

SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING)

IMPROVING AIR QUALITY IN LEEDS

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In 2014, Public Health England published its report 'Estimating Local Mortality Burdens Associated with Particulate Air Pollution' which highlighted the health impacts of exposure to everyday air pollutants, with long-term exposure primarily contributing to cardiovascular disease (including heart diseases and stroke), lung cancer and respiratory disease (including asthma and chronic bronchitis). The two main pollutants of concern in urban areas are nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter (PM_n). The Department of Health's Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants (COMEAP) also estimated that long term exposure to air pollution had an effect equivalent to 29,000 deaths a year in the UK in 2008. However, general public awareness of such impacts of poor air quality on their health is lower to other health issues such as smoking or obesity and therefore it is recognised nationally that further effort is required to raise awareness levels and influence behavioural changes that will help to tackle air quality issues.
- 1.2 At the beginning of the municipal year, the Director of Environment and Housing and the Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability also raised the need to improve air quality as a key local priority for the Council and one which would benefit from further Scrutiny by the Environment and Housing Scrutiny Board. Whilst the Board agreed to undertake an inquiry into this matter, it also acknowledged the cross-cutting nature of this area of work. Invitations were therefore extended to the City Development and Adult Social Services, Public Health and NHS Scrutiny Boards to contribute to this inquiry.
- 1.3 The Scrutiny Board acknowledges the work already being undertaken as part of the Council's existing breakthrough project on cutting carbon and improving air quality. This inquiry therefore sets out to add value to this work. The Board is also aware of the West Yorkshire Low Emission Strategy 2016 to 2021 (WYLES), which has helped provide the framework for the existing Leeds Air Quality Action Plan. As a live document, the Scrutiny Board will be assessing the progress made in implementing the Leeds Action Plan and also reviewing the need for any other potential local solutions to reduce the health impacts of exposure to air pollution and to also comply with evolving national policies surrounding air quality.
- 1.4 In particular, the Scrutiny Board is mindful of the Government Plan to improve the UK's air quality, as set out and published by DEFRA in December 2015. This UK Plan aims to reduce health impacts, and crucially to also fulfil legal obligations to meet EU Directives on

emissions. It also sets out an approach for meeting these goals by implementing a new statutory programme of Clean Air Zones. Linked to this, a joint unit of DEFRA and DfT is co-ordinating the implementation of the Clean Air Zones across the UK. This involves supporting Local Authorities in their own planning for delivery of Clean Air Zones through providing financial, legislative and traffic and air quality emission modelling expertise. The Scrutiny Board acknowledges that the Council is already working closely with DEFRA and the other named local authorities to secure consensus with the joint unit on agreed methodologies to progress this work. As such, this will also be considered as part of this inquiry.

2.0 Scope of the inquiry

2.1 The purpose of the Inquiry is to make an assessment of and, where appropriate, make recommendations on the following areas:

- The current understanding of the scale of air quality issues affecting Leeds, including mapping of existing air pollution hotspots across the city.
- Progress made against the existing Leeds Air Quality Action Plan and its links with the West Yorkshire Low Emission Strategy 2016 to 2021 (WYLES).
- The key features of the DEFRA UK Air Quality Improvement Plan, published in December 2015, and its implications for Leeds (including targets and potential sanctions).
- Existing and potential mechanisms used to engage the public and various stakeholder groups on the issue of air quality and the potential solutions.
- The extent to which air quality issues are being considered in the development of the Transport Strategy for Leeds, with particular reference to the proposed introduction of Clean Air Zones.
- Other potential local solutions to reduce the health impacts of exposure to air pollution and to also comply with evolving national policies surrounding air quality.

3.0 Desired Outcomes and Measures of Success

3.1 It is important to consider how the Scrutiny Board will deem if their inquiry has been successful in making a difference to local people. Some measures of success may be obvious and others may become apparent as the inquiry progresses and discussions take place.

