
Report of: Director of Environment and Housing**Report to: Environment and Housing Scrutiny Board****Date: 8th December 2016****Subject: Air quality communications update**

Are specific electoral Wards affected?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. Air pollution is now accepted as one of the greatest public health issues in the UK, attributable to around 40,000 premature deaths each year. However, current public awareness of air pollution is low compared with those of other public health issues, for example smoking or obesity. To improve the quality of life of Leeds' residents, whilst improving air quality, public awareness needs to be improved so that individuals are empowered to make decisions to alleviate their exposure to emissions, and reduce their own contribution to these emissions.
2. In order to encourage this behaviour change, the potential health issues resulting from exposure to elevated levels of air pollution must be communicated to members of the public through consulting and engaging with stakeholders, partnership work and through events and activities across the city.

Recommendations:

3. That the information supplied in this report is noted and discussed.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report informs Scrutiny Board of the progress being made in informing and communicating the issue of air pollution to the residents, businesses and schools (parents and children) of Leeds

2 Background information

- 2.1 Air pollution originates from a range of sources. Natural background air pollution derives from animals or events such as storms and volcanic movements. However, the bulk of emissions come from man-made sources. Power stations and industry are major contributors, but a significant emission source is our road networks that contribute to regional background air pollution and specific local hot spots.
- 2.2 Urban air pollution typically increases incrementally as traffic flow and volume increases; this can lead to particular areas of concern – which in Leeds have been defined as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). Improvements in air quality can largely only be delivered through reducing the emissions from vehicles, or reducing the number of vehicles on the roads.
- 2.3 To improve the quality of air in Leeds, a modal shift to sustainable forms of transport is vital. This means encouraging stakeholders to switch from jumping in the car each time they travel, to using public transport or active transport such as cycling, running or walking. In terms of business, this means encouraging fleet change to lower emissions vehicles, and consolidation practices to reduce the number of delivery vehicles on our roads.

3 Current engagement initiatives

- 3.1 To achieve this behaviour change, our communications strategy has 4 overarching themes:
- Raising awareness and sharing information
 - Consultation and engagement activity
 - Promoting active partnerships
 - Organising events and activities

Raising awareness and sharing information

- 3.2 The Council website has been updated with air quality information for businesses and residents. This includes information on the Council's progress in this area (such as converting 70 fleet vehicles to zero emissions or ultra-low emissions vehicles; opening the Cycle Superhighway to encourage cycling between Leeds and Bradford; and introducing a Park and Ride at Elland Road), as well as signposting businesses to register their interest in our air quality pledges, and an informative 'did you know?' myth busting section on the residents' pages.

- 3.3 The second phase of website development will incorporate the introduction of a more detailed and informative air quality section within the Council's website. This would act as an information hub, including signposting to other relevant webpages. Examples of the kind of information that would be included are:
- Background information on the sources and types of pollutants.
 - Health impacts of poor air quality with links to Public Health and NHS advice, and health charities such as Asthma UK and the British Lung Foundation.
 - Advice for members of the public to avoid personal exposure to air pollution, including factual information from recent studies e.g. 'you are actually exposed to more emissions whilst sat in your car in busy traffic than walking or cycling alongside'.
 - Guidance on how members of the public can reduce their own personal contribution to air pollution, including links to sustainable travel, cycle2work schemes, walk to work buddy schemes and government low emissions vehicle grants.
 - Location of AQMAs and links to the Council's and DEFRA's air quality monitoring websites.
 - Information packs and activity ideas for schools.
- 3.4 Work is being undertaken to develop an integrated campaign, which will help to get our story into the media through a range of articles showcasing case studies from our business pledges. It will also seek to raise awareness of the public health issues associated with poor air quality. There is current work being done to develop the branding and visual identity, which will be market tested with a range of target audiences from our 3 stakeholder groups (residents, businesses and schools). This is expected to be approved by the end of December.
- 3.5 The aim is to share information with anyone who drives a vehicle on our roads. The best ways to reach this group are through advertisements on the sides and rears of buses, variable signage on roads, billboards at main junctions, news articles, and online advertising via channels such as our own website and social media accounts. These opportunities will ensure appropriate and effective messages are affirmed.
- 3.6 To ensure our messages reach as wide an audience as possible, sharing information online through social media is critical. The process to create a brand and strapline for our campaign has started. This includes setting up a Twitter and Facebook account to raise awareness of current air pollution levels, promote our pledges, and link to other information sources such as the British Lung Foundation and Enterprise Leeds car club. This will develop the 'clean air conversation' and will give traction to future initiatives that develop from these foundations.
- 3.7 There is a need to ensure that the impact on public health caused by Air Quality is understood across the city in order for the measures that need to be taken to

