

CABINET

26 JULY 2005

AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREA (AQMA) WITHIN WINCHESTER TOWN CENTRE –
ADOPTION OF AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES

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RECENT REFERENCES:

CAB 707 – Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) within Winchester Town Centre, 3 September 2003

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report presents the final draft version of the Air Quality Action Plan for Winchester Town Centre and seeks Cabinet's approval of the plan before formal submittal to the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That Cabinet agrees to the formal adoption and submittal to DEFRA of the Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) which forms part of this report.
2. That Cabinet agrees to the continuation of the Air Quality Informal Member/Officer Working Group to review the progress with the actions identified within the AQAP.

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DETAIL:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Since the implementation of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 all local authorities have been under a duty to review air quality within their district. The current objectives that have to be met are prescribed under the Air Quality (England) Regulations 2000 (as amended). It is a requirement that each local authority conducts a formal staged review of air quality within its district in accordance with a comprehensive set of guidance documents. These reports are then sent to the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) for approval. Where compliance with such objectives is unlikely then the local authority has to declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).
- 1.2 Cabinet report CAB 707 detailed the necessity to declare an AQMA for Winchester town centre and to develop an air quality action plan to achieve compliance with the air quality objectives. The AQMA was declared in November 2003 for both the nitrogen dioxide annual mean and the particles 24 hour mean air quality objectives.
- 1.3 An Informal Member/Officer Working Group has been meeting regularly since the declaration of the AQMA (as recommended by CAB707). The group reviewed and prioritised all possible actions in accordance with comprehensive guidance documents issued by DEFRA and produced a draft Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) in December 2004.
- 1.4 This draft AQAP was then subject to considerable stakeholder consultation between January to March 2005.

2. Current Position

- 2.1 Following consultation on the draft AQAP a revised version has been produced. Considerable effort has been made to ensure that the proposed actions dovetail into Hampshire County Council's Local Transport Plan for 2006 to 2011 (LTP2) which is currently being drafted.
- 2.2 The revised AQAP has been approved by the Informal Member/Officer Working Group (IMOG) at a meeting on 11 July 2005.
- 2.3 In addition a draft version of the AQAP was submitted to DEFRA in May 2005, unfortunately despite chasing, no reply has been received to date. If a reply is received before Cabinet a verbal report will be made regarding this matter.
- 2.4 On 26 July a Hampshire County Council report is being taken to Councillor Tim Knight, executive member for South Hampshire and resources management,

recommending Hampshire County Council support for the revised AQAP, whilst recognising that the funding of the proposals through the Local Transport Plan will be subject to the level of future financial support from central government.

- 2.5 A copy of the revised AQAP is enclosed as part of this report. This document provides full background information, air quality data and the proposed actions. The **section 5 matrix** should be of particular interest.
- 2.6 As the air quality problem is transport related, many of the solutions rest with the Highways Authority which is Hampshire County Council. However, certain elements such as parking strategy, planning control and promotional aspects are matters for consideration by Winchester City Council. The AQAP cannot be treated as a stand alone document as it will need to inform future policy decision across a wide range of both City and County plans and services.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

3. CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

- 3.1 It is a key objective of the corporate strategy to promote a healthier, safer and more caring community by enforcing legalisation designed to safeguard public health.
- 3.2 The AQAP will help to meet the key objective of helping to look after the built and natural environment for the benefit of present and further generations, for example by promoting more environmentally friendly forms of transport.

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 4.1 There are significant cost implications to this strategy; however most capital costs will need to be met by Hampshire County Council as the local Highway Authority. In particular actions 1 (park and ride) and 6 (review of traffic management options) are likely to have sizable resource implications. Such actions are subject to the allocation of funding from central government and as appropriate transport assessments and feasibility studies. The adoption of this AQAP should assist in procuring such funding.
- 4.2 There are no staff resource implications for Winchester City Council as action plan implementation can be met using current staff resources. The AQAP does not commit Winchester City Council to any capital costs. If such costs are subsequently identified then these will be the subject of further reports to Cabinet. For example Cabinet has already considered on the 29 June 2005 a report regarding the park and ride buses and the costs for providing cleaner buses.

5. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Department file with correspondence with other agencies and papers relating to the work of the Informal Member/Officer Group

6. APPENDICES:

Because of its size, copies of the AQAP are appended for Members of Cabinet, Group Leaders and the Chairmen of Local Economy Scrutiny Panel, Environment Scrutiny Panel and of Principal Scrutiny Committee only, with a copy available in the Members' Library and on the Council's Website with the papers for the 26 July 2005 Cabinet meeting.