

12th February 2018

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Public Health and Sport – Councillor K Caan

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Deputy Chief Executive (Place)

Ward(s) affected:

Woodlands

Title:

Petition – Coventry City Council to carry out Air Quality/Pollution Surveys in and around Tile Hill Village

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

This report responds to a petition containing 29 signatures which was submitted to Coventry City Council. The petition is supported by Councillor Skinner and requests that the Council undertake air quality surveys in and around Tile Hill Village and for proposed developments not to go ahead should air pollution prove to be above acceptable levels

The Petition reads:-

“In view of the large housing developments that have taken place over the years in and around Tile Hill Village and, in view of the proposed large new housing developments planned for Westwood Heath Road, Cromwell Lane and Burton Green and the planned heavy works connected with HS2 over the next few years, it is important that current air quality be measured now and then consistently over the next 5 - 10 years. If air current quality proves above acceptable levels and a danger to public health, the above mentioned developments should not go ahead until such time as air quality improves and can be maintained - perhaps in 2040 when all cars will be electric!

I represent Tile Hill Village Residents' Group and we would like the air quality survey to commence no later than September 2017 to establish current air quality and for regular measurements to be taken thereafter. Safe air quality is a legal requirement and therefore should form part of any new housing development. Excessive traffic speeds and a significant increase in traffic levels over the years, proven by surveys, in and around Tile Hill Village may be having a serious effect on our air quality.

Air quality is a hot topic at the moment and is proven to be responsible for the deaths of thousands of people each year, and increases the discomfort and limits the mobility of those already suffering from breathing disorders.”

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Sport is asked to:

1. Note the specific policy on air quality contained within the newly adopted Local Plan (Policy EM7) and the monitoring framework associated with that Plan (extract at Appendix 1).
2. Support officers in ensuring that areas around Tile Hill Village are included as part of the next annual review programme of air quality monitoring stations. It is a requirement that this review should take a city-wide approach.
3. Support officers to continue their efforts to develop a Local Plan for Air Quality according to DEFRA requirements (The Air Quality Plan), that seeks to reduce levels of NO₂ pollutants, where there are current exceedances, in the City in the shortest possible time frame.

List of Appendices included:

N/A

Other useful background papers:

The Local Plan was adopted at Council on the 5th December 2017. Please see Air Quality Policy EM7 on page 161

http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/file/25899/final_local_plan_december_2017

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Petition – Coventry City Council to carry out Air Quality/Pollution Surveys in and around Tile Hill Village

1. Context (or background)

1.1. A petition with 29 signatures and support by Cllr Skinner has been received. The petition requests that the Council undertake air quality surveys in and around Tile Hill Village, and for proposed developments not to go ahead should air pollution prove to be above acceptable levels.

1.2. Coventry City Council recognises the impact of air pollution on health and wellbeing and is committed to taking action to improve air quality in the City. It is recognised that air pollution can have effects on health throughout life, contributing to the development or exacerbation of a range of health conditions, as well as to mortality at a population level. In this respect matters of health and wellbeing (including air quality) form an integral part of a range of council Plans and strategies. This includes the Council's new Local Plan.

1.3. Local Plan 2017 and Supplementary Planning Documents:

1.3.1. At its meeting on the 5th December 2017, the Council adopted a new Local Plan. This Local Plan came into effect on the following day and now forms the basis for determining planning applications. Within the Plan are a range of policies including site allocations and a new policy specifically on air quality (Policy EM7). In addition, the Council are working on developing a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on air quality. This will provide technical guidance and support for those submitting planning applications. Together the new Local Plan and SPD will provide a platform for improving the city's air quality and reduce levels of pollutants across the city as a whole.

1.3.2. The new Local Plan also contains a monitoring commitment to ensure ongoing monitoring of air quality across the city with an overarching aim of removing parts of the city from the current AQMA designation. These matters were considered during the Local Plans public examination and summarised by the Inspector in her final report (Para 172-175).

1.3.3. At the planning application stage, all air quality assessments for planned developments in Coventry are reviewed by the Environmental Protection Team at Coventry City Council. Should development have a detrimental impact on air quality, developers are required to establish mitigation measures as appropriate. Cumulative impact on air quality are also required to be considered by developers in their Air Quality Assessments. As referenced above a Supplementary Planning Document on Air Quality is being developed to support the Air Quality Policy (EM7) this will provide further technical guidance and information that will guide developers on ways to reduce the impacts on air quality and generate improvements for local communities. Matters of air quality are also highlighted as part of the Councils Health Impact Assessment requirements (Policy HW1 of the new Local Plan).

1.4. Air Quality Management Areas, and Environmental Health:

1.4.1. The importance of improving air quality was recognised within the Local Plan in response to the whole city being designated an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in 2009. This designation primarily relates to the level of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and nitric oxide (NO), which combined, are referred to nitrogen oxides (NO_x), within specific parts of the city. Exceedance of NO_x in Coventry only generally occurs close to the busy arterial roads with junctions i.e. Foleshill Road, Stoney Stanton Road and Holyhead Road. The majority of the city's, urban areas though are situated away from busy roads and do not exceed

the NOx target level. The city wide designation however ensures that the worst affected stretches of road are not tackled in isolation and helps avoid silo investment which could result in problems being moved from one place to another.

