

CABINET – 19TH NOVEMBER 2020

ITEM 5 QUESTIONS UNDER CABINET PROCEDURE 10.7

A. B. Nunn - 2020 Air Quality Annual Status Report/Monitoring Equipment/Waste Incinerators

“Please would the Cabinet Leader respond to my question in the context of the Air Quality Annual Status Report 2020.

Note:

https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/files/documents/2020_annual_status_report_asr/Charnwood%20ASR%202020.pdf

“One aspect of our monitoring that we need to be mindful of is the ageing life of our monitoring equipment. Unfortunately, we have again experienced issues with our automatic NO₂ analysers this period that has meant insufficient data capture for inclusion within this report. The remaining longevity of existing equipment, some of which has been in operation since 2007, is now becoming a significant consideration when planning flexibility to cover future air quality requirements in the borough.”

1. The 2020 Air Quality Annual Status Report published by the Borough Council in fulfilment of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 Local Air Quality Management states that *“we need to be mindful of is the ageing life of our monitoring equipment”*. It then refers to difficulties experienced issues with our automatic NO₂ analysers and equipment that is over twelve years old. Air quality is of increasing concern to residents and whilst we have nothing but admiration for our professional environmental officers, does the Leader agree that they, and the public, deserve air quality monitoring equipment of standard we can all rely on?
2. Despite the progress made to restrict NO₂ emissions to below 30 µg/m³ across the Borough, which is appreciated, many people are concerned about emissions from chemical and industrial processes and none more so than from Waste Incinerators like the Newhurst EfW currently under construction in Charnwood as well as others within range of the borough. Could the Leader therefore tell me what instrumentation we are able to dedicate to measuring emissions that are likely to be generated within such plants?
3. In Appendix E (Page 76) the table refers to Particulate Matter (PM₁₀) 50 µg/m³ , not to be exceeded more than 35 times a year 24-hour mean 40 µg/m³ Annual mean. Whilst the owners of incinerators, together with the Environment Agency, are responsible for monitoring emissions within the plant, what emissions are the Borough independently responsible for monitoring in the wider community and do we currently have the adequate equipment and resources to do so?

4. I note that the 2020 Air Quality Report (Page 19 3.2.3) states “Charnwood Borough Council do not undertake any local monitoring of PM2.5 As outlined in section 2.3; consideration will be taken via several available indicative data sources as well as local knowledge for us to identify any localised ‘hot-spots’ that may be, or become, potential areas of concern. As Particulate matter comes in very fine measures, what does the law require the Council to measure and will the council measure outside that range as it appears that the finer the particles the more likely they are to accumulate in the surrounding population?”
5. Noting the significant public concern, and particularly over the long term effects of waste incinerator emissions, will the Borough Council be monitoring the change in air quality before and after the Newhurst EfW plant becomes operational?”

The Leader, or his nominee, will respond:

1. *The Council will continue to meet its obligations under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 for the Review and Assessment of Local Air Quality within the borough of Charnwood. This is undertaken by officer assessments based on national predictions of air quality emissions linked to any significant changes occurring within the borough. Additionally, to support this work, monitoring is undertaken where it is predicted that the national air quality objective limits may be exceeded. In relation to nitrogen dioxide, real time analysers were located at Syston and Loughborough Town Centres. In addition to this there is a network of 53 diffusion tubes at 49 locations across the borough, which have shown a significant decline of emissions over the past 10 years and resulting in no areas across the whole of the borough exceeding the annual average limit of $40\mu\text{g}\text{m}^{-3}$. The real time nitrogen dioxide monitors have been operating for 12 years and the Council is considering the need to continue to operate these or determine alternatives. For nitrogen dioxide monitoring the diffusion tubes are nationally accepted as a suitable monitoring methodology and this will continue. The Head of Regulatory Services is currently reviewing the air quality monitoring being undertaken, to ensure that the Council can continue to assess air quality levels in line with the statutory requirements.*
2. *In relation to specific industrial sources, the potentially most polluting processes are controlled through the Environmental Permitting Regulations (England and Wales) Regulations 2010. Environmental Permits are issued to relevant processes either by Charnwood Borough Council or the Environment Agency for the larger processes. All the current Permits for the industrial process issued by the Council are detailed on the Council’s website. The Permits include any emission limits, checks and monitoring requirements. The most effective way to monitor emissions from the larger processes is from within any chimneys or stacks. This enables the levels to be determined at the final emission point. For emissions from Waste Incinerators, these are controlled by the Environment Agency, who determine the extent and level of the monitoring being undertaken. The current Permit details a very wide range of emission limits that are applied. The Council*

does not have responsibility to undertake the specific monitoring for such Waste Incineration Processes. The Council has continued to monitor nitrogen dioxide levels close to the Newhurst EfW facility, using the network of diffusion tubes, linked to road traffic emissions. This will continue to determine levels of nitrogen dioxide in the area. The Council will continue to review air quality and if it is felt that additional monitoring is required to further assess levels in locations likely to exceed the national limits, then this will be considered.

- 3. In relation to Particulate Matter PM10 (particles less than 10µm diameter), the Council is currently responsible for reviewing and assessing such levels and determines if there are likely to be any exceedances of the National Air Quality Objective Limits as outlined. At the current time the Council only monitors for PM10 in Mountsorrel and for emissions from the Mountsorrel Quarry. At the moment levels are well below the national limits. The Council has not determined any other location across the borough likely to exceed PM10 levels and is, therefore, not required to undertake any further monitoring. These requirements are reviewed and reported to the Government within the Annual Status Report.*
- 4. In relation to particulate matter, the Council is currently required to review and assess air quality levels for PM10. Monitoring is only then required where officers predict that the national air quality objective limits are likely to be exceeded. The need for this is reviewed by the Government on an annual basis through the Annual Status Report. The Council is aware that the Government is proposing to introduce new requirements for air quality under the Environment Bill, which may include the assessment of PM2.5. Should this become a legal requirement, this will be undertaken by the Council. If monitoring is then deemed necessary, officers will determine what this will require and the locality to ensure it meets the national guidelines.*
- 5. As detailed above, the Council does monitor for nitrogen dioxide levels across the borough and also in the locality of the Newhurst EfW facility. This will continue after the development has been completed. The Lead Member for Regulatory Services is aware of such public concern and is reviewing the implications of any additional monitoring with the Head of Regulatory Services.*