

Committee: Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 22 February 2017

Wards: ALL

Subject: Air Quality Task Group Update

Lead member: Councillor Imran Uddin, Chair of the Air Quality task group.

Contact officer: Stella Akintan, stella.akintan@merton.gov.uk; 020 8545 3390

Recommendations:

- A. That the task group note and comment on the task group update
 - B.
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. The purpose of the report is to provide the panel with a scope and outline of work of the air quality task group.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. In June 2016, this Panel set up a task group to consider how to improve air quality in Merton. The membership is as follows:

Councillor Imran Uddin (Chair)
Councillor Michael Bull
Councillor David Chung
Councillor Daniel Holder
Councillor Abdul Latif

2.2. SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

- 2.3. To review the Merton Air Quality Action Plan looking specifically at planning, monitoring and enforcement. There will be a focus on achieving the acquired targets in a cost effective manner.
- 2.4. To assist the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel to identify areas that may require future review in the field of air quality. This task group will highlight key developments, topics to consider and future issues of concern in this rapidly changing and increasingly complex area.
- 2.5. To consider how to improve strategic leadership for improving air quality across the South West London sub-region.
- 2.6. Task Group Activity
- 2.7. The task group has held three meetings and met with; Environmental Health Pollution Manager, Head of the Regulatory Services Partnership, Head of Future Merton, Programme Manager with responsibility for planning and

Consultant in Public Health. A task group member attended an Air Quality conference, and shared the literature, provided some useful contacts and reported on the main themes from the event. The key issues which helped to shape the scope of the review are as follows;

- 2.8. Although air quality in London has improved in recent years, pollution is still too high and is a great cause of concern for the government and policy makers. Merton's main local sources of atmospheric pollutants are road transport from the busy and congested roads and the neighbouring areas of London. Poor air quality is thought to contribute to the early deaths of at least 9,000 people a year, affecting those with existing respiratory and cardiac conditions and exacerbating illnesses for people who are already vulnerable.
- 2.9. This review is very timely as the council is in the early stages of refreshing the Merton Air Quality Action Plan. The task group has commented on an early draft and will look at it in detail alongside the results of the associated public consultation which is due to begin this month.
- 2.10. The task group will focus on the role of the planning process in improving air quality at construction sites. There is already good work happening in this area and the task group can play an important role in ensuring that strong partnerships are in place and our approach is robust and consistent.
- 2.11. Monitoring compliance at construction sites and using enforcement measures where necessary are important levers to improve air quality. The task group will review our existing approach, speak to experts and consider good practice.
- 2.12. The task group believes strategic leadership across South London is imperative to make progress in tackling air pollution as Merton cannot successfully tackle this issue in isolation. A number of local partnerships are in place across the sub-region and these must be supported by local politicians and organisations such as the Greater London Assembly and London Councils.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel can select topics for scrutiny review and for other scrutiny work as it sees fit, taking into account views and suggestions from officers, partner organisations and the public.

Cabinet is constitutionally required to receive, consider and respond to scrutiny recommendations within two months of receiving them at a meeting.

- 3.1. Cabinet is not, however, required to agree and implement recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny. Cabinet could agree to implement some, or none, of the recommendations made in the scrutiny review final report.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. The Panel will be consulted at the meeting

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1. The Panel will consider important items as they arise as part of their work programme for 2017/18

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. None relating to this covering report

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. None relating to this covering report. Scrutiny work involves consideration of the legal and statutory implications of the topic being scrutinised.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. It is a fundamental aim of the scrutiny process to ensure that there is full and equal access to the democratic process through public involvement and engaging with local partners in scrutiny reviews. Furthermore, the outcomes of reviews are intended to benefit all sections of the local community.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. None relating to this covering report. Scrutiny work involves consideration of the crime and disorder implications of the topic being scrutinised.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. None relating to this covering report

11 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

- 11.1. None

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1. None

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