street in the town centre of Addlestone and in New Haw. The purpose of this report is therefore to provide an accurate assessment of the likelihood of the objective being exceeded at locations with relevant exposure.

New modelling predictions have been made for this report, and these include both improved modelling methods and treatment of emissions. The report also incorporates the most recent monitoring results for the above areas. The report thus meets the requirements of the technical guidance LAQM. TG (03) produced by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

The Council’s bias adjusted diffusion tube monitoring results for its sites at Station Road and New Haw Road indicated that the 2005 annual mean objective for NO₂ was exceeded for 2004 and also approached during 2006.

The modelling predictions, using 2003 meteorology, for roads in this area showed that the annual mean NO₂ objective was exceeded for 2005 close to the centre of the roads. These predictions were also compared against the biased diffusion tube results and these agreed well, indicating that the predictions did not need further verification.

Concentrations near the Station Road and High Street junction in Addlestone had the highest predicted concentrations and these included areas with relevant exposure. As a result an Air Quality Management Area should be designated in the High Street and Station Road, subject to further monitoring in the area.

The predictions for the New Haw area also indicated that the objective was exceeded mainly close to the road centre lines and not at the façade of residential premises in the area.

Modelling of the same area for PM₁₀ indicates that the daily mean objective was not exceeded where there was relevant exposure.

The Council is recommended to undertake the following actions, in respect of the findings for the statutory objective relating to annual mean nitrogen dioxide.

For the High Street and Station Road area in Addlestone, although improvements are anticipated, an AQMA still needs to be designated due to the 2005 objective being exceeded:

1. Undertake consultation on the findings arising from this report with the statutory and other consultees as required.
2. Confirm that there is relevant exposure in the area predicted to exceed and designate an AQMA based on the area predicted to exceed in this report.
3. Consider extending monitoring in the area to confirm the findings of the report.

For the New Haw area:

4. Confirm that there is not relevant exposure in the area predicted to exceed.
5. Undertake consultation on the findings arising from this report with the statutory and other consultees as required.