

<b>12 October 2017</b>		<b>ITEM: 5</b>
<b>Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>		
<b>Update on Air Quality &amp; Health Strategy</b>		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Key	
<b>Report of:</b> Fred Raphael, Transport Development Manager		
<b>Accountable Assistant Director:</b> Ann Osola, Assistant Director, Transportation and Highways		
<b>Accountable Directors:</b> Steve Cox, Corporate Director for Environment and Place Ian Wake, Director of Public Health		
<b>This report is Public</b>		

## **Executive Summary**

Cabinet endorsed the Air Quality and Health Strategy in December 2016. The strategy frames the authority's approach to improving air quality and reducing air pollution exposure to safe levels for human health across the borough. Additionally, the strategy provides the context for the council to manage air quality through a suite of borough-wide policies to prevent new Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) from arising, as well as outlining actions and measures to improve air quality in each AQMA with a view to moving towards advisory limits and future revocation.

The overall strategic aim of the Air Quality & Health Strategy is to improve air quality and to reduce the health impacts of air pollution in the borough. This will be delivered through three main approaches:

- a) the implementation of measures for managing air quality throughout the borough to prevent new AQMAs from arising
- b) implementing measures contained within the action plans for existing AQMAs;  
and
- c) collaboration with external bodies to reduce background pollution from inside and outside the borough.

This report provides the Committee with an update on the implementation of the measures and actions to improve air quality.

## **1. Recommendation(s)**

### **1.1 That the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee comment on the progress of implementation of the Air Quality & Health Strategy.**

## **2. Introduction and Background**

2.1 In 2013 the council declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA 24) for NO<sub>2</sub> in Tilbury, along part of Dock Road, Calcutta Road and St Chad's Road. This was followed by further declarations for Aveley (High Street and Ship Lane (AQMA 25) and Purfleet Bypass (AQMA 26), bringing the total number of AQMAs in Thurrock to 18.

2.2 In early 2015 a report which underlined the acute and chronic health effects associated with poor air quality was presented to the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The committee supported the establishment of a cross-directorate Air Quality Officer Task Group to develop an integrated Air Quality and Health Strategy. The strategy was developed and later endorsed by December 2016 Cabinet.

2.3 The Thurrock Air Quality and Health Evidence-Base identified the issues that the Air Quality and Health Strategy would need to resolve and to this effect adopted an overall strategic aim, which is as follows:

- To improve air quality in the borough to reduce the health impacts of air pollution.

2.4 This aim was given further dimension by considering the core goals of the Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which are:

- Every child has the best possible start in life;
- People stay healthy longer, adding years to life and life to years;
- Inequalities in health and well-being are reduced; and
- Communities are empowered to take responsibility for their own health and well-being.

2.5 In accordance with the core goals of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy above, the Air Quality and Health Strategy has adopted the following aims and objectives:

- a) Implement measures for managing air quality throughout the borough to prevent new AQMAs from arising;
- b) Implement measures contained within the action plans for existing AQMAs; and
- c) Work with external bodies to reduce background pollution from inside and outside of the borough.

2.6 In order to meet the above aims and objectives, the strategy adopted four (4) policies. These policies seek to facilitate decision-making on air quality issues

and work to prevent new AQMAs from arising wherever possible. The policies adopted in the Air Quality and Health Strategy are as follows:

