



CABINET – 20 OCTOBER 2020

AIR QUALITY AND HEALTH JOINT ACTION PLAN 2020-2024

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

PART A

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of the report is to inform the Cabinet of the Council's ongoing work with partners to improve air quality across and the County and seek approval for the Leicestershire Air Quality and Health Joint Action Plan.
2. The Leicestershire Air Quality and Health Joint Action Plan is a partnership Plan, owned by the County Council and delivered in partnership with the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning Group, University of Leicester and the following district councils - Blaby, Charnwood, Harborough and North West Leicestershire. It will be overseen by the Air Quality and Health Action Plan Partnership, of which the above are members.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that the Cabinet
 - a) Notes the Council's continued work with partners to improve air quality across the County;
 - b) Approves the Leicestershire Air Quality and Health Action Plan 2020-2024.

Reasons for Recommendation

4. Air pollution has a significant impact on public health and wellbeing, and poor air quality is the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK. The public need to be aware of the impact their behaviours have on air pollution and measures that could be put in place to address these.
5. The Environment Act 1995 (Part IV) places obligations on both county and district councils to work together to develop their approach to addressing air quality and, with respect to Action Plans, ensure that all necessary measures to address air pollution in their local area are included. Whilst statutory responsibilities for addressing air quality rest with the district councils, some County Council functions such as Highways and Transportation will impact air

pollution. and improving the health of the population is also a County Council function. It is therefore beneficial to have a partnership approach.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

6. The Scrutiny Commission considered a report on 2 September 2020 and its comments are set out in Part B below.
7. Subject to approval of the Action Plan, the Health and Wellbeing Board will consider a progress update at its meeting on 28 January 2021.
8. Actions included within this plan have also been incorporated within the majority of district council air quality strategies and plans where they exist, and these will be approved through their own governance processes. It is expected that this process will be completed by December 2020 and the joint Action Plan will then be considered live. The Joint Action Plan will then be publicised and launched early 2021.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

9. In November 2016, the Health and Wellbeing Board approved the Leicestershire's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for 2017 – 2026. This document sets out the vision to “improve health outcomes for the local population, manage future demand on services and create a strong and sustainable health and care system by making the best use of the available resources”. Improving health outcomes is reliant on understanding and tackling the causes of ill-health of which poor air quality is one.
10. On 15 May 2019 the County Council declared a climate emergency, resolving to work with partners and other public bodies across the County and region to deliver ambitious goals such as reducing the Council's carbon emissions by 38% by 2030.
11. Following the declaration of a climate emergency, the Council at its meeting on 8 July 2020 approved the revised Strategic Plan for 2018 – 22 to incorporate new environmental commitments to ensure future growth is considered within a robust environmental framework. It also approved the revised Environment Strategy 2018-2030, which aims to reduce pollution and the environmental impacts of travel and transport and seeks to protect people from harm caused by the deteriorating condition of the environment and a target of net zero carbon emissions by 2030.
12. The Director of Public Health has a statutory duty under the Health and Social Care Act to ensure that plans are in place to protect the health of the local population.

Resource Implications

13. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Partners are asked to support the delivery of the Action Plan using existing resources. The Director of Law and Governance has been consulted on the content of this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

14. As air quality is a matter that affects all areas of the County, this report is being circulated to all members of the County Council.

Officers to Contact

Mike Sandys, Director of Public Health
Tel. (0116) 305 4239
Email: mike.sandys@leics.gov.uk

Kelly Evans, Consultant in Public Health
Tel. (0116) 305 1995
Email: Kelly-Marie.Evans@leics.gov.uk

PART B

Background

15. Air pollution has a significant impact on public health and wellbeing, and poor air quality is the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK.
16. Air pollution is a complex mix of particles and gases, both natural and of human origin. Particulate matter (PM) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) are major components of urban air pollution. Other pollutants include Sulphur dioxide, Ammonia, Ozone and Non-methane volatile organic compounds (NMVOCs).
17. Health effects from air pollution occur throughout life - from conception to older age. Conditions caused by air pollution not only cause deaths but also significantly reduce quality of life. They also mean people are less able to work and need more medical and social care support, resulting in higher social costs and greater burden on the Health and Care System.
18. Road vehicles are the main pollution source that people are exposed to in the most populated urban environments and the pollutants they cause and emit have the greatest health impacts. Combustion for heating, farming activities and certain industrial processes also contribute to air pollutant emissions, but these tend to be more diluted, contributing to background levels of air pollution.
19. There are considerable differences in emissions between different vehicles and fuels. In general, diesel exhausts contain up to 30 times more PM than petrol or liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) / compressed natural gas (CNG), but all vehicles generate additional PM from friction of brakes and tyres and through re-suspension of dust from road surfaces.

