

ENVIRONMENT REVIEW PANEL CABINET: 3 OCTOBER 2001

STAGE 2 AND 3 REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT OF AIR QUALITY IN THE NEW FOREST

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Following the report to the Environmental Services and Licensing Committee on 4 March 1999, when the Stage 1 Review and Assessment of Air Quality was adopted, further work has been done on Stages 2 and 3 of the Air Quality Assessment. Stages 2 and 3 normally follow on one from the other, but it was decided to combine both reports into one.
- 1.2 If it is found that the level of an air pollutant is below the national air quality standards, as set in regulations, then the investigation will stop at that stage and proceed no further. If there is still concern at the levels of the pollutant, the investigation is carried out in more detail, until the local authority is satisfied that there is unlikely to be any exceedances of Air Quality Standards. If at Stage 3, the detailed investigation stage, levels are found to exceed the National air quality standards, the Local Authority will have to go onto declare an air quality management area (Stage 4).
- 1.3 A draft of the Stage 2 and 3 report was sent to the Department for the Environment Transport and Regions (DETR) to meet the deadline of December 2000. Where problems with Air Quality Standards are identified under these reviews, a local authority is required to go on to declare an Air Quality Management Area. This was not recommended within our report but comments were received back from the DETR, most of which have been incorporated in to our reports, except for one point. The DETR commented on the levels of sulphur dioxide that have been modelled around Fawley, which can be sourced back to the Refinery.
- 1.4 The DETR were of the opinion that this Council should declare an Air Quality Management Area. A letter of reply was sent to the DETR with our comments, pointing out that the Refinery is already controlled as a prescribed process by the Environment Agency. As this was the sole source of the sulphur dioxide, there would be duplication of enforcement if we were to go on to declare an Air Quality Management Area.
- 1.5 The method in the air quality regulations for controlling air quality is to use the planning process and transport policies, but this would be difficult to apply to the refinery. A letter was sent to the Environment Agency who have confirmed that they are working on a national

programme to limit sulphur dioxide emissions from refinery processes. This will reduce the emissions below the national air quality standards and prevent the need to declare Air Quality Management Areas.

- 1.6 A reply has been received from the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), formerly DETR, accepting the draft report, provided the Council continues its current monitoring. At the same time discussions with the Environment Agency will take place to ensure the refinery does not exceed any of the air quality standards.

2 MAIN PROVISION OF THE STAGE 2 AND 3 REPORT

- 2.1 The abstract of the Stage 2 and 3 report is appended at Appendix 1 to this report. The Air Quality Review and Assessment is set out giving an introduction to the New Forest, and reviews and assesses the areas of Fawley, Hythe, Totton, Cadnam, New Milton, Marchwood and Ringwood area. Proposed developments are looked at, including the Marchwood Waste Incinerator, the Dibden Bay application and the Marchwood combined cycle gas turbine generating plant. Other sources are looked at from neighbouring authorities, aircraft, shipping and railways. Each individual pollutant is examined and conclusions drawn on any need for future action.
- 2.2 As stated earlier, there is no recommendation to go on to declare an Air Quality Management Area, but there will be a requirement to further review our air quality in several years time, and to keep an eye on any local trends in air quality. This information is very useful when dealing with planning applications of a large nature, particularly those received for the Waterside area, including the Dibden Bay application.

The recommendations of the report are appended at Appendix 2.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Once adapted, the strategy will be published and sent out to interested parties. The funding for this has already been identified.
- 3.2 The continuing assessment of air quality within the New Forest District can be carried out with existing resources within the Environmental Health Service.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Although this review has identified a problem of sulphur dioxide within Fawley, work is to be carried out by the Environment Agency to ensure that the emissions from the Refinery are maintained below the Air Quality Standards. All the other pollutants are currently below the national Air Quality Standards, which represents a level at which there is unlikely to be harm to human health.

5. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no Crime and Disorder Implications.

6. COMMENTS OF THE PANEL

The Environment Panel met on the 21st September 2001 and supported the recommendations within the Stage 2 & 3 Air Quality Review and Assessment.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 It is recommend that as the Air Quality Standards are likely to be met within the New Forest District Area, that the New Forest District Council does not declare an Air Quality Management Area.
- 7.2 The monitoring and reviewing of air quality in the New Forest District Council Area should continue particularly for Sulphur Dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and particulates to ensure levels are maintained below the National Air Quality Standards.
- 7.3 The National Air Quality Standards should be applied to any new developments that may be affected by, or affect air quality.

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION.

Published papers