**Table 1: Air Quality and Health Strategy Policies**

	Policy	Summary
AQS 1	Tackling Transport Emissions	The Council will deliver transport interventions aimed at: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Reducing vehicle trips and promoting a modal shift where possible to active modes of travel to future proof Thurrock's transport network for sustainable growth.</li> <li>II. The business community and transport service providers to discourage the use of polluting vehicles travelling within Thurrock.</li> <li>III. Rerouting vehicles, particularly HGVs, to avoid residential dwellings.</li> <li>IV. Reducing its own emissions and to influence emission reductions through its own procurement and operations.</li> </ol>
AQS 2	Tackling health inequalities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. The areas of highest need, highest deprivation and poorest health outcomes in relation to air quality will be prioritised for action on initiatives to mitigate the impact of poor quality on health.</li> <li>II. Work with health partners to improve long-term condition management in primary care through the implementation of the GP balance scorecard and the development of integrated healthy living centres in areas of highest need (Tilbury and Purfleet).</li> </ol>
AQS 3	Thurrock Clean Air Zones/ Low Emissions Zones	The Council will undertake a detailed review of the merits of the wider use Clean Air Zones or Low Emission Zones within Thurrock. A range of options for implementing a Clean Air Zone or Low Emission Zone in Thurrock to tackle poor air quality will be appraised. A firm proposal for a Clean Air Zone or Low Emission Zone will be developed provided that detailed consideration suggests that it is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feasible and practicable;</li> <li>• Represents value for money; and</li> <li>• Likely to have local support and improves public health.</li> </ul>
AQS 4	Future Developments and Planning	Air quality policies will be incorporated into the preparation of the new Local Plan. This is to provide the planning framework to safeguard existing areas and to ensure that the type or location of proposed development will not adversely impact air quality and where possible bring about improvements, through either relocation of polluting activities or negotiation of appropriate mitigation.

- 2.7 These policies have been translated into actions and measures that are borough-wide, which seek to improve air quality across the borough, including within the existing AQMAs; and specific actions assigned to AQMAs where pollutant concentrations are highest and within the 20% most health deprived LSOA in England.
- 2.8 The strategy recognises the need for monitoring of air quality in order to determine whether the actions and interventions in the strategy are achieving success on the ground.

- 2.9 Officers are monitoring and assessing progress on air quality throughout the borough, including the implementation, delivery and success of the Air Quality Actions Plans in terms of improvements to air quality within AQMAs. The assessment and reporting of progress in the implementation of measures and the evidence acquired from on-going evaluation of the impacts of measures that are reported through the ASR to Defra is on-going.

### **3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

- 3.1 Update on the implementation of the measures

- 3.2 AQS1 – Update of Vehicle Fleet

The council's Environment team have placed an order for approximately 108 new vehicles including 27 new waste lorries to replace the council's current aged fleet. The engines on our current vehicles are Euro 4 and the new replacements will be Euro 6 (the highest level of engine efficiency). These will be operational early in 2018.

- 3.3 Actions Specific to AQMAs

#### AQMA 25 – Aveley High Street

- The council introduced westbound width restrictions on Aveley High Street. These restrictions are intended to ameliorate some of the air quality issues that arise from HGVs in the area.

#### AQMA 26 – Purfleet Bypass

- The council has developed plans and will be delivering cycleway improvements as part of the Cycle Infrastructure Programme from October 2017.

#### AQMA 23 – London Road, Grays

- The council is currently investigating measures to control HGV movement on London Road. The design work will be completed in March 2018.

#### AQMA 2 – London Road, Grays

- The council is progressing bus lane camera enforcement in London Road. "Go-live" date scheduled for 1<sup>st</sup> March 2018 with full enforcement and issue of PCNs from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018.

#### AQMA 10 – London Road, Purfleet.

- The council introduced width restrictions to the west of AQMA 10 and east of Botany Way.

#### AQMA 3 – Hogg Lane/Elizabeth Road

- The council is considering options to widen parts of the A1306 to improve traffic flows. This is the subject of VISSIM modelling work, which is being jointly undertaken with Highways England.

#### AQMA 24 – Calcutta Road, Tilbury

- The council is progressing a scheme as part of the Cycle Infrastructure Programme.
- Parking restrictions are being introduced as part of a controlled parking zone (CPZ), which will contribute to minimising some of issues arising from roadside HGV parking. Dock Road design to be completed by November 2017, Calcutta Road design to be completed by December 2017, Civil Works to be programmed in for January/February once Legal order process is completed in December/January.
- HGV parking enforcement activities in the area has increased in order to address the current issues related to roadside HGV parking.

