

Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 04 December 2018

Report Title: Cheshire East Air Quality Strategy 2018 Update

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Ainsley Arnold – Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning and Regeneration

Senior Officer: Frank Jordan – Executive Director Place and Acting Deputy Chief Executive

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. This report recommends the formal approval of the Cheshire East Air Quality Strategy (AQS). In accordance with Environment Act 1995 the Council has a statutory duty to review and assess air quality across the borough. If, as part of this process, there are areas which are found to be exceeding the air quality objectives the Council must declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). In addition, the Council must implement an Action Plan, which sets out what actions will be taken to improve air quality within all AQMAs.
- 1.2. Currently, Cheshire East has eighteen AQMAs, which are all relatively small areas and spread across the borough and they all are as a result of vehicle emissions.
- 1.3. DEFRA recommends that all those local authorities that have declared AQMAs should implement an AQS. The purpose of the AQS is to ensure that air quality is taken in to account in all relevant decisions and sets out six indicators to ensure it is implemented. The indicators include the monitoring of air pollutants, assessing new developments for their impact on air quality, improving public awareness, assessment of road schemes and the assessment of industrial processes.
- 1.4. Therefore, by approving the AQS it will ensure that the Council will consider the impact on air quality of all the relevant decisions taken across the borough.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. That Cabinet approve the Air Quality Strategy so that air quality can be taken in to account in all relevant decisions across the Council.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. Local Authorities have a statutory duty under the Environment Act 1995 to review and assess local air quality within their area, against a set of health-based objectives for a number of specific air pollutants. If any areas are found where pollutants exceed the objectives, local authorities are required to declare an Air Quality Management Area and to prepare an Air Quality Action Plan setting out measures they intend to introduce in order to reduce concentrations of air pollutants, in pursuit of achieving the objectives. To assist with this process DEFRA encourages all local authorities to implement a local Air Quality Strategy. The purpose of the strategy is to set out how air quality will be considered in all relevant decision making processes across the Council to ensure that any impacts to air quality are taken in to account and actions in the Air Quality Action Plan are implemented where possible.
- 3.2. Cheshire East currently has eighteen Air Quality Management Areas, which are all relatively small areas spread across the borough and are due to vehicle emissions. Therefore, in order to improve air quality in these areas and generally across the borough it is essential to ensure air quality is taken in to account in all relevant Council decisions. By approving this report it will demonstrate the commitment by the Council to tackle current air quality issues across the borough and to help prevent any further deterioration in air quality in other areas.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. The only other option is if the Air Quality Strategy is not approved the strategy. If this is the case it will prevent the Council from ensure that air quality is a material factor in all relevant decisions and could lead to a deterioration of air quality within the borough.

5. Background

- 5.1. Local authorities have a duty under the Environment Act 1995 to review and assess local air quality within their area, against a set of health-based objectives for a number of specific air pollutants. If any areas are found where pollutants exceed the objectives, local authorities are required to declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and to prepare an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) setting out measures they intend to introduce in

order to reduce concentrations of air pollutants, in pursuit of achieving the objectives. This strategy sets out how air quality will be considered in all relevant decision making processes across the Council to ensure that any impacts to air quality are taken in to account and actions in the AQAP are implemented where possible.

- 5.2. In addition to these formal obligations, local authorities are encouraged by Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) to draft and implement local Air Quality Strategies. The aims of the Air Quality Strategy are to support the achievement of the air quality objectives and to ensure air quality is considered within a wide range of local government and regional planning frameworks. This is important, as whilst working towards achievement of the air quality objectives will help reduce the risk of the most serious health effects related to pollution, there are advantages to be gained from the continual improvement of local air quality conditions. By establishing a strategic framework for the inclusion of air quality considerations within Council policies and procedures, a local authority is then well placed to maintain good air quality and secure future improvements.
- 5.3. Delivering improvements to local air quality requires input from a wide range of professions. Therefore the Strategy identifies commitments intended to promote communication and co-operation within the Council, between external organisations and the community. These commitments are grouped under a number of relevant policy sectors including air quality, spatial planning, transport, climate change and energy management, health and education.
- 5.4. Although future improvements in local air quality are predicted as a result of technological advances in vehicle engines and improved fuels, there is currently some doubt as to their efficacy, and there remains a need to reduce the increasing reliance on private motor vehicle use and to provide access to improved public transport services or other sustainable means of travel. Traffic accounts for the main source of pollutant emissions across the borough, which is primarily responsible for all the AQMAs. As such, links with the Local Transport Plan are fundamental to both the improvement of local air quality and maintenance of air quality, across the borough.
- 5.5. Six indicators are proposed within the Strategy including the monitoring of air pollutants, assessing new developments for their impact on air quality and improving public awareness of air quality. Using these metrics, the

effectiveness of the Strategy can be evaluated throughout the lifetime of the document.

