

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO HEALTH & HOUSING COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: THURSDAY, 18 MARCH 2009
title: DECLARATION OF AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREA
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
principal author: JAMES RUSSELL

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To consider and approve an Air Quality Management Area in respect of Whalley Road, Clitheroe and confirm related 'Order'.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Council Ambitions – This action is fully inline with the Council's ambition "to help make people's lives safer and healthier".
- Community Objectives – To promote and support health, environmental, economic and social well-being of people who live, work and visit the Ribble Valley.
- Corporate Priorities – To promote healthier environment and lifestyle.
- Other Considerations – This action is a mandatory requirement under current Government Technical Guidance.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Further to my previous report to Committee on 28 May 2009 concerning this matter, included in the review of the Environmental Health Service 2008/2009, I can now advise you of recent developments and what needs to be done.

2.2 Detailed monitoring of Nitrogen Dioxide has been undertaken on Whalley Road, Clitheroe since 2006, using 6 Nitrogen Dioxide diffusion tubes and a control site. This has been necessary due to confirmed high numbers of vehicle movements along with the 'canyon effect' of the terraced properties, whose front entrance doors open directly onto the carriageway footpath.

2.3 The Air Quality objective at two of the locations has been exceeded slightly throughout this extended monitoring period. In May 2009, the Council's Triennial Update and Screening Assessment for Air Quality was completed and submitted to DEFRA for approval. One of the conclusions reached was that it was now necessary to declare an Air Quality Management Area to seek to address the identified exceedences.

3 ISSUES

3.1 Since a potential problem was identified in 2006, we have been in ongoing discussions with DEFRA that there was sufficient doubt regarding these results to justify not declaring an Air Quality Management Area. Diffusion tube monitoring continued through 2008 and discussions were held with Lancashire County Council regarding traffic control measures, which could improve the traffic flow on Whalley Road.

3.2 Two proposals have been implemented by Lancashire County Council with the aim of improving the traffic flow through the effected area. In October 2008, the junction to

Turner Street had a 'No Waiting' box applied to the Clitheroe bound carriageway of Whalley Road, with the aim of improving egress from Turner Street, particularly for school buses. Secondly, the pelican crossing was upgraded to a more intelligent system which will not hold traffic unnecessarily.

- 3.3 However, the annual Nitrogen Dioxide Air Quality Objective has continued to show an exceedence, and therefore the Council is now required to progress to the next stage and declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) for a short length of Whalley Road, Clitheroe and surrounding area, as outlined on the plan attached as the appendix to this report.
- 3.4 As such, the Council has a duty under section 83(1) of the Environment Act 1995 to designate those areas where the air quality objectives are unlikely to be, or are not being met, as Air Quality Management Areas. These areas have to be designated officially by the Council by means of an 'Order'.
- 3.5 The declaration of this Order will result in the Council having to work with all relevant agencies to prepare an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) to consider and implement improvements to address Nitrogen Dioxide to meet the national Air Quality Objective.
- 3.6 In order to meet the Air Quality objective, it may be necessary for some fundamental changes, for example, the changing of traffic flow systems and the extension of double yellow lining to the carriageway to improve traffic flow in this area.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:
 - Resources – There are no direct implications at this stage.
 - Technical, Environmental and Legal – The Council has a duty to designate an area where the air quality objectives are unlikely to be, or are not being met, as an Air Quality Management Area.
 - Political – This document confirms the Council's intention to put in place the necessary arrangements to address the recognised exceedence of Nitrogen Dioxide Air Quality Objective.
 - Reputation – The Council is meeting its statutory duty and declared ambition "to help make people's lives safer and healthier".

5 **RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

- 5.1 Note the content of this report.
- 5.2 Approve and confirm the declaration of an Air Quality Management Area and associated 'Order' in relation to the area identified and outlined on the Plan attached as the appendix to this report.

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

For further information please ask for James Russell, extension 4466.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Ribble Valley BC 2009 Air Quality Updating & Screening Assessment for the Borough of Ribble Valley – May 2009.
2. Local Air Quality Management Policy Guidance (PG09) - Part IV Environment Act 1995.