

**TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE
WEDNESDAY 25 JUNE 2003**

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER
SUPPLEMENTARY CREDIT APPROVAL – AIR QUALITY MONITORING**

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Edwards

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this Report is to inform members that bids have been made for Supplementary Credit Approval (SCA), as follows:
 - a) Action Planning, in the sum of **£16,000**
 - b) Replacement Meteorological Station, **£5,000**
- 1.2 A letter from the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) dated 30 April 2003 confirms that the application has been successful, despite bids being heavily oversubscribed nationally.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 An SCA is an approval given to borrow money for a specific purpose, and is given in addition to the basic credit approval issued to the Council each year. If the SCA is accepted and a loan taken out then the authority would be liable for the interest and principal repayments in future years. The Authority will receive some reimbursement of these charges through the annual revenue support grant allocation process.

3.0 Action Planning Bid

- 3.1 Taunton Deane Borough Council is in a unique position in that, following a Supplementary Stage 3 Air Quality Report published in September 2002, Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) in Henlade and in East Reach were designated in January 2003.

We are, therefore, currently involved in a Stage 4 Review and Assessment, developing an Action Plan, as well as carrying out the second round of review and assessments. All of these are statutory functions with tight deadlines.

- 3.2 To assist in the production of the Action Plan, which is a statutory consequence of declaring an AQMA, it is proposed to employ the Air Quality Management Resource Centre (AQMRC), at the University of the West of England (UWE) to carry out a comprehensive review project. The project will involve:

- consideration of the guiding principles

- a review of the Council's AQMAs, Supplementary Stage Three Assessment work
- consideration of relevant local authority and external agency planning functions and responsibilities
- criteria development for evaluating potential options following review of sources identified
- developing a framework for estimating the air quality improvements required
- developing a framework for quantifying potential air quality and non-air quality impacts of outlined measures
- developing a framework for the consideration of cost-effectiveness
- developing of a framework methodology for ranking and prioritising options
- producing recommendations for the effective development of an Action Plan in pursuit of securing the national air quality objectives.

3.3 The AQMRC is one of the leading organisations in the UK for the study and resolution of air quality management problems. They work with a large number of partners, including DEFRA.

They are very familiar with consultation techniques being employed by local authorities in aspects of their local air quality management work, and particularly with respect to action planning and strategy work.

3.4 The AQMRC has estimated that the project will require 40 days, at an estimated total cost of **£16,000**.

4.0 Replacement Meteorological Station

4.1 The Council has operated a meteorological station since the early 1990s but the station has been inoperable since December 2002. The data provided by the station have been most useful in the interrogation of air monitoring data collected, using both our permanent and mobile monitoring stations.

The use of local meteorological data will become increasingly important as more air monitoring is carried out and, in particular, for use in our future air modelling work. The accuracy of modelling exercises depends upon very localised data.

4.2 Having obtained a number of quotes for a replacement station, our application was based on Skye Instruments Limited supplying a MiniMet station and a SkyeLynx Delux communications and graphing package.

In addition to the supply and installation costs of around £5,000, there will be an ongoing cost of £375 for the annual maintenance contract, which will ensure that the sensors and system remain accurate.

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 The coincidental timing of so many Air Quality Projects, each of which requires very significant amounts of work, means that the development of the Action Plan for the AQMAs cannot be undertaken from within existing staff resources.
- 5.2 The preferred Contractor (AQMRC) has considerable experience in this very specialised field and is highly regarded by DEFRA.
- 5.3 The success of future air quality projects will increasingly depend upon reliable and very local meteorological data. It is therefore important that the Council has access to and control of such data.
- 5.4 Both bids are in line with Corporate Priority 2, Our Environment.

6.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that the DEFRA offers of SCA be accepted in the sums of £16,000 and £5,000 for Air Quality Action Planning and for a replacement Meteorological Station, respectively, and that Full Council approval be sought for the general fund capital programme for 2003/04 to be amended accordingly.

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