

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

7TH MARCH 2018, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors G. N. Denaro (Leader), K.J. May (Deputy Leader),
B. T. Cooper, M. A. Sherrey, C. B. Taylor and P. J. Whittaker

Observers: Councillors S. R. Colella and L. Mallett

Officers: Mrs. S. Hanley, Mrs. C. Felton, Mr C. Forrester, Mrs B. Talbot,
Mrs. H. Mole, Ms. T. Beech, Mr M. Austin and Ms. A. Scarce

94/17 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

95/17 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

96/17 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 21st February 2018 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 21st February 2018 be approved as a correct record.

97/17 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 12TH FEBRUARY 2018**

It was confirmed that the recommendations within the minutes in respect of the Medium Term Financial Plan 2018/19 – 2021/22 had been considered at the Cabinet meeting held on 21st February 2018. It was agreed that it would be more appropriate to consider the recommendations in respect of the Air Quality Management Area, Kidderminster Road, Hagley under that item of the agenda.

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 12 February were noted.

PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Deputy Chief Executive gave a brief overview of the Performance Report and advised Members that officers from the relevant areas were present to respond to any questions that arose. The Measures Dashboard was also displayed to assist Members. This was the first Corporate Performance report, which would in future be presented every two months covering a specific strategic purpose at each meeting together with a set of key corporate measures. This initial report considered the strategic purpose 'Keep my place safe and looking good'.

The following areas were highlighted and discussed in detail:

- Anti-Social Behaviour – example of data, which Safer Bromsgrove drilled down into with real time data being considered by the Group. It was noted that there had been a spike which had referred to a particular individual and details of how this had been dealt with were noted. Members discussed how this could have a huge impact on such data and on a particular area. It was noted that often the school holidays also triggered a spike in incidents.
- Environmental Services – the top 5 high profile demands were detailed for each of the Place Teams. The main areas were fly tipping and litter and it was noted that following the move to the Place Teams, who were able to react locally, with positive feedback having been received.
- In respect of bulky waste, it was noted that there had been a change in the way this service was provided, with a central team now responding to requests, which had proved more cost effective.
- Members thanked the Place Teams for their hard work and asked if there was any new initiative to deal with fly tipping. It was confirmed that a greater use of covert cameras was being planned with resources being used to raise the profile of their use and a lesson learnt from how they had previously been used. It was hoped that with additional cameras this would help combat the problem. It was also noted that there had been a number of successful, high profile; prosecutions which it was also hoped would act as a deterrent.
- Work was also being carried out with Safer Bromsgrove and the Police to obtain funding for signage to also be used as a deterrent.
- Members questioned the formalities which businesses had to go through to legally use the tips and were concerned that this may lead to fly tipping as an alternative. Officers were not aware of the bureaucracy that needed to be gone through for small commercial operators and agreed to investigate this matter further.

- Members raised the issue of education for young children in respect of recycling and whether visiting schools was something which had been considered.
- Members asked how the recycling rate compared with other authorities both locally and nationally. Officers confirmed that Bromsgrove had the highest rate within Worcestershire, with the national highest figure being 65%. This referred to those authorities who provided free garden and food waste collections.
- There were a number of projects planned which would highlight the need to eliminate cross contamination in recycling, which was currently a problem.
- It was confirmed that the tips were solely run by Worcestershire County Council and the figures were not including within those of the Council.
- The report also included a snap shot of the survey undertaken by the Bromsgrove Community Panel and concerns were raised in respect of feeling safe in the community after dark.
- The report also covered a number of key corporate measures, including sickness. A new system had been used and the figures included within the report were those for 2016/17. The number of days absence per full time equivalent was 8.10 days. The figures for 2017/18 would not available until April.
- Members asked whether return to work interviews were held and Officers confirmed that they were and the new system would allow for these to be recorded more accurately and for Human Resources and Payroll to be able to access them to ensure that they were being carried out appropriately.
- It was further confirmed that the figures were slightly below the average for other public sector organisations and the figures had remained broadly the same in recent years.

RESOLVED that the Corporate Performance Report be noted.

99/17

**AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREA - KIDDERMINSTER ROAD,
HAGLEY - POTENTIAL REVOCATION**

The Leader welcomed the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, Councillor L. Mallett and Councillor S. Colella as a Member of the Board and as Ward Councillor for Hagley West. He proposed that the Cabinet considered recommendation a) that Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) reverse the proposal to revoke the Hagley AQMA after consideration had been given to the other recommendations.

It was noted that recommendation d) that the Council increase the AQ monitoring points in Hagley from Stakenbridge Lane to the B4187 (Worcester Road junction) had already been discussed and actioned following the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting.

Councillor Colella was invited to speak and in so doing explained the reason for the request that the revocation of the AQMA be reversed. He raised concerns around the current monitoring process and the use of the small test tubes which were analysed on a monthly cycle with a mean average being taken over a year. It was stated that there was equipment available which able to produce both a maximum and minimum reading, this was important as there were peak traffic times and the impact of residents would be higher particular for those travelling to school on foot or cycling. Hagley had carried out numerous investigations and research and had heard from experts. It was clear that traffic in the area had increased due to the recent developments and therefore it was difficult to understand how the current position had been reached. It was acknowledged that financial support would be needed to carry out such testing, but it was understood that in the not too distant future Central Government would be making available a number of grants for local authorities who needed to improve air quality in their areas.

