

Appendix 1

Annual Summary of Hull City Council's Air Quality Strategy

March 2021

This Appendix is aimed at providing an over view of the work being carried out by the Authority, and also the further measures being proposed.

It is drawn from the information in tables presented to DEFRA as part of the Annual Status Report (ASR).

1. Achievements

Progress on measures presented in the 2019 Cabinet report have been limited due to the impact of the Covid-19 virus. During the on-going pandemic, one achievement is that staff have been working hard to assess the impact on air quality of the changes in travel and working patterns in order to be better placed to advise on other schemes in the future. A summary report on the impact of the Covid situation on air quality is provided in Appendix 2.

Kingston upon Hull City Council has taken forward a number of direct measures during the current reporting year of 2019 into 2020 in pursuit of improving local air quality. A summary of these are listed below.

Last year's annual status report (ASR) was appraised by independent experts on behalf of DEFRA and the findings accepted. The findings were that air quality in the City is continuing to improve, the one area of exceedance remains near the A63, but it too is improving and is expected to be resolved by the upcoming road improvements. This would leave Hull with no Air Quality Management Areas, which is almost unique for a City of this size. Further information is to be provided by Environmental Regulation to Defra regarding the on-going situation with monitored levels on Ferensway currently being a cause for concern.

Key completed measures are:

- a) The Environmental Regulation Section continue to work with various internal and external partners who are carrying out a feasibility study into the wider use of low cost analysers to monitor amongst other things Air Quality, including linking them to the various communication systems that operate, such as wifi, LoRaWAN and 4G networks, all linked to the Internet of Things (IoT). These monitors have the potential to highlight air quality issues that may have been missed by the authorities existing monitors and could also have beneficial use for educational purposes. The feasibility study has found a number of issues / concerns regarding the accuracy of these monitors which are included in the 'issues' section of this summary.
- b) More recently, staff attended an on-line conference with colleagues in Antwerp to discuss other opportunities relating to community engagement and the Smart City network. This links with other work staff are engaged in with Hull

University, where a number of options relating to Citizen Science Projects are being investigated.

- c) Environmental Regulation produced a business case for funding for mobile air quality monitoring equipment of an appropriate standard to validate the results and supplement the Section's existing monitoring regime. However, following an initial tendering process and receipt of a number of bids it was decided not to proceed with the acquisition of the mobile analysers. After further consideration it was concluded that it may be more beneficial to hire in equivalent analysers on a specific needs basis. If the data from such analysers (using certified methods) identifies a need for more detailed assessment the Section may need to further consider the purchase of analysers, but in the short-term it is not intended to pursue this. Such monitors, whether purchased or hired in could be used to validate the accuracy of low cost monitoring alternatives mentioned in Point 'a' above, would answer any concerns from members of the public and others regarding air quality issues in specific areas such as around schools and to supplement information provided in the annual status report to DEFRA as well as measuring the impact of some of the schemes being progressed in the Council's Air Quality Strategy.
- d) Council officers have taken the opportunity to encourage community engagement when Councillors or members of the community raise air quality concerns. Examples include presenting information to area committees to help progress community schemes to monitor air quality using diffusion tubes.
- e) In conjunction with the community air quality monitoring schemes, Environmental Regulation are also looking to include other council initiatives, such as the Playing Out schemes (where communities request that roads are temporarily closed to traffic to allow children to play), to encourage awareness of the issues and offer some means for the community to minimise emissions. This also links to Public Health's work with Planning to produce a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - 'Healthy Places' that will provide additional evidence, interpretation and guidance on the various health related policies contained in Hull's Local Plan (2016-32).
- f) Linked to the proposed Healthy Places SPD, a group has been formed to investigate improvements and to promote Green Travel Plans corporately and externally.
- g) Officers from various Departments have formed a Behaviour Change Group, to investigate ways of linking actions from differing areas of the Authority, such as flooding, waste management and air quality, to present a cohesive message and make the best use of resources and knowledge.
- h) The Environmental Quality Supplementary Planning Guidance Document (SPD3) produced in 2018 that forms part of the Local Plan continues to be a useful document to specify which developments will require an air quality assessment and what it should contain, in particular by way of good design and mitigation.

