

## **PLACE SCRUTINY BOARD, Thursday, 3rd March, 2022**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Caffrey (Chair)

Councillors: A Smith, Bellenger, Clarke, Dickenson, Fazal, Rivron (Substitute for Councillor B Smith) and Young

### **54 SUBSTITUTES NOMINATED FOR THIS MEETING AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Beech and B Smith.

Councillor Fazal arrived at the meeting at 18:28.

*(The meeting closed at 19:42.)*

### **55 MAKE WEST VALE AN AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREA**

The Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods, submitted a written report which provided the details of a petition received about an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in West Vale. The Council's Petition Scheme required that validated petitions with more than 500 but fewer than 2000 signatures should be presented to the relevant Scrutiny Board. The petition was seeking to make West Vale an AQMA. An AQMA was put in place when local air quality was not meeting the Government's national air quality objectives. Based on current monitoring West Vale did not meet the threshold for it to be declared an AQMA.

Councillor Cook, the Lead Petitioner, attended the meeting and addressed the Board. He advised Members that West Vale was a unique area due to the junction of several roads and the location of West Vale Academy. There was a risk of the air quality becoming worse because of development proposals as part of the Local Plan. Members of the public were concerned about the detrimental effect this could have on children attending West Vale Academy. Councillor Cook explained that Calderdale Council had applied a national reduction factor to the area in 2018. Had a local reduction factor been applied, West Vale would have been declared an AQMA in 2018. He also questioned why the air quality monitors had been switched off for 3 months during 2018.

The Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods, attended the meeting and addressed the Board. He advised Members that the latest monitoring figures in West Vale showed that the annual mean levels were below the threshold for declaration of an AQMA. He advised that air quality would continue to be monitored throughout the district to identify concerns early and take appropriate action.

The co-author of the petition attended the meeting and addressed the Board. She advised Members that the latest figures, which had been used in calculating whether West Vale met the threshold for declaration as an AQMA, were from 2020. She advised that these figures were not reliable as due to the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown, data from this year was not comparable with pre- or post-Covid data. She also advised that since 2005 the number of air quality monitors in West Vale had been reduced from 5 to 2, with the monitor which was recording the highest concentration of nitrogen dioxide being one of those removed.

Members commented on the following issues.

- Members asked to be provided with the physical location of air quality monitors. In response, Officers advised that confirmation of the location of current monitoring arrangements in West Vale would be provided to Members following the meeting.
- The information given in the report did not seem to reflect information provided during the meeting.
- Why would it be difficult or controversial to declare West Vale an AQMA? In response, Councillor Cook advised that the Council had a degree of discretion in declaring an AQMA but this might jeopardise plans to build houses in the area.

**IT WAS AGREED** that:

- (a) the petitioners be thanked for attending the meeting and presenting the petition;
- (b) the Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods, be requested to provide the following information to Members of the Board:
  - i. why the monitors were switched off for 3 months in 2018;
  - ii. why a national reduction factor was applied to data in 2018; and
  - iii. why the number of air quality monitors had been reduced from 5 to 2; and
- (c) it be recommended to Cabinet that West Vale be declared an Air Quality Management Area.

## **56 PARKING CHARGES IN HALIFAX PETITION**

The Senior Scrutiny Officer submitted a written report which provided the details of a petition received about parking charges in Halifax. The Council's Petition Scheme required that validated petitions with more than 500 but fewer than 2000 signatures should be presented to the relevant Scrutiny Board. The petition was seeking to ask that the Council save our high streets, support our residents and reverse the new parking charges.

The report advised that recent changes made to car parking charges were as follows:

- Existing charges in Halifax (short stay), Hebden Bridge, Sowerby Bridge and West Vale would be extended until 8pm.
- Charges would also be extended to Sundays and bank holidays in Halifax town centre short stay car parks and on-street spaces.
- Bank holidays would also become chargeable in Hebden Bridge.

Councillor Cook attended the meeting and addressed the Board. He advised Members that this petition was intended to show Council and Cabinet that there was a lot of opposition to the increases in parking charges. He advised that there had been a noticeable effect on businesses and footfall in Halifax town centre.