

14 December 2016		ITEM: 10 (Decision 01104390)
Cabinet		
Air Quality and Health Strategy		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key	
Report of: Councillor Brian Little, Portfolio Holder for Transport and Highways Councillor James Halden, Portfolio Holder for Education and Health		
Accountable Head of Service: Ann Osola, Head of Transportation and Highways		
Accountable Director: Steve Cox, Corporate Director Environment and Place Ian Wake, Director of Public Health		
This report is Public.		

Executive Summary

In 2015, a decision was taken by Thurrock Council to develop an integrated Health and Air Quality Strategy through which to tackle the health problems associated with and exacerbated by air pollution within the borough.

Thurrock's Air Quality & Health Strategy has framed the authority's approach to improving air quality and to reduce air pollution exposure to safe levels for human health across the borough. 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 a number of 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 this Thurrock Air Quality & Health Strategy is to improve air quality in the borough to reduce the health impacts of air pollution.

The Strategy will be delivered through three main approaches:

- a) By implementing measures for managing air quality throughout the borough to prevent new AQMAs from arising; and

- b) By implementing measures contained within the action plans for existing AQMAs; and
- c) By working with external bodies to reduce background pollution from inside and outside the borough.

Alongside the production of the Strategy the opportunity was taken to refresh the Air Quality Action Plans for the existing AQMAs as well as produce action plans for the recently declared AQMAs for Tilbury, Aveley and Purfleet Bypass.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That Cabinet approves the Air Quality & Health Strategy and the associated delivery approaches (Appendix 1)

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 In 2013 the council declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA 24) for NO₂ in Tilbury, along part of Dock Road, Calcutta Road and St Chad's Road, followed earlier this year with 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 was presented to the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny committee underlining areas of poor air quality in Thurrock and the associated acute and chronic health effects from exposure. The committee supported the establishment of a cross-directorate Air Quality Officer Task Group to develop an integrated Health and Air Quality Strategy (hereafter referred to as 'the Strategy', see Appendix 1) to identify ways to reduce air pollution and public health exposure.
- 2.3 The impacts and management of poor air quality is an issue many UK local authorities are committing resources to improve and although there is not a universal solution, developing a cross-directorate strategy which seeks to improve air quality and health is seen as good practice.
- 2.4 Several AQMAs have extremely high regional and/or local background concentrations of NO₂. This means that in some AQMAs, the majority of NO₂ concentrations are not arising from local sources and that local actions carried out on the ground by the local authority may be unlikely to significantly affect the regional background concentrations. This means that in certain circumstances, there may be little, if anything, within the council's remit that would effectively reduce NO₂ concentrations to below the limit value.
- 2.5 Nonetheless source apportionment work has also identified road traffic as a major contributory factor to poor air quality and therefore mitigating its negative effects was identified as a focus of the Strategy.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 The Thurrock Air Quality and Health Evidence Base was considered to identify the issues that the Strategy will need to resolve. The overall strategic aim of the Thurrock Air Quality & Health Strategy is:

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

3.2 This aim can be given further dimension by considering the core goals of the Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Strategy, that:

- 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.

3.3 In accordance with the above, this Strategy has therefore considered ways to:

- 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.

3.4 In order to meet the above aims and objectives, a suite of policies for effectively managing air quality throughout the borough have been developed which will facilitate decision making on air quality issues and work to prevent new AQMAs from arising wherever possible. Figure 1 summarises these policies.

	Policy	Summary
AQS 1	Tackling Transport Emissions	The Council will deliver transport interventions aimed at: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. II. The business community and transport service providers to discourage the use of polluting vehicles travelling within Thurrock. III. Rerouting vehicles, particularly HGVs, to avoid residential dwellings IV. Reducing its own emissions and to influence emission reductions through its own procurement and operations.

	Policy	Summary
AQS 2	Tackling health inequalities	<p>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.</p> <p>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).</p>
AQS 3	Thurrock Clean Air Zones/ Low Emissions Zones	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feasible and practicable; • Represents value for money; and • Likely to have local support and improves public health.
AQS 4	Future Developments and Planning	<p>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</p>

Figure 1. Air Quality and Health Strategy policy summaries

- 3.5 A prioritisation exercise was undertaken to enable the Council to focus its resources on those areas where the issues are most pronounced. Borough wide interventions have been identified to contribute to improving air quality across the borough including within the 18 existing AQMAs. Figure 2 outlines the AQMAs prioritised for interim transport actions, the dominant pollution sources and the magnitude level of action required.