3.2 The main objective of this inquiry is to add value to the work being undertaken as part of the Council's breakthrough project on cutting carbon and improving air quality. In particular, the inquiry will focus on the progress made against the existing Leeds Air Quality Action Plan as well as reviewing whether this Plan remains fit for purpose in response to evolving national policies surrounding air quality. Linked to this, attention will also be on ensuring that existing air quality

monitoring methodologies used by DEFRA and the Council, and the data measurements used, are robust.

4.0 Comments of the relevant Director and Executive Member

- 4.1 In line with Scrutiny Board Procedure Rule 12.1 where a Scrutiny Board undertakes an Inquiry the Scrutiny Board shall consult with any relevant Director and Executive Member on the terms of reference.

5.0 Timetable for the inquiry

- 5.1 The Inquiry will take place over a number of sessions. These sessions will also involve working group meetings with stakeholders, which will provide flexibility for the Board to gather and consider evidence.
- 5.2 The length of the Inquiry is subject to change. However it is anticipated that a final report will be produced by March 2017.

6.0 Submission of evidence

6.1 Session one – October 2016 (working group meeting date tbc)

To consider evidence in relation to the following:

- The current understanding of the scale of air quality issues affecting Leeds, including mapping of existing air pollution hotspots across the city
- Progress made against the existing Leeds Air Quality Action Plan and its links with the West Yorkshire Low Emission Strategy 2016 to 2021 (WYLES).
- The key features of the DEFRA UK Air Quality Improvement Plan, published in December 2015, and its implications for Leeds (including targets and potential sanctions).

6.2 Session two – November/December 2016 (working group meeting date tbc)

To consider existing and potential mechanisms used to engage the public and various stakeholder groups on the issue of air quality and potential solutions.

6.3 Session three – January 2017 (working group meeting date tbc)

To consider the extent to which air quality issues are being considered in the development of the Transport Strategy for Leeds, with particular reference to the proposed introduction of Clean Air Zones.

6.4 **Session four – January/February 2017 (working group meeting date tbc)**

To consider other potential local solutions to reduce the health impacts of exposure to air pollution and to also comply with evolving national policies surrounding air quality.

6.5 **Session five – February 2017 (working group meeting date tbc)**

To consider the findings and potential recommendations arising from this inquiry.

6.6 **Session six – March 2017**

To agree the Board's inquiry report.

7.0 Witnesses

7.1 The following have been identified as possible contributors to the inquiry, however others may be identified during the course of the inquiry:

- Director of Environment and Housing
- Director of City Development
- Director of Public Health
- Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability
- Executive Member for Regeneration, Transport and Planning
- Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adults
- Executive Programme Manager, Projects, Programmes, & Procurement Unit
- Representation from DEFRA
- Representation from Friends of the Earth
- Representation from Highways Agency

8.0 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

8.1 The Equality Improvement Priorities have been developed to ensure our legal duties are met under the Equality Act 2010. The priorities will help the council to achieve it's ambition to be the best City in the UK and ensure that as a city work takes place to reduce disadvantage, discrimination and inequalities of opportunity.

8.2 Equality and diversity will be a consideration throughout the Scrutiny Inquiry and due regard will be given to equality through the use of evidence, written and verbal, outcomes from consultation and engagement activities.

- 8.3 The Scrutiny Board may engage and involve interested groups and individuals (both internal and external to the council) to inform recommendations.
- 8.4 Where an impact has been identified this will be reflected in the final inquiry report, post inquiry. Where a Scrutiny Board recommendation is agreed the individual, organisation or group responsible for implementation or delivery should give due regard to equality and diversity, conducting impact assessments where it is deemed appropriate.

9.0 Post inquiry report monitoring arrangements

- 9.1 Following the completion of the Scrutiny inquiry and the publication of the final inquiry report and recommendations, the implementation of the agreed recommendations will be monitored.
- 9.2 The final inquiry report will include information on the detailed arrangements for how the implementation of recommendations will be monitored.