reduce emissions are supported. The requirement to comply with the government's plans to introduce a Clean Air Zone will require fleet owners across the city to be aware of how to comply with schemes to reduce emissions. The communications plan will need to ensure that any schemes are clearly articulated to all key stakeholders.

Consultation and engagement activity

- 3.8 Stakeholders have been identified under 3 categories: businesses, residents and schools (parents and children). The approach to communications will be tailored to these groups individually, with an overarching ambition of raising awareness and instigating behaviour change towards more sustainable transport modes.
- 3.9 A city-wide transport survey 'Leeds Transport Conversation' ended on the 11th of November. This comprised of questions relating air quality to transport. The responses to this are now being analysed, and we will use this to inform our work: understanding the views of Leeds' residents and businesses and allowing us to focus our air quality communications with target audiences in mind.
- 3.10 A DEFRA consultation is being hosted in Leeds on their proposals for a framework for National Clean Air Zones on the 29th of November. This will be split into two parts, with an event for Local Authorities followed by one for local stakeholders (including taxi/private hire firms, local fleet managers, emergency services, etc.), enabling people to learn more about the proposal and put their questions to government policy teams. This will ensure that businesses in Leeds are engaged in the consultation process and have the chance to express their views and concerns prior to these plans being adopted.
- 3.11 In order to change transport behaviour amongst fleet operators, we have appointed a consultant to engage with individual businesses. We will raise awareness of air quality issues, offer them advice and information about the proposed Clean Air Zone and how it might affect them, and suggest ways they can reduce their contribution to emissions through a range of different actions (including signposting to the types of subsidies that may be available to them, such as the Workplace Electric Charge Point grant scheme announced by central government).
- 3.12 Not all businesses will be reached through this engagement work, so meetings will be facilitated between fleet managers of larger companies and those of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to share information on how they have reduced their emissions. This would include case studies from those who have signed our pledges and made changes to their behaviour, and information on the ECO Stars scheme.
- 3.13 A key objective for 2017 is to make air quality data useful and accessible. Consultations with the Data Mill and Open Data Institute (ODI) on the development of an air quality mobile app to forecast pollution levels, find low air pollution routes, and send targeted messages to vulnerable groups will be part of this work. Engagement with NHS and Public Health to consider other ways to utilise this data will be considered.

Promoting active partnerships

- 3.14 As part of our business engagement work, businesses will be encouraged to become 'Champions' for cleaner air in Leeds by agreeing to a range of actions they can take to reduce air pollution under four key themes: policy and communications, corporate buildings, transport and fleet, and supply chains. These commitments will include:
- Highlighting the health impact of poor air quality to employees through air quality awareness workshops;
 - Embedding air quality improvements into corporate responsibility and environmental policies;
 - Promoting walking and cycling as the best option for employee commutes;
 - Reducing the number of vehicles delivering to the office through consolidation and sharing office basics with neighbouring businesses;
 - Signing up to the ECO Stars fleet recognition scheme.
- 3.15 Pledges will be promoted and publicised through newsletter articles to fleet operators and via the information on the Council's business webpage.
- 3.16 ECO Stars is a national fleet recognition scheme that aims to help fleet operators improve efficiency, reduce fuel consumption and emissions, and make cost savings. The Council's work with this scheme has improved and made cost savings to our own fleet resulting in our rating as a 3-star authority. We want to encourage businesses to review their own arrangements by partnering with ECO Stars to generate cost savings and emission reductions.
- 3.17 Partnership with other bodies, such as the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, will ensure the continued promotion of low emission travel choices
- 3.18 Schools are one of our three identified stakeholders. Much can be achieved in terms of educating children and encouraging them to ask their parents to make the right choices for their commute to school. During the first week of November a 'Green Week' with a focus on Air Quality was held at a primary school in Headingley. This was a success and further partnership work with Schools will be developed to encourage walking/cycling to school, a ban on engine idling near schools, and various other educational and awareness raising activities.