AQMA	Notes	Level of Action Required
10	Highest NO2 concentration, predominantly from HGVs	High
3 (Elizabeth Road only)	Focussed on HGVs and cars	High
5 (B186 to Clockhouse Lane only)	Focussed on HGVs	High
24	Focussed on cars	Medium
25	Focussed on HGVs and cars	Medium
2	Assuming that most of AQMA 1 will be revoked, all that remains is the London Road element of this AQMA.	Low
23		Low
1 (London Road only)		Low

Figure 2 AQMAs prioritised for Action Planning

- 3.6 Investing in improving air quality in the borough is going to have multiple benefits to the health and well-being strategy, contributing to a number of objectives in addition serving to also tackle congestion and help manage

traffic better. The Health & Wellbeing board will be mechanism to determine how other partners can improve air quality beyond the identified actions.

- 3.7 Officers will continue to monitor and assess progress on air quality throughout the borough, including the implementation, delivery and success of the AQAPs for improving air quality within AQMAs.
- 3.8 If air quality across the borough improves, particularly within AQMAs, the Strategy will be regarded as being effective. By implementing the measures contained in the Strategy, we also anticipate noticing improvements in the fraction of mortality attributable to particulate air pollution in Thurrock. Additionally, as air quality across the borough improves through implementation of the Strategy, it is intended that a number of AQMAs will be revoked, pending DEFRA approval.
- 3.9 The Strategy will be kept as a live document as it's success will be dependent upon the on-going 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.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 Historic poor air quality in Thurrock is well known, but increasingly its negative impacts on the health of residents are being recognised. The Strategy has prioritised interventions within the council's sphere of influence to focus resource and attention in tackling both emissions of and exposure to pollutants, to improve Thurrock's environment and health. The Strategy demonstrates the council's commitment to tackling the borough's air quality problems.

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

- 5.1 Inception of the Health and Air Quality Officers' Task Group was a direct result of consultation with both the health and wellbeing overview and scrutiny committee and a presentation to the Health and Wellbeing Board. Further updates on progress with development of the Strategy have been given at their meetings and consultation has taken place with the older people's Parliament and Health Watch Advisory Group. The Cleaner, Greener Overview and Scrutiny committee have also been consulted on the declaration of new AQMAs for Thurrock.
- 5.2 Sections 83 and 84 of the Environment Act 1995 require consultation with the Secretary of State, the Environment Agency, the Mayor of London, surrounding local authorities and those residents situated within these AQMAs notifying of the air quality review and recommendation for declaration.
- 5.3 Public consultation on the Draft Strategy and new Air Quality Action Plans was undertaken in May and June 2016 with information available through the

Council's 'Have My Say' page. The consultation was publicised through social media and in the local press as a result of a press release.

- 5.4 Whilst the level of public participation was low with only 8 respondents, the level of understanding and competency shown by the comments (30) highlighted the importance of this subject locally.
- 5.5 This Strategy was discussed at the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview & Scrutiny committee on 8 November 2016. The committee agreed the strategy could be taken forward to Cabinet for approval with minor amendments (inclusion of enforcement of weight restrictions and routing on Thurrock's road network and prioritisation to undertake a detailed review of Clean Air Zones or Low Emissions Zones).

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

Costs associated with the Strategy and Action Plans are identified for funding through either existing revenue budgets for Transportation and Public Health or to be negotiated through s106 funding from relevant related developments (as identified on the Infrastructure Requirements List).

7.2 Legal

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

The declaration of AQMAs, the formulation of action plans and assessment of air quality are statutory duties of the council under the provisions of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995.

The council is obliged to undertake regular monitoring of air quality and to make an Air Quality Management Area Order (AQMAO) when thresholds are breached and are unlikely to be met within a reasonable timescale.

Following the implementation of an AQMA the Council has a duty to implement an Air Quality Action Plan which makes recommendations for improving air quality within the AQMA.

By pursuing this course of action the council will seek to update and amend the current AQMAO 2005 and subsequent amendment in 2013 to reflect the proposed revisions within the Detailed Assessment Report 2014.

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)

Under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, local authorities have a statutory duty to improve and protect the health of their population.

It is recognised that exposure to consistently high levels of air pollution can have an adverse impact on health, particularly in those with heart or lung problems, especially if they are elderly.

In adopting this Strategy and Action Plans the appropriate officers in Thurrock Council will be better informed to provide advice for preventing or mitigating against any new developments that could worsen air quality, or introduce additional exposure in this area.

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):

- None

9. **Appendices to the report**

- Thurrock Air Quality and Health Strategy

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