Mark Cox responded to a number of points raised by Councillor Colella and explained that the testing that was used provided robust quality assurance and meet DEFRA guidelines. The monitoring to which Cllr Colella had referred was used to record measures with a rapid turnover and had a set up cost of around £30k this did not include the cost of maintenance, electricity etc or for the cost of analysing the data collected and calibration. This method was currently being used on the Worcester Road in Wychbold in order to ascertain whether an AQMA was required in that location. This method had also been used in Hagley initially to assess the area. The monitors needed to be in place for 6 months. It was accepted that air quality was a wide concern generally and that DEFRA had guidelines and protocols to follow in respect of AQMA's inception and revocation. The national objective, which took into account "peaks and troughs", was not being exceeded in the case of the Hagley AQMA and therefore it was not appropriate or necessary for it to be retained.

Members noted the availability of such equipment and commented that they had not been aware of this. Mark commented that this had in fact been used initially in Hagley when considering whether it was appropriate to establish an AQMA in the area.

Members had some sympathy with Councillor Colella's concerns in respect of the use of the mean average measurements and how the levels could fluctuate dependent on the weather and the traffic movement in the area. It was questioned whether by revoking the AQMA this would impact on the monitoring and the availability of funding for further investigations within that area and considered whether by

revoking the AQMA the monitoring would be made easier as it did not have to be so strictly based on the guidelines set out by DEFRA.

Mark explained that the annual average over a 3 year period took into account fluctuations and was confident that it met the DEFRA requirements and that there was no longer levels that we needed under the AQMA regime. He further advised Members that the grants referred to by Councillor Colella, were primarily used for larger authorities such as London and Birmingham who had particularly poor air quality and had been mandated to produce clean air. There were a large number of clean air zones which demanded attention throughout the country and it was very likely that they would receive the bulk of this funding.

The Leader referred to recommendation b) that the Council invest in sensitive and appropriate monitoring equipment in all its AQMAs and whilst he sympathised and accepted the need in principle, he requested further detailed costings to be brought back to Cabinet in order to give further consideration as to whether it was appropriate to fit these in all areas or in particular ones. It was noted that detailed monitoring had been carried out in all AQMAs in order to establish them initially and that the monitoring in Hagley had meet the requirements of DEFRA in order for it to be revoked. It was also confirmed that by revoking the AQMA it did not mean that the monitoring would stop, this would continue and the areas where it would take place had been discussed with the relevant ward Members and was being put in place, as requested in recommendation d).

In respect of monitoring for Particulate Matter as detailed in recommendation c) Mark Cox explained to Members that these levels were not monitored across the County but it had not been indicated that there was a particular problem. Any measures of nitrogen dioxide would impact on the particulate levels and whilst there were some issues in Bromsgrove there were none in Hagley.

Councillor Mallett suggested that there was a need to focus on actions being taken rather than on the challenge of monitoring and that it was likely that the reduction which was influencing the revocation of the AQMA was most likely due to a number of reasons, which were undeterminable. However, it was noted that there remained issues in respect of traffic problems in a number of areas, for example along the Worcester Road in Bromsgrove where it was clear that the traffic had got worse, with an increase in the number of vehicles and those vehicles taking longer to travel along the road. It was therefore important, to establish the levels and for appropriate monitoring to take place, whilst understanding the need to take the financial implications of any additional monitoring into account, before making a decision.

Members went on to discuss a number of other areas in more detail, including:

- The work of a Residents' Air Quality Task Group which was established in Hagley.

- The impact of diesel engines and the increase in levels of other CO² emissions.
- The national objectives under the DEFRA guidelines.
- Where the monitoring, using the more detailed equipment, was carried out initially.
- The monitoring was not there to improve the air quality but as a benchmark.
- There was no categorical explanation as to why the levels had reduced in respect of the Hagley AQMA.
- The revocation of the AQMA would not impact on the monitoring – if it were to be retained then any application for grant funding in the future would not be looked on favourably if the Council had an AQMA that did not meet the DEFRA guidelines.
- Preventative work such as the synchronising of traffic lights.
- Concerns that although the AQMA was revoked that residents would not accept that there had been improvements to the air quality.
- The levels were not borderline but well below the recommended level.
- The challenges facing WRS and the need for them to work closely with Worcestershire Highways in light of recent concerns raised in respect of issues which had been raised following developments where it has been proven that the information from WCC was not accurate. This was referred to within recommendation e).
- It was confirmed that monitoring would continue for a further 3 years and the locations had been reviewed following discussions at the Overview and Scrutiny Board.
- Concerns around this Council and WCC encouraging residents to walk and cycle yet the monitors were not on the road sides but by residential properties. It was confirmed that they were placed on the residential properties as part of the DEFRA guidelines.

It was confirmed that should the AQMA be revoked monitoring would continue and this would be provided to DEFRA for background information only. WRS would continue to work with WCC and assert pressure where possible to ensure that air quality was considered at every opportunity.

In respect of the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Board, Cabinet

RESOLVED:

- a) that the Council increase the Air quality monitoring points in Hagley from Stakenbridge Lane to the B4187 (Worcester Road junction);
- b) that Worcestershire Regulatory Services continues to engage fully and positively with Worcestershire County Council Highways to resolve known local Highways issues that exist along AQMAs and adjoin carriageways that effect air quality and health; and

- c) that further costings be obtained and presented to a future Cabinet meeting in respect of the Overview and Scrutiny Board recommendations b) and c).

Following the review of the air quality monitoring in Hagley, which had been undertaken and in light of the levels having fallen below the national objectives that required the adoption of an air quality management area Cabinet

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that Kidderminster Road, Hagley AQMA be revoked.

The meeting closed at 7.15 p.m.

Chairman