Organising events and activities

- 3.19 Attendance at various ECO Stars events in the city have highlighted how this free scheme can be promoted to businesses in Leeds, and will be an ongoing part of the air quality project.
- 3.20 An event is being planned for 2017 to showcase fleet opportunities to support the adoption of cleaner and low emission vehicles. Manufacturers, fuel infrastructure suppliers, advisory bodies and fleet operators will be invited to attend. This event

will be used to celebrate the progress of our Air Quality Champions and improvements resulting from our pledges, and will also be an opportunity to promote our pledges to other fleet operators. This will support the reduction of fleet emissions across city and regional fleets.

- 3.21 Sustainable travel was an important part of the week of events at the primary school in Headingley. Training on 'cycling confidence' and 'practical road safety training' were some of the activities held. Year 4 students visited the air quality monitoring station on Otley Road, and the year 6 students used an air quality monitor to assess pollution levels at school. Councillor Yeadon made a visit to the school in support of this work. The week was a success and the school are now looking into the feasibility of a walking bus and/or park and stride scheme to improve their local air quality. These activities can be replicated at future events with schools.
- 3.22 A 'data hack' event will be held in Spring 2017. This will be a two stage process: firstly establishing which businesses, public sector organisations and community groups feel they need better air quality data; and secondly inviting them to the event to understand how we can make this data meaningful for them. This will determine how we share air quality data and make it usable. It will support the delivery of change in these organisations processes, practices and decision making. This will be in collaboration with the ODI.

4 Other opportunities

DEFRA and DfT grant opportunity

- 4.1 A national air quality grant fund has been launched with a total value of £3 million. The fund is split into 2 lots:
- Lot 1 'Delivering results' – programmes that deliver air quality benefits in the next 1-2 years;
 - Lot 2 'Taking the lead' – programmes developing the evidence base for measures that could deliver widespread benefit in the future.
- 4.2 The Council have submitted individual and consortium bids for each lot.

National air quality campaign

- 4.3 As part of our bids for lot 1 of the DEFRA grant, Leeds is part of a joint bid for a national air quality campaign submitted by Southampton on behalf of the cities group; with local engagement in 6 cities including Birmingham, Derby, Manchester and Nottingham. Global Action Plan (GAP) have provided a provided the framework for this, which would launch with a National Clean Air Day on the 15th of June 2017.
- 4.4 There are 3 keys outcomes for this national campaign:
- Visible action on the ground involving the public on 'National Clean Air Day', including school challenges and no-idling intervention;

- A wide reach through high profile communication of health messages through local media;
- A legacy of greater capability for local health professionals and community leaders to address air quality, and continued community action on air pollution year-round.

4.5 The above aligns with DEFRA's CAZ framework which recommends that campaigns focus on health benefits. It will ensure that good advice is provided by health experts and academics, which then reaches Leeds' residents. This will be achieved through targeted messaging aimed at protecting health to overturn the current situation, where there is a resource gap in the funding available to city authorities and local NHS trusts to spread awareness.

Taxi Scrappage Scheme

4.6 An additional bid has been submitted by Leeds in LOT 1 for funding to support a pilot scrappage scheme that will support the early take up of Ultra Low Emission vehicles (ULEVs) in place of older diesel vehicles across the taxi and private hire trade. If successful this bid will support the purchase of electric and plug in hybrid vehicles in this sector to demonstrate the benefits of these vehicles and raise awareness in the trade and publically of the feasibility of alternative fuel vehicles, Communications activity will be delivered as part of this scheme, with the benefits of ULEVs being measured and case studies developed to encourage the adoption of these vehicles across fleets.