National and local context

20. The UK Government and the devolved administrations have policy responsibility for air quality in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland respectively.
21. The Government published a Clean Air Strategy in January 2019 which constitutes the Government's main plan to curb emissions of nitrogen oxides (NO_x), sulphur dioxide, volatile oxide compounds, ammonia and particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) emissions as required by the National Emissions Ceilings Directive and the Gothenburg Protocol underpinning it.
22. Local authorities in Great Britain have powers to address local air pollution via the Clean Air Act 1993, the Road Traffic (Vehicle Emissions) (Fixed Penalty) (England) Regulations 2002 and equivalent legislation in Scotland and Wales. The latter includes enforcement powers for stationary idling offences.
23. Local authorities are required to review and assess local air quality, in accordance with the statutory Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) guidance. Where a local authority identifies areas exceeding statutory limits and there is

relevant public exposure, it is required to declare the geographic extent of exceedance as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). It must then draw up an Action Plan detailing remedial measures to address the problem.

24. In two-tier authority areas, the duties placed on local government associated with air quality management are the responsibility of district authorities. This includes identification of AQMAs, monitoring and reporting on air quality, producing and delivering Action Plans, and assessing the impact of development on air quality through the planning process.
25. There are 16 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) due to exceedance in Leicestershire:
 - 14 of these monitor Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂).
 - One AQMA monitors Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂) and covers the Great Central Railway area and one AQMA monitors particulate matter (PM₁₀) and covers the Mountsorrel Quarry area.
 - Melton Borough Council, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council and Oadby and Wigston Borough Council have currently no declared AQMAs.
26. Prevalence of asthma across Leicestershire was 6.3% in 2018/19, this is significantly higher than the England average of 6%.
27. Background levels of PM are found to be higher in North West Leicestershire, Loughborough and Kegworth with quarries and the airport considered as the main cause. The quarry at Croft in Blaby District is also a potential source of PM.
28. There are also higher levels of Nitrogen Oxide – found in car exhaust fumes and when coal and oil is burnt, leading to Particle Matter 2.5 and Particle Matter 10 - dust, soot and smoke. The numbers 2.5 and 10 refer to the size of the particles. The higher levels of both pollutants are found around the main road routes in the County; namely the M69, A42, A46, A6 and the M1.
29. However, there are obligations on both the County Council and the district councils within Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 in relation to air quality. The Secretary of State expects lower and upper-tier councils to work together to develop their approach and, with respect to Action Plans, ensure that all necessary measures to address air pollution in their local area are included. Each district with an AQMA will have an Action Plan that looks to manage air quality in that area.
30. In Leicestershire, the Air Quality and Health Action Plan Partnership has been established to oversee and monitor delivery and implementation of the Leicestershire Air Quality and Health Joint Action Plan. Members of the Partnership are: Leicestershire County Council; Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning Group; the University of Leicester and the following district councils - Blaby, Charnwood, Harborough and North West Leicestershire. Other district councils will be encouraged to join the partnership as the Plan is delivered.