### 3.4 Borough-wide Actions

- Variable Message Signing (VMS) – The council has acquired three (3) VMS signs that can be deployed in locations across its road network as needed, towards minimising traffic impacts arising from incidents at Dartford Crossing.
- Weight Restrictions and HGV Management Schemes – this includes a review of current HGV routing and the introduction of measures to minimise air pollution from HGVs, such as weight restrictions and turning bans.
- Improvements to Walking and Cycling – these include the walking and cycle infrastructure improvements secured as part of planning consents; and the Cycle Infrastructure Programme. The £5m Cycle Infrastructure Programme is currently in process of delivery and will be completed by March 2019. To date we have worked at West Thurrock Way near Lakeside and Aveley and are currently working on Arterial Road, Purfleet moving on to Purfleet by-pass in October. The schemes at South Ockendon, further schemes at West Thurrock and Tilbury are currently being designed and planned to be constructed by April 2018. Before moving to other parts of the borough we are conducting a Cycle Infrastructure review as a number of changes took place since the last review in 2013/14.
- School and Workplace Travel Plans – the council secures travel plans and monitoring provisions as part of development consents. Schools currently monitor their travel plans via Modeshift STARS web-tool which provides a national framework for the implementation of sustainable and active school travel activities. This is the only national accreditation scheme for rewarding sustainable School Travel Plans and 35 out of 51 schools in the borough are actively working on their School Travel Plans and many have achieved a Bronze Accreditation (STP). Arthur Bugler and Kenningtons Primary have recently achieved Silver accreditation and Woodside Academy has achieved Gold accreditation in their STP.
- Freight Quality Partnership (FQP) – the council has re-established its Freight Quality Partnership to help manage the impact of HGVs in Thurrock.

- National Clean Air Day (NCAD) – on National Clean Air Day (June 15, 2017), the council hosted a pilot scheme for Defra Air Quality funding bid. This involved delivering anti-idling and no-smoking outside of the gate at two schools and engaging with children via assemblies, t-shirt design competitions, flyers, banners and car stickers.
- South Essex Active Travel (SEAT) – the council, along with Southend-on-Sea and Essex County Council was successfully awarded approximately £3.3 million to deliver this programme, which targets people in a transitional stage of life to encourage sustainable travel options prior to key behavioural decision-making processes, such as commencing new employment or education.

One of the first delivery outcomes of the SEAT programme is working with the new Amazon development in Tilbury, where every member of staff who has been offered a conditional work placement by Amazon has also been offered personalised travel planning advice. This involves being informed of the various public transport, walking and cycling options, or a combination of these modes, and how these can help them to get to work and home, based on their home location and proposed shift patterns. This has been delivered by a team of travel engagement officers who have engaged with at least 1500 Amazon employees with the company keen to extend this programme across the three years. Further employment sites to be targeted within Thurrock include intu Lakeside, and the park development at London Gateway, as well as South Essex College.

The programme also includes a range of other measures, including a target to provide adult cycle training to 200 people over the three years to encourage cycling to work, and financial support to deliver a cycle hub in Tilbury (or other suitable location within the borough) which will support a programme of up-skilling local volunteers in cycle repairs, to encourage enterprise and reemployment, as well as offering a community space, cycle recycling and cycle exchange programme for families (i.e. as a child grows older, a smaller cycle can be exchanged for a more suitable bike).

The SEAT programme offers a range of benefits to residents by providing improved travel information and advice on travel to the workplace, not just within Thurrock, but across the south Essex corridor, the promotion of lifelong skills in cycling and cycle confidence, and cycle repairs and maintenance, as well as cycle loans to new job seekers who do not have access to their own transport. The SEAT programme has also engaged with public transport operators to provide free travel tickets to job seekers or new employees to help them commence employment using public transport at a low cost which may otherwise be unaffordable in the first few weeks of employment. The scheme will result in approximately £400,000 worth of investment per annum in Thurrock over three years.

- Electric Vehicle Charging – the council will go out to tender on a new contract for electrical infrastructure. New EV charging points will be

introduced where demand justifies. We are aiming to have an approved contract set up for April 2018.

