

22nd March 2021

Wards: All

Update on the Local Air Quality Strategy 2017
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**Report of the** Director of Public Health and Adult Social Care

This item is not exempt  
Therefore exempt reasons are not applicable

This is a Not a Key Decision

1. Purpose of the Report and Summary

- 1.1 The Report provides an annual update on the progress of the Local Air Quality Strategy as requested at the November 2017 Cabinet.
- 1.2 Appendix 1 provides a summary of the achievements, priorities and potential issues encountered in implementing the strategy to date.
- 1.3 Appendix 2 provides information on the impact of Covid and this year's lockdowns on local air quality.
- 1.4 Appendix 3 provides a comparison of levels for the main pollutant of concern, Nitrogen Dioxide, at selected locations in Hull as well as a comparison of national trends.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet consider the information provided in the Achievements, Priorities and Issues list at Appendix 1 on the progress of the Local Air Quality Strategy.
- 2.2 That annual reports on the progress of the Local Air Quality Strategy are submitted to Cabinet each November and these will include an update on the progress of measures.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The Local Air Quality Strategy is a long term plan that sets out the ambition of the Council to lead by example on improving air quality and protecting the health of people in Hull. It contributes

to our obligations to the UK Air Quality Strategy, and the statutory requirements for local air quality management. It is a key element in ensuring that people can live healthier, longer and happier lives. It will contain a series of commitments and targets set out in such a way that progress can be tracked easily. It has been produced in a way that ensures there is a Council wide contribution and commitment to achieving the necessary improvements that can be assessed. There is also the flexibility to add additional measures as required, each being subject to the necessary consultations and considerations.

3.2 The Council's Local Plan was submitted for examination in December 2016 and approved in 2017 – Policy 47 within the Plan deals with atmospheric pollution and identifies the need for development proposals to be submitted with air quality assessments.

3.3 There are other examples of policies within the Council which seek to improve air quality. Within the City Plan, the Active Travel Strategy aims to discourage commuting by car and promote less polluting modes of transport. Also policy 45, which requires the planting of three trees for every dwelling that is newly constructed helps to maximise to the absorption of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions within the City. The Local Air Quality Strategy supports the inclusion of such initiatives within other Council frameworks.

#### 4. Impact on other Executive Committees (including Area Committees)

4.1 The Local Air Quality Strategy covers the whole city, therefore each executive committee will be affected by its objectives, and will be involved in helping to drive the actions required to achieve the overarching aim of improving air quality to protect health.

#### 5. Background

5.1 The Council's Air Quality Strategy was presented to and approved by Cabinet in July 2017.

It contains 3 key aims:

1. To lead by example by minimising the environmental impact of Council activities
2. To ensure the air quality and climate change impact of development within the district is minimised and, wherever possible, helps to improve local air quality
3. To minimise and control polluting emissions from industrial,

transport and other sources by working with business, residents and other stakeholders

- 5.2 Central Government produced a UK Air Quality Strategy in 2011 which has been subsequently revised. The Strategy lays out proposals to achieve the Air Quality Objectives, and includes measures expected from Local Authorities.
- 5.3 Part of the UK Strategy is for Local Authorities to submit annual reports on air quality (Annual Status Reports), and for these to be reviewed by external consultants to ensure that they are accurate.
- 5.4 The content of the Reports from Hull City Council have been accepted each year, and demonstrate that air quality in Hull is good, particularly in comparison to similar areas of the UK. The only exception to this being an area around the A63 trunk road, which is the responsibility of Highways England, a strategic highways company. This area is an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).
- 5.5 Local Authorities that do not demonstrate that they are doing all they can to achieve the Air Quality Objectives, run the risk of sanctions, if they cannot explain their position. Hull City Council is striving to do everything realistically possible to protect the health of people in Hull by improving air quality, and has an action plan of measures aimed at achieving that.
- 5.6 One measure in the Action Plan is the continued progression of a Local Air Quality Strategy.
- 5.7 As an Authority, there is significant progress being made on initiatives that will have a beneficial effect on air quality and subsequently people's health. These initiatives will also support trade and commerce. The Local Plan has taken a key step already in this transition to appropriately manage air quality. Part of the purpose of the Local Strategy is to catalogue that work, so that it's clear that Hull City Council takes its responsibility for protecting the health of people in Hull very seriously. Many of the measures in the Local Strategy will be actions that are carried out for reasons other than air quality directly, but there will be air quality considerations and benefits.
- 5.8 To date, the Strategy has resulted in a number of initiatives and studies, a summary of those for 2019 / 2020 can be found in Appendix 1.
- 5.9 The actions in the Strategy are drawn from the information provided by Officers at workshops involving all Council Departments, who

feedback what they have done and what they propose to do to improve air quality within their sphere of influence, and discuss wider opportunities that can be progressed by others.

- 5.10 It can be seen from the summary of achievements, priorities and issues in Appendix 1, that good progress is being made to protect health and improve air quality, particularly in the key area of community engagement, although more progress is needed in generating links with the NHS and Schools.
- 5.11 To date, the actions have resulted in Hull having just one area that exceeds the objectives, and that situation will be resolved with the on-going improvements to the A63. This would leave Hull as one of only a few areas of comparable size without an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in the UK and possibly wider.
- 5.12 The Strategy itself is a live document, and can be freely circulated if desired, with any feedback and suggestions sent to the Environmental Regulation Section of Public Protection.

