



PART B:	RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL
REPORT TO:	POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
DATE:	11 NOVEMBER 2021
REPORT OF THE:	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES MANAGER ROBERT ROBINSON
TITLE OF REPORT:	REVIEW OF RYEDALE DISTRICT COUNCIL AIR QUALITY STEERING GROUP TO INVESTIGATE OPTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEMBER INVOLVEMENT
WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL – AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREA AFFECTING MALTON & NORTON ONLY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The report provides a response to a motion referred to this Committee by Council. The motion relates to the consideration of options for member involvement in the Air Quality Steering Group in liaison with the North Yorkshire County Council.
- 1.2 The current motion is:

“This Council requires officers to investigate options and opportunities for Member engagement on air quality work (including the work of the Ryedale District Council Air Quality Steering Groups) in liaison with the County Council and report back to the next meeting of P&R Committee.”

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that:
- (i) Policy and Resources Committee approve Option 2 as set out in Paragraph 6.7 of this report and Recommend to Council that a Local District Councillor be appointed to attend future meetings of the Air Quality Steering Group.
- 2.2 The suggested recommendation is:
- That Policy and Resources Committee support Option 2 as set out in Paragraph 6.7 of this report and recommend to Council that the motion be amended as follows:

To delete

“requires officers to investigate options and opportunities for Member engagement on air quality work (including the work of the Ryedale District Council”

To add

“agrees to appoint a Local District Councillor to attend future meetings of the”

To delete

s) in liaison with the County Council and report back to the next meeting of P&R Committee.”

The motion would then read:

“This Council agrees to appoint a Local District Councillor to attend future meetings of the Air Quality Steering Group.”

3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 To ensure that Members are aware at an early stage of any developments associated with the work of the Air Quality Steering Group.

4.0 SIGNIFICANT RISKS

- 4.1 No operational significant risks have been identified with this recommendation.

5.0 POLICY CONTEXT AND CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Managing air quality is an integral part of the Council’s approach to development in the district and in particular in the towns of Malton and Norton. Policy SP17 of the Local Plan Strategy seeks to protect and improve air quality. The cutting of congestion and improving traffic flow is also an integral part of the Council Plan which seeks to deliver a connected rural economy as set out in the Council Plan
- 5.2 The Environment Act 1995 requires local authorities to review and assess air quality in their areas and to determine whether or not air quality objectives are likely to be achieved. There is an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in Malton which was first designated in 2012 and this is also the subject of an Action Plan. An Annual Status Report (ASR) is produced which sets out the strategies employed and any progress that has been made during the year.

6.0 REPORT

Background

- 6.1 At the meeting of Council on the 9 September 2021, a motion proposed by Cllr Paul Andrews and seconded by Cllr Burr was referred to this Committee. The motion reads as follows:

“This Council requires officers to investigate options and opportunities for Member engagement on air quality work (including the work of the Ryedale District Council air Quality Steering Groups) in liaison with the County Council and report back to the next meeting of P&R Committee.”

- 6.2 Following the acceptance of the motion by Council (and its referral to P&R Committee) officers held a meeting with senior officers from North Yorkshire County Council who have previously been engaged with the Air Quality Steering Group. These include the local Area Manager and the Local Improvement Manager together with the Assistant Director for Highways and Transportation. Following an initial meeting NYCC officers undertook to have further internal discussions in relation to the motion which included discussions the County Council executive member for Access.
- 6.3 On 28th September 2021 the NYCC Assistant Director responded in writing to confirm that following the conclusion of those discussions NYCC considered that they had a preference for the Air Quality Steering Group to remain as an officer group only. It was however acknowledged that dealing with air quality is a district council function and that if Ryedale District Council resolves to have a district member on the group then that would be acceptable. It was confirmed that there would however be no requirement for a County Council member to attend future meetings of the Air Quality Steering Group.
- 6.4 As mentioned earlier in this report the Council has had a designated Air Quality Management Area at Malton and Norton since 2012. The work of the steering group has concentrated on the AQMA since that time. An Annual Status report ASR is produced and the most recent ASR was published in June 2021. The executive summary is appended for Members information which sets out useful background information in relation to the AQMA. It confirms that air quality has improved significantly within the AQMA since its designation in 2012 in relation to the monitoring of NO₂. Indeed there have been no exceedances in the annual mean NO₂ objective since 2016. Additional monitoring also takes place out other locations in the district outside the AQMA and these too show no exceedances above the annual mean objective.
- 6.5 The ASR does however take a precautionary approach to the issue of air quality notwithstanding the progress that has been made. Air Quality monitoring is therefore continuing into 2021 and beyond. With regard to the AQMA there is uncertainty around increased rail crossing ‘down time’ that has yet to be fully experienced. In addition there are potential changes to the road system locally arising from the work of the Infrastructure and Connectivity Study and the introduction by the County Council of a trial one-way system on Norton Rd. with associated improvements to the traffic controlled junction at Butcher Corner.

Options

- 6.6 **Option 1.** Members will appreciate that to date the AQSG has operated as an officer level group only and that following consultation with NYCC officers (as partners to this group) a preference had been expressed that the group should remain so.
- 6.7 **Option 2.** The matter of air quality remains a district function. Notwithstanding the view expressed in Option 1 it remains a decision of the District Council whether or not there is Member attendance at future meetings of the Air Quality Steering Group. Whilst much of the work is technical in nature it is acknowledged by officers that the matter is

sensitive locally (particularly within and close to the AQMA) and that the appointment of a local District Councillor to the group has the potential to assist with links to the community that resides within and close to the designated AQMA in Malton and Norton.

- 6.8 Officers at NYCC have confirmed that an upgrade to the traffic controlled system at Butcher Corner is due in the New Year (January 2022) and that following those works the County Council will commence activity on the introduction of the one way trial shortly afterwards. The next Air Quality Steering Group is to be arranged to coincide with this activity. A decision on this matter should therefore ideally be made at 2nd December Council in order ensure that all parties are aware and are able to attend the next meeting of the Air Quality Steering Group.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The following implications have been identified:
- a) Financial – None. The monitoring of air quality and production of the ASR is budgeted for. No additional expense is anticipated based on the current monitoring and reporting arrangements
 - b) Legal - No legal implications anticipated arising from the motion.
 - c) Other (Equalities, Staffing, Planning, Health & Safety, Environmental and Climate Change, Crime & Disorder) – None arising from the motion

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Background Papers:
Council Meeting 9 September 2021

Background Papers are available for inspection at:
<https://democracy.ryedale.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=114&MIId=3449&Ver=4>