6. Implications of the Recommendations

6.1. Legal Implications

6.1.1. The Air Quality Strategy is vital to ensuring that the Council meets the relevant air quality objectives as set out in the Environment Act 1995.

6.2. Finance Implications

6.2.1. There are no direct financial implications, however it will probably result in further costs to assess and implement the impact of some decisions taken across the Council especially with regards to Highway's decisions.

6.3. Policy Implications

6.3.1. There are no direct Policy implications arising from this report.

6.4. Equality Implications

6.4.1. There are no direct equality implications arising from this report.

6.5. Human Resources Implications

6.5.1. There are no direct HR implications arising from this report

6.6. Risk Management Implications

6.6.1. Failure to take air quality in to account as part of all relevant decisions could result in a further deterioration of air quality and ultimately affect the health residents.

6.7. Rural Communities Implications

6.7.1. There are no direct implications for rural communities.

6.8. Implications for Children & Young People

6.8.1. There are no direct implications for children and young people.

6.9. Public Health Implications

6.9.1. Air pollution damages lives with harmful effects on human health, the economy and the environment. It is the largest environmental risk to the public's health, contributing to cardiovascular disease, lung cancer and other respiratory diseases. It increases the chances of hospital admissions, visits to Emergency Departments and respiratory and cardiovascular symptoms, which interfere with everyday life. In the

most severe cases it increases the risk of death, especially for people who are already vulnerable. Poor air quality affects everyone. It can have long term impacts on all and immediate effects on vulnerable people, with a disproportionate impact on the young and old, the sick and the poor.

- 6.9.2. There is now an extensive body of evidence that long-term exposure to everyday air pollutants over several years contributes to the development of cardiovascular disease (CVD), lung cancer, and respiratory disease. PM is inhaled into the lungs and ultrafine PM_{0.1} is thought to pass into the blood causing many adverse outcomes including systemic inflammation. Air pollution is strongly associated with all-cause mortality statistics. The all-cause mortality statistic captured in PHOF indicator 3.01 ranks air pollution in the top 5-7 causes of mortality in polluted areas, ahead of many other PHOF preventable mortality indicators like road deaths, excess winter deaths or communicable diseases. New evidence also points to other damaging effects. There is also emerging evidence of links between long term PM_{2.5} exposure and the health of the central nervous system, the progression of Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases, developmental outcomes in children, and such reproductive health outcomes as low birth weight, as well as other chronic conditions such as diabetes.
- 6.9.3. The health effects of air pollution are distributed unequally across the population, with the heaviest burden borne by those with greatest vulnerability and/or exposure. The elderly, children and those with cardiovascular and/or respiratory disease are at greater risk from the health effects of air pollution. Those who spend more time in highly polluted locations will be affected more. Since air pollution levels are typically as high within vehicles as just outside, this is likely to include not only those who live and work near busy roads, but also those who drive for a living.
- 6.9.4. Deprived communities are more likely to be situated near polluted busy roads, and are more likely to experience adverse health impacts. Analysis of environmental quality and social deprivation carried out for the Environment Agency (2003) looked at the social distribution of the wards with the highest pollutant concentrations, and concluded that more than half of the most exposed 5% of the population (2.5 million people) were resident in the 20% most deprived wards.

6.9.5. Action to improve air quality and reduce emissions in Cheshire East is therefore to be welcomed for the opportunity to improve Public Health.

7. Ward Members Affected

7.1. Borough wide

8. Consultation & Engagement

8.1. The Updated Air Quality Strategy was include in the 17th September 2018, Environment and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee agenda, which led to a number of suggestions and the report has been updated to include as many of these suggestion as possible.

9. Access to Information

9.1. Cheshire East Air Quality Action Plan.

9.2. The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

9.3. Local Air Quality Management: Policy Guidance (PG16).

10. Contact Information

10.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

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