## 6. Issues for Consideration

- 6.1 As the Local Strategy is progressed, each service area of the Authority will be committed to completing updates on the actions they have taken to help improve air quality within the city. The key aspects of these updates for 2019/2020 are summarised in Appendix 1. The expectation is that this will keep local air quality issues more prominent in the decision making processes which form part of the Council's activities.
- 6.2 The additional commitment from the individual service areas is not envisaged to be problematic, as previous workshops looking at what can be done were very well received with a lot of very positive feedback. However, it is important that the process is managed and coordinated in the right way.
- 6.3 As approved at the Cabinet meeting in July 2017, the Air Quality Officer will continue to meet with the key people in each area highlighted in the Local Strategy, to discuss what is required and support the delivery of the Action Plan on an on-going basis and at annual progress meetings.
- 6.4 The equalities impact assessment has been completed, and it was determined that the implementation of the Local Air Quality Strategy will have a beneficial effect for all groups in

the City. It is recognised, however, that poor air quality disproportionately affects the lives of many vulnerable groups so they will see a greater benefit of the improvements that will result from the successful implementation of the Action Plan.

- 6.5 Other policies and initiatives that are linked to the Local Strategy would be subject to their own scrutiny and procedures.

## 7. Options and Risk Assessment

7.1 The options are:

1. For Cabinet to continue to support the ethos and direction of the Local Strategy and for it to be an integral priority in all projects and areas of work.
2. To discuss and agree any suggested amendments that Cabinet may wish to make regarding the Local Strategy or action plan and how they are reported to Members.
3. To reject the recommendations for annual updates to Cabinet. To do this is likely to result in the perception that the Authority views air quality and health as a lesser priority in the City and would run the risk of central government intervention and fail to meet stated Council objectives.

## 8. Risk Assessment

- 8.1 The risks related to the recommended approach of continued reporting to Cabinet on the progress of the Local Strategy are minimal. However not having the Local Air Quality strategy, and it not being a key priority in all aspects of Council activity provides major risk as the Council is unable to demonstrate clearly how it is leading by example and managing pollution levels and air quality.

## 9. Consultation

- 9.1 Prior to July 2017's Cabinet approval, the Local Strategy had been considered by the departments listed in it, as well as Committee's such as the Riverside Area Committee, the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, the Health and Wellbeing Board and Public Health Divisional Management

Team, Informal Cabinet and Corporate Strategy Team.

10. Comments of the Director of Legal Services & Partnerships (Monitoring Officer)

Although there is no overarching statutory obligation to achieve national air quality objectives, the Environment Act 1995 imposes a duty on the Council to carry out air quality assessments and, if necessary, introduce management zones. Both environmental and planning legislation can, through policy development and enforcement, make a positive impact and, as the report states, good air quality benefits local health and well-being and contributes towards regeneration. Periodic reporting will assist the Council in meeting national objectives and maintain this positive momentum.

11. Comments of the Section 151 Officer

The Section 151 Officer notes the contents of the report and has no further comments (JM)

12. Comments of Assistant Director HR & OD and compliance with the Equality Duty

There are no staffing issues arising, better air quality has health benefits that may assist those with a protected characteristic.

13. Comments of Overview and Scrutiny

This report has not been subject to overview and scrutiny. (Sc6064 – AS)

14. Comments of the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods, Communities & Environment

Improving air quality is a key strategic target for the Council and it is pleasing to note that Hull has good air quality across the City and this is improving year on year. It is vitally important that the excellent work carried out so far to improve air quality is maintained and we continue to meet our statutory responsibilities.

**Julia Weldon, Director of Public Health and Adults**

Contact Officer: Dave White (Air Quality Officer) Telephone No.: 615549

Officer Interests: None

Background Documents: -

Appendix 1 - Annual Summary of Hull City Council's Air Quality Strategy

Appendix 2 - Information on the impact of this year's lockdowns on local air  
Quality

Appendix 3 - Comparison of Pollutant Levels Locally and Nationally

Available on request:

- Hull City Council Air Quality Strategy (updated on an ongoing basis)
- Annual Status Report (submitted to DEFRA)

## Implications Matrix

**This section must be completed and you must ensure that you have fully considered all potential implications**

This matrix provides a simple check list for the things you need to have considered within your report

If there are no implications please state

I have informed and sought advice from HR, Legal, Finance, Overview and Scrutiny and the Climate Change Advisor and any other key stakeholders i.e. Portfolio Holder, relevant Ward Members etc prior to submitting this report for official comments	Yes
I have considered whether this report requests a decision that is outside the Budget and Policy Framework approved by Council	Yes
Value for money considerations have been accounted for within the report	Yes
The report is approved by the relevant City Manager	Yes
I have included any procurement/commercial issues/implications within the report	Yes
I have considered the potential media interest in this report and liaised with the Media Team to ensure that they are briefed to respond to media interest.	Yes
I have included any equalities and diversity implications within the report and where necessary I have completed an Equalities Impact Assessment and the outcomes are included within the report	Yes
Any Health and Safety implications are included within the report	Yes
Any human rights implications are included within the report	Yes
I have included any community safety implications and paid regard to Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act within the report	Yes
I have liaised with the Climate Change Advisor and any environmental and climate change issues/sustainability implications are	Yes

included within the report	
I have included information about how this report contributes to the City Plan/ Area priorities within the report	Yes
I have considered the impact on air quality, carried out an appropriate assessment and included any resulting actions or opportunities necessary to improve air quality in the report.	Yes