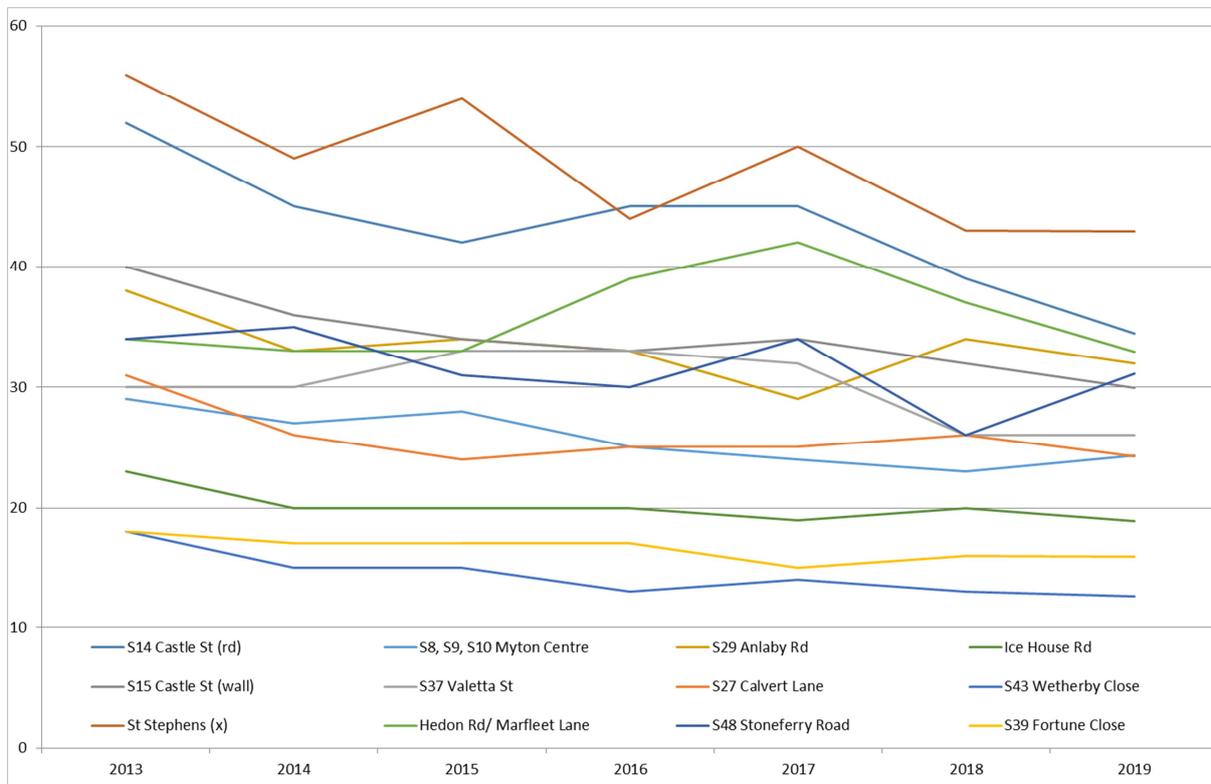
- i) Environmental Regulation will continue to comment on planning applications, and ensure that they meet the requirements of Hull City Council's Air Quality Strategy and SPD3. The aim is to minimise any increase in emissions to protect health.
- j) The previous 25 Smoke Control Orders have now been revoked, and have been replaced by one single, clearer Order covering the whole of the City. This is seen as an opportunity to raise awareness of the issues around solid fuel combustion and fine particulate. The consultation and settling in period required by law has now been completed, and the Order came in to force on the 1st of June 2020.
- k) The taxi licensing policy which commits the licensing section to include air quality as a major element of any actions, has enabled the licensing section to enact a number of measures including a revision to the number of hackney carriage licenses available, that are only open to fully electric vehicles.
- l) The electric vehicle and charging point strategy is progressing, and will be enhanced by the Council's Declaration of a Climate Emergency for the City.
- m) Fleet Management are progressing with measures to facilitate the Council goal to have a low emission fleet by 2030, by halting the purchase of all fossil fuel vehicles by 2022.
- n) Environmental Regulation officers have been assisting Hull University with a ground breaking study to determine the concentration of micro-plastics in the atmosphere, and an investigation into the likelihood of them being inhaled, and the study is now at the report stage. Once completed, this will provide more detailed information on the components that make up the particles in the atmosphere smaller than 10 microns (PM₁₀).
- o) Highways England has commenced improvement works to the A63 to address delays and congestion. Officers from Environmental Regulation have had considerable input into the Scheme such as liaising with Highways England officers, their contractors and local planning officers and will continue to do so throughout the life of the project which commenced in 2020 and is expected to be completed by 2025. These improvements should ensure a better flow of traffic and therefore improve air quality in this area.
- p) Good connections with internal and external organisations have been further developed, including Port Health, Friends of the Earth, The Plant a Tree Foundation, Hull Carbon Neutral, Hull and East Riding Climate Coalition and others.
- q) Discussions are ongoing with Connected Humber, based at the C4Di building, to offer advice on the development of low cost air quality sensors with a view to developing a project that can be taken into schools.
- r) Environmental Regulation Section are assisting Associated British Ports (ABP) to develop their own Air Quality Strategy and Action Plan. This incorporates liaison with colleagues in East Riding Council, and the Section have relocated its air quality monitoring station to a location on the port to provide a better

understanding of emissions there, and to assist with ABP's own monitoring programme.