Proposal

31. In light of the above, it is proposed that an Air Quality and Health Action Plan 2020 – 2024 be introduced which aims to improve air pollution across Leicestershire through joint working across organisational boundaries, with professionals in environment and transport and public health in the County Council and Regulatory Services in the district council and the public to improve air quality in the county and reduce the impact of air pollution on the environment and human health, contributing to the reduction in health inequalities. A copy of the Action Plan is appended to this report as Appendix A.
32. The key aims of the Action Plan are to:
 - i. Reduce the impact of poor air quality on the health of residents, workers and visitors, and the environment.
 - ii. Raise public awareness of air quality, its impact on health and personal protection measures to promote sustainable behaviour change.
 - iii. Increase our understanding of the state of air quality in Leicestershire and the impact of measures to improve air quality.
 - iv. Meet and exceed statutory obligations and national targets on air quality.
33. In addition, the following three priorities were determined by partners as the focus of collaborative action over the next 4 years:
 - i. Active and sustainable travel: This work should act as a catalyst for behaviour change and modal shift to green travel. Each authority with support from the Counties active and sustainable travel team will be expected to promote active travel to their residents and workforce.
 - ii. Planning and development strategies and proposals: Guidance and frameworks should be developed with and for planners to support measures to improve air quality and identify and address developments which may worsen air quality. Each authority will be expected to contribute to the healthy design guide programme of work.
 - iii. Information sharing and campaigns: It is important that steps are taken to understand the public's views, knowledge, attitudes and motivations, in order that they can be engaged in developing actions which are aligned with their priorities. Each authority will be expected to promote county-wide campaigns.

Engagement with Key Stakeholders

34. A workshop was held in October 2019 to engage with partners and develop an initial draft of the proposed Air Quality and Health Action Plan. Partners included county and district council officer representatives, East and West Leicestershire Clinical Commissioning Groups, health colleagues in acute care and community providers such as Leicestershire Partnership Trust.

Views of the Scrutiny Commission and Officer Response

35. The Scrutiny Commission considered a report at its meeting on 2 September 2020 as part of the consultation and a detailed minute of the discussion is attached at Appendix B. In summary, members welcomed the Plan and recognised that both nationally and locally air pollution was the biggest environmental hazard in terms of mortality impacts.
36. Members also welcomed more monitoring of air quality levels across the county and the sharing of this data to drive the need for change, whilst recognising that district councils often had insufficient resource to do so. The work of the Strategic Planning Group to improve developer understanding of expectations in respect of air pollution as part of a development was also welcomed. Members said they would like more insight into work by surrounding councils, which would likely impact air pollution in some boundary areas.
37. The Scrutiny Commission noted that no single body had oversight or control of air pollution and suggested that the Plan be strengthened to address the challenge between the impact of growth on air pollution and other environmental considerations. Concern was expressed that there was currently no member involvement in the development of the Plan or its delivery. The Director agreed and undertook to revisit the governance structure to ensure political oversight was properly reflected in the Plan and this has been done by inviting members of the Health and Wellbeing Board to attend the Air Quality and Health Action Plan Partnership.
38. Following the comments of the Scrutiny Commission, the Action Plan has been modified to include actions regarding consistent monitoring across Leicestershire. An interactive dashboard has also been developed incorporating all NO₂ and PM monitoring sites, so monthly data by site can be seen across the county.
39. Membership of the Air Quality and Health Partnership Group has also been reviewed to ensure all key partners are included. Member input is welcomed, and members of the Health and Wellbeing Board will be invited to attend. The Health and Wellbeing Board will also receive regular progress reports.

Performance Monitoring and Governance

40. The overall measurement of success will be reducing mortality attributable to air pollution. However, the detailed outputs to achieve this will be developed with partners through the Air Quality and Health Action Plan Partnership, which will oversee delivery of the Action Plan. The Partnership includes Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning Group, officers from the County Council's Environment and Transport, Strategic Planning and Public Health departments, the University of Leicester and also officers from district councils who will implement the plan. Following comments from the Scrutiny Commission, Members will now be invited to be part of this partnership.

41. The Air Quality and Health Action Plan Partnership will meet six weekly to monitor progress against the plan.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

42. An Equality and Human Right Impact Assessment (EHRIA) screening of the Action Plan has been completed and concluded that a full impact assessment is not required.

Background Papers

Meeting of the County Council – 8 July 2020 – Revised Strategic Plan 2020-2023
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MId=6040&Ver=4>

Meeting of the County Council – 8 July 2020 - Revised Environment Strategy 2018-2030
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MId=6040&Ver=48>

Meeting of the County Council – 15 May 2019 – Notice of Motion – Climate Emergency
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MId=5112&Ver=4>

Meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board – 11 November 2016 – Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1038&MID=4635#A14953>

Air Quality joint strategic needs assessment
<https://www.lsr-online.org/uploads/jsna-air-quality-2019-v10-final.pdf?v=1561477116>

Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Air Quality and Health Action Plan
 Appendix B – Minute of the Scrutiny Commission 2 September 2020