

Report to Safer, Cleaner, Greener Scrutiny Standing Panel

Date of meeting: 24th February 2015

Subject: Member request – Cllr Neville

Officer contact for further information: Jim Nolan

Committee Secretary: Adrian Hendry



Member Request – Information regarding air pollution

Request

The following request for scrutiny has been received from Cllr Neville:

“After a Public Health England Report illustrated the worrying finding that levels of particulate pollution in Epping Forest are attributable to 6% of all deaths, and to explore the reason why we have relatively high levels of such deaths compared most local authorities in Essex as well as more general effects on people’s health as a result of particulate pollution and what action may be taken by EFDC in formulating its plans and policies to reduce this problem.” “

Response

The Report in question estimates the mortality burden based on modelled annual average concentrations of fine particulate matter in each local authority area, based on human activities.

Some important matters to consider in relation to this report:

- The council is not currently obliged to monitor for PM_{2.5} (PM_{2.5} limits have not been adopted into UK legislation for action at local level).
- The PM_{2.5} modelling is generally derived from vehicle movements – we have more motorways than most other parts of Essex. This could be why EFDC is a great percentage than other Essex LA’s.
- The report details the proposed national objective for PM_{2.5} as 25µg/m³ as an annual average. The estimated annual average for PM_{2.5} in the Epping Forest District area in the report is 10.7µg/ m³, which is less than half the objective.
- All emissions data in this report is estimated.
- Monitoring in a continuous monitoring station would cost in the order of £40k to install per site excluding ancillary equipment and power supplies. Ongoing annual costs would be on the order of £15k.

PM_{2.5} is present in the atmosphere as a result of direct emissions from a range of sources (primary PM_{2.5}) and as a result of the chemical and physical transformation of various precursor gases from a range of sources (secondary PM_{2.5}).

The UK as a whole is required to comply with air quality objective values for ambient concentrations of air pollutants, including: lead, SO₂, benzene, carbon monoxide, PM₁₀, PM_{2.5} and NO₂. Local authorities are required under local air quality management to identify areas where national objectives are likely to be exceeded, but are not currently obligated to review and assess for PM_{2.5}. Local authorities do not currently have direct responsibilities to control PM_{2.5} concentrations.

The national objective for PM_{2.5} is 25µg/m³ as an annual average. The report highlighted by Cllr Neville indicates that the annual average for PM_{2.5} in the Epping Forest District area is 10.7µg/ m³, which is less than half the objective.

Epping Forest District Council undertakes monitoring for NO₂, and fulfils its local air quality management obligations in its updating and screening reports, progress reports and action plans. The Council also proactively works toward the direct improvement of air quality via statutory nuisance action, clean air act controls and industrial pollution prevention and control. These measures are not primarily aimed at reducing PM2.5 but will effectively do so.

An officer from the Neighbourhoods Directorate will be present to answer any questions Members may have.