### 3.5 Impacts of Actions

The strategy sets out the need to monitor and measure air pollution levels in AQMAs where actions are focussed, in order to determine whether the actions being implemented are achieving success in terms of a reducing NO<sub>x</sub> levels. We currently monitor air quality in all AQMAs in the borough. This is undertaken through diffusion tubes sited in and out of AQMAs. This will allow us to use the monitoring data to measure the impact of interventions. As NO<sub>x</sub> is measured and reported on an annual basis, the monitoring data for 2017 will not be available till early 2018. However, since traffic emissions, especially from HGVs, are a major source of air pollution, we can make some assumptions that some improvements have been realised in those AQMAs where actions such as weight restrictions were introduced. We expect the data for 2017 to support these assumptions.

### 3.6 Lower Thames Crossing and Air Quality in Thurrock

Following the government's announcement of the preferred route for Lower Thames Crossing on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2017 Highways England are progressing this option through the next stages of design. This is expected to be the route taken forward to the submission of an NSIP application to the Planning Inspectorate in mid-2019. To support the application HE will need to undertake a number of assessments, including an assessment of the impacts of the proposed crossing on air quality in Thurrock. The scope of assessment for air quality will be set out in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Report that HE are intending to submit by mid-October 2017. The council will be formally consulted on the EIA Scoping Report and invited to make comments on the adequacy of the data collection and analysis which is proposed. The council has engaged independent subject matter experts to inform the council's response to this issue. At its July meeting, Thurrock Council passed a resolution to ask Highways England to jointly establish with the council a process for independent air quality testing and provide the council with access to all data used to reach decisions. This request has been passed on to Highways England and the details as to what this means in practice are currently under discussion.

### 3.7 The Draft National Air Quality Plan

Thurrock was consulted on the government's Draft Air Quality Plan in May 2017. In our response, we set out that the document identifies areas with roads that persistently exceed NO<sub>2</sub> limits based on modelling. Thurrock has significant data and modelling regarding air quality across the borough and has 18 AQMAs declared on the basis of NO<sub>2</sub>. We sought greater clarity from Defra and DfT on the reasoning behind their selection of the authorities that have been prioritised for clean air zones. The council is keen to ensure that there is sound reasoning behind the selection of these authorities and wants

to see a fair process that ensures that we receive funds to help tackle air quality, not just within individual AQMAs but across the borough.

#### **4. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 4.1 Planning, Transportation and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee are invited to comment on progress made against this strategy as part of the council's commitment to appropriate scrutiny of its actions.

#### **5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

N/A

#### **6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact**

- 6.1 Better management of Air Quality in Thurrock plays a very important part in meeting the Council's priorities; particularly to improve health and well-being and protect and promote our clean and green environment.

#### **7. Implications**

##### **7.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: **Laura Last**  
**Senior Finance Officer – Management**  
**Accounts**

There are no financial implications. The actions defined in the Air Quality and Health Strategy will be delivered through existing resources.

##### **7.2 Legal**

Implications verified by: **Vivien Williams**  
**Planning and Regeneration Solicitor**

There are no legal obligations. This report relates only to an update on the actions defined in the adopted Air Quality and Health Strategy.

##### **7.3 Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Price**  
**Community Development Officer**

Adoption and subsequent implementation of the measures identified in the Strategy and Action Plans will support the wellbeing of some vulnerable members of the local community including those suffering from health conditions affecting the upper-respiratory system. Associated AQAPs will tackle existing air quality problems and help to bring down levels of nitrogen



dioxide which may reduce the number of health impacts for people living and working in and around these AQMAs.

**7.4 Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

There are no other implications.

**8. Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- November 2016 Cabinet report – Air Quality & Health Strategy
- Thurrock Air Quality & Health Strategy

**9. Appendices to the report**

Appendix 1 – Location of Monitoring Sites in Thurrock

**Report Authors:**

Fred Raphael

Transport Development Manager