5 Corporate Considerations

5.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 5.1.1 An annual report on air quality in the city is taken to Executive Board.
- 5.1.2 This report forms part of the consultation on air quality communications.

5.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 5.2.1 There is now categorical evidence that long-term exposure to everyday air pollutants contributes to a wide range of health effects, such as: respiratory diseases including asthma and declines in lung function; cardiovascular diseases including strokes; adverse pregnancy outcomes such as preterm birth; and premature deaths.
- 5.2.2 Air pollution is harmful to everyone. However, some people are more susceptible than others because of the location in which they live and work, their age, or existing medical conditions.
- 5.2.3 Deprived areas in cities typically experience heavier than average traffic movements and consequently, potentially higher levels of pollution as well. When combined, air pollution, deprivation and poor health status can create increased and disproportionate disease burdens.

- 5.2.4 The groups most vulnerable to the adverse effects of air pollution are young children with developing lungs, the elderly, and those with pre-existing health conditions.
- 5.2.5 Communicating the risks associated with high exposure to air pollution, and ensuring vulnerable groups are aware of ways in which they can reduce their individual exposure to air pollution, are vital in order to reducing these health inequalities.
- 5.2.6 Air quality is one element that contributes to the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

5.3 **Council policies and Best Council Plan**

- 5.3.1 Raising awareness of the impacts of air pollution to residents, businesses and schools contributes to the Council's cutting carbon and improving air quality breakthrough project. Improving air quality is one of the 2016/17 priorities and cannot be achieved without positive action and a whole city approach.
- 5.3.2 There is a need to reduce air pollution-related risks for all in Leeds. To improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities across communities, the adverse health effects of poor air quality and advice to reduce exposure to emissions must be communicated to members of the public. This particularly applies to those in vulnerable groups or living in AQMAs.

5.4 **Resources and value for money**

- 5.4.1 The £5,000 cost of appointing an agency to develop a brand for the Air Quality campaign is being met from within existing DEFRA funding for this purpose.
- 5.4.2 The Council has also received funding from DEFRA to support the work with CrispAir consultant.
- 5.4.3 If the DEFRA/DfT bid for the national air quality campaign is secured, Leeds will receive £50,000 funding towards communications activities in the city. This will be used for: bus and radio adverts targeting car drivers; developing materials that can be rolled out across schools to encourage behaviour change and educate children; supporting additional local events up to the national clean air day 2017 event; and developing business materials to assist with investment decisions on alternative fuels and low emissions transport modes.

5.5 **Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

- 5.5.1 The Council has a statutory duty to reduce air pollution in the city in order to comply with legislative targets set by EU law adopted into legislation.

5.6 **Risk Management**

- 5.6.1 Failing to raise public awareness of the risks of poor air quality to health, and providing guidance about what the public can do to help reduce emissions, could result in criticism of the Council from central government, local residents and activist groups.

- 5.6.2 Until residents, businesses and schools are aware of both the issues and the steps they can take to reduce their exposure, primarily through a modal shift to sustainable transport; the figures for premature deaths and health complications caused by pollution are unlikely to improve and could well continue to rise. Businesses also need to be made aware of DEFRA's plans for a Clean Air Zone in Leeds so that they can plan for the impact on their business.
- 5.6.3 In order for Leeds to achieve compliance with air quality standards which have been incorporated into national legislation by 2020, significant changes must be made to the way we travel around the city. Failure to comply with these EU targets would mean that the Council could face infraction fines imposed by the Government through the Localism Act. Consequently air quality is included on the Corporate Risk Register and is reviewed by CLT four times a year.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 To note the work undertaken this year on air quality communications and the timetable for progression of the local campaign into 2017.

7 Background documents¹

- 7.1 None.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.