

Committee: Environment

Agenda Item

Date: 19th June 2007

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Title: Air Quality Management Areas in Saffron Walden

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Item for decision?

Summary

The Committee received a report on the 23rd January 2007 giving details of air pollution levels at three locations in Saffron Walden where levels of nitrogen dioxide exceeded national standards and resolved to consult on the precise location of the boundaries of the proposed Air Quality Management Areas.

This report gives details of that consultation and recommends that there be no change to the boundaries as suggested in the original report.

Recommendations

That the boundaries of the Air Quality Management Areas be finalised as shown in the Detailed Assessment.

Background Papers

None

Impact

Communication/Consultation	Consultation has been carried out, but a further round will be needed on the Action Plan
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Finance	None
Human Rights	None
Legal implications	Official Orders will be needed to bring into

	effect the Air Quality Management Areas
Sustainability	Positive effect if emissions from road traffic can be reduced
Ward-specific impacts	Saffron Walden only
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

1. Consultation was carried out by direct mailing to all premises in and close to the proposed Areas inviting residents and others to an exhibition of the proposals. In addition the County Council, the Saffron Walden Initiative, the Castle Street Residents' Association, the Bridge End Residents' Association and the Saffron Walden and District Friends of the Earth we all sent a copy of the report and asked for their views.
2. In total 15 residents and one retailer visited the exhibition and were able to see and hear at first hand the details of the air quality assessment that had lead to the conclusion that a number of Air Quality Management Areas would need to be declared in the central parts of Saffron Walden. All the comments from those that attended related to the possible actions that could or should be taken to reduce air pollution, there were no suggestions that the draft boundaries of the three areas should be changed.
3. Detailed comments were received from Essex County Council Highways and Transportation and Friends of the Earth also suggesting matters that could be included in the Action Plan which will be required once the Orders have been made. The Castle Street Residents' Association commented that the whole of Castle Street should be included in the Air Quality Management Area proposed for the junction with Castle Street and High Street and that additional monitoring should be carried out along the street.
4. The size and shape of the Air Quality Management Areas was determined using nitrogen dioxide passive diffusion tubes placed at monitoring points within the town centre where traffic congestion is at its worst. One of those monitoring points has been established in Church Street some 10 metres from its junction with the High Street where traffic congestion caused by queuing is similar to that in Castle Street. The results of that monitoring, at $29 \mu\text{gm}^{-3}$ for the calendar year 2006, indicate that the national annual mean standard of $40 \mu\text{gm}^{-3}$ is unlikely to have been exceeded and by implication neither is it likely that the levels in Castle Street would exceed the standard, so there is no scientific basis for including the whole of Castle Street in an Air Quality Management Area.

5. Once the Orders have been made the Council will be legally obliged to draw up an Action Plan to reduce pollution levels and this can include any matter that has the potential to influence air quality in the Air Quality Management Areas. It is envisaged that a wide range of activities both inside and outside the strict boundaries of the Air Quality Management Areas would be considered including School and Business Travel Plans, the sequencing of traffic lights, the movement of freight within the Town Centre, spot checks on vehicle emissions, the close scrutiny of new developments which could influence the amount of traffic within the town and local publicity campaigns to promote the use of public transport, cycling and walking.

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Air pollution levels in parts of Saffron Walden remain unsatisfactory	High	The health of vulnerable residents may be harmed	Declare the 3 areas of concern Air Quality Management Areas and prepare and implement an Action Plan to reduce air pollution