- s) Discussions on alterations to the air quality area of the corporate web page have been completed and further discussions are proposed to expand it further.

Since the introduction of the Strategy in 2017 concentrations of the primary pollutant nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), in the majority of locations have decreased. This is illustrated by the graph below.

Trends in Annual mean NO₂ concentrations.



(The 'S' locations included in the key are locations where nitrogen dioxide diffusion tubes are sited)

2. Issues

- a) The breadth of work of the Council means that a number of departments need to consult on issues such as air quality to avoid an impact that could adversely affect health and the environment. On occasions consultation hasn't worked as well as it could. To address this it is proposed that cross departmental meetings will be arranged to improve the consultation process.
- b) As per the previous report, the principal challenges and barriers to implementation that officers anticipate facing are that the primary cause of the exceedance is emissions from vehicles using the A63, and this is not within the Control of the Authority. This leaves the Council with potential issues

when the major works commence, such as the potential to increase traffic, and therefore emissions, on other roads. Another consequence is that the rest of the areas where people are exposed are below the objectives, which means some future development applications could have the potential to add to a potential creep of background levels, and officers would be limited in their ability to fully minimise that.

- c) Progress on the removal of the exceedance that has resulted in the AQMA has been slower than expected due to it being out of the direct control of the authority, which can only influence and support the measures proposed by Highways England. However, officers anticipate that works to improve the A63 trunk road will result in there no longer being a need for an AQMA.
- d) The increased use of lower cost air quality sensors has the potential for an increase in media interest. In itself this is a positive but there are known issues with the reliability and accuracy of the data produced by these sensors. The use of such technology needs to be balanced against known issues around reliability and accuracy to avoid presenting misleading or inconsistent information.

3. Priorities

- a) The priorities for the coming year are to continue to build on the support and commitment offered by leading Councillors, Senior Managers and Officers as well as environmental and community groups in implementing The Air Quality Strategy, and Air Quality measures, as well as the actions required as a consequence of declaring the Climate Emergency, which all help to demonstrate that the Authority is leading by example.
- b) It is seen as a priority that all departments across the Council are fully engaged in the delivery of the Air Quality Strategy, and that this is factored in to projects and workstreams.
- c) To facilitate the desired wider strategic approach, meetings have been arranged with cross department Teams to investigate the opportunities to co-ordinate measures that share a common goal, so that the best outcomes for the Authority are achieved, with the most efficient use of resources. Examples include proposed meetings with the Assistant Director of Streetscene and the Director of Legal Services to look at ways of utilising the Smart City Platform in ways that support the various Council Strategies.
- d) Officers are also actively working on linking actions in the Air Quality Action Plan more directly to the proposed measures for Climate Change, as they share many actions and outcomes.
- e) The Behaviour Change Officers Group, which consists of Officers responsible for waste management, street scene, flood resilience, public health, carbon neutrality and air quality, are to investigate measures to improve collaboration so that initiatives and best practice are progressed collectively in a strategic manner.

- f) The pending review of the Planning White Paper, and also the Environment Bill provide an opportunity for the above strategic approach and allow engagement on issues regarding air quality amongst officers, senior management and Elected Members.
- g) A number of meetings have taken place with the Major Projects team to discuss implementing measures to monitor the impact of schemes such as the pop up cycle lanes that are likely to impact on air quality. Discussions have also taken place to ensure that assessment for future schemes is implemented as early as possible which will ensure adequate consideration is given before projects commence.
- h) There are a number of measures relating to the ongoing road schemes on the A63 and Stoneferry Corridor that will be priorities. These include working with the appropriate organisations to minimise the impact during the works, and relocating monitoring devices to ensure that health is protected. This is mentioned in the issues section of this report.
- i) To further develop relationships with external organisations, and in particular schools, the University and the NHS to help raise awareness of air quality issues.
- j) To liaise with Procurement to review the air quality elements that can be included in procurement guidance.
- k) To progress the production of a media strategy for wider engagement on air quality issues.