

Runnymede Borough Council
ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE
18 March 2021 at 7.30pm via MS Teams

Members of the Committee present: Councillors M Heath (Chairman), J Wilson (Vice-Chairman, B Clarke, S Dennett, T Gracey, J Olorenshaw, S Walsh, D Whyte and M Willingale

Members of the Committee absent: Councillor M Brierley

Councillors L Gillham, R King, M Kusneraitis and I Mullens also attended

509 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14 January 2021 were confirmed as a correct record to be signed when the Chairman was physically able to do so.

510 AIR QUALITY ANNUAL STATUS REPORT

The Committee received and noted the 2019 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) which had recently been submitted to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). The Committee was also asked to consider inclusion of any measures outlined to improve Air Quality in Runnymede in the Climate Change Strategy, if viable.

Members were advised that monitoring air quality in Runnymede was totally reliant on diffusion tubes. Diffusion tubes were a relatively inexpensive way to monitor for nitrogen dioxide, however their accuracy must be corrected at the end of each year. This adjustment process was called bias correction. Bias correction data was created by having similar diffusion tubes to those used in Runnymede located next to very accurate continuous nitrogen dioxide monitors (located in other parts of the country) data from which was used by Defra to determine what adjustment factor must be applied to the diffusion tubes to calibrate them against the accurate monitors. These determinations were posted, at different times throughout the year on Defra's national bias correction website.

Over the last 20 years Runnymede had seen a slow decline in nitrogen dioxide levels (principal source: traffic) across the Borough. However, when directly comparing the nitrogen dioxide levels of 2018 to 2019, the air quality situation within the Borough had seen an overall slight deterioration year on year, in so much that 15 out of the 26 monitoring points where comparable measures were taken showed an increase in levels of nitrogen dioxide. The other 11 sites where there was a comparison to the previous year's data showed a slight improvement in air quality.

Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA's) had been declared in two locations in Runnymede for exceedances of the annual mean nitrogen dioxide objective, namely land adjacent to the M25 and at a traffic light-controlled junction in Addlestone town centre.

Members were keen for Officers to look at re-allocating/expanding the use of diffusion tubes where possible and would contact Officers with their particular areas of concern. These concerns predominately related to Chertsey and Egham and level crossings throughout the Borough.

Unfortunately, a recent bid by Runnymede to Defra for erection of large format signs on lampposts close to level crossings, advising drivers to switch off their engines, had been rejected. Therefore, Officers were asked to look at approaching businesses for funding of signage throughout the

Borough regarding idling engines. This was a particular problem at level crossings and outside schools. It was noted that schools monitored air quality outside their premises and this data was sent to Surrey County Council. The benefits of both conifer and hedge planting outside schools to combat low level particulates was noted and Councillor Heath would inform the Surrey Tree Strategy of the benefits of this planting taking place.

With regard to planning developments the Committee was keen to continue to further work collaboratively with the planning department on future planning developments particularly in relation to the air quality checks carried out and proposed developments in AQMA's.

It was reported that a new website addresspollution.org had been set up whereby residents could input their address and details of the air quality at that property was provided. Officers advised that only if information on this website had been obtained by Defra could it be considered completely reliable.

RESOLVED that –

- i) **The 2019 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) be noted; and**
- ii) **any measures outlined by the Committee to improve Air Quality in Runnymede be included in the Climate Change Strategy, if viable**

(The meeting ended at 9.11pm)

Chairman