- 1.4.2. As part of the AQMA designation the area around Tile Hill village was, at that time, not deemed of sufficient concern to justify regular monitoring. Although there have been higher levels of development in this area over the last decade, much of this development has focused on the Bannerbrook site (former Massey Ferguson factories) and so reflects a change in land use from industrial to residential. It is also acknowledged though that the construction of the railway fly-over and expansion of the Tile Hill Railway Station Park and Ride facility has added additional highway pressure to the area. Notwithstanding, the overriding characteristics of the area do not raise immediate concerns around the risk of excessive levels of poor air quality.
- 1.4.3. The city's air quality monitoring stations and information relating to them can be found via the following link – <https://goo.gl/Z7OGFw>. This shows that monitoring for NO2 has been undertaken along the A45 at the Broad Lane junction (began April 2015), with levels being shown to be below the national mean annual objective (of 40 microgrammes/m3). As mentioned above there is currently no other monitoring in the Tile Hill area.

1.5. Local Plan for Air Quality:

- 1.5.1. The Council has been given the opportunity by DEFRA to prepare a 'Local Plan for Air Quality'. Despite sharing the same name as the planning document it is a very different Plan and will not form a material consideration in planning terms. To avoid confusion, and for the purposes of this report, it will be referenced from here on as the 'Air Quality Plan'.
- 1.5.2. The primary focus of the Air Quality Plan will look to reduce existing levels of NO2 at a number of hotspots around the City in the shortest time possible. Actions arising from the Air Quality Plan are likely to focus on sites in and around the city centre.
- 1.5.3. Production and implementation of the plan will involve partnership working across all parts of the Council, its Warwickshire neighbours and other key partners in the City. A range of options which support the reduction of air pollution will be considered, including traffic and sustainable infrastructure improvements, low emission technologies, and behaviour change interventions targeted at reducing car usage. This plan will complement existing activities in the City which support the reduction of air pollution, including transport infrastructure improvements, Park and Ride schemes, improving the cycling infrastructure, railway station improvements and a range of other innovative transport projects. The Plan will also support modelling of air quality and mitigation opportunities to deliver long term air quality improvements across the city.
- 1.5.4. The Coventry and Warwickshire Air Quality Alliance offers a prime example of this collaborative working. Since 2015, Coventry City Council has been working in partnership with colleagues in Warwickshire through the Coventry and Warwickshire Air Quality Alliance, to share ideas and collaborate on initiatives to improve air quality. The Alliance brings together officers from Planning, Transport, Environmental Health and Public Health. Last year saw the launch of "Choose How you Move" (www.coventry.gov.uk/activetravel) a collaborative active travel campaign across the sub-region.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1. Matters relating to air quality and new development have recently been considered through the development of the Council's new Local Plan. This resulted in Policy EM7 and

the Plan as a whole being found sound and legally compliant following a period of public examination. Following adoption by Council on the 5th December 2017, the Plan will now be subject to ongoing monitoring and assessment. As adopted Council policy this is the method by which all future development in the City will be assessed, including any impact that this may have on air quality.

- 2.2. To not assess future development using the adopted Local Plan and other Council policies would leave decisions open to legal challenge. In addition to potential significant financial loss, a successful challenge may also remove any conditions placed upon a developer by the City Council, including measures to mitigate any adverse effect on air quality.
- 2.3. However, given the concern expressed by the petitioners. It is proposed to include the areas of recent development in and around Tile Hill village for consideration in the next round of air quality monitoring. Noting that at present this area shows no indicators as an area of poor air quality.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1. The Local Plan was subject to numerous rounds of consultation over the last 4 years. This included detailed references to the new Air Quality policy (EM7). During the course of consultation, the numbers of responses relating to specific matters of air Quality were limited and as a result the only changes made to the policy and its supporting text were to add cross-references to the West Midlands Metropolitan Transport Emissions Framework.
- 3.2. At this time there has been no consultation on the Air Quality Plan.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1. The Local Plan was adopted by Council on the 5th December 2017 and came into effect the following day. The Air Quality Plan will be developed over the course of 2018. This will relate, in part at least, to the annual review programme of air quality monitoring stations, which is due to be considered from April 2018.

5. Comments from Director of Finance and Corporate Services

5.1. Financial implications

A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will need to be commissioned at a cost of around £6k, which can be managed within existing resources. Officers are also exploring opportunities to work jointly with Warwickshire to share the cost and delivery of the document.

DEFRA have allocated resources to help pay for traffic surveys needed to build the air quality model for the 'Local Plan for Air Quality'. There will be no further cost associated with the ongoing monitoring work as this will be absorbed through existing budgets. There may be a cost of providing further monitoring stations and equipment. There is no budget to deliver additional monitoring stations at this time, so new equipment would require new budget, grant funding or developer contributions.

5.2. Legal implications

There are no legal implications associated with the recommendations outlined in this paper.

6. Other implications

6.1. How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's Plan?

The recommendation of this report will help contribute to the council's core aims of improving the health and wellbeing of Coventry citizens.

6.2. How is risk being managed?

Risk will be managed through the existing Place directorate risk profile and continued monitoring of the Local Plan.

6.3. What is the impact on the organisation?

None

6.4. Equalities / EIA

A Full EIA was undertaken for the Local Plan. No Equality Impact Assessments have been undertaken related specifically to this petition though.

6.5. Implications for (or impact on) the environment

The continued monitoring and management of air quality issues are expected to realise an improvement in air quality across the city, with a specific focus on known hotspots.

6.6. Implications for partner organisations?

None are expected. However the City Council continues to work collaboratively with neighbouring councils and other partners through the Coventry and Warwickshire Air Quality Alliance, to help manage and monitor all matters of air quality.

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