

LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY

To: The Metro Mayor and Members of the Combined Authority

Meeting: 29 June 2018

Authority/Authorities Affected: All

EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL ITEM: No

REPORT OF THE LIVERPOOL CITY REGION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND THE LEAD OFFICER: SCRUTINY

SCRUTINY REVIEW OF AIR QUALITY ACROSS THE LIVERPOOL CITY REGION

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to draw the Authority's attention to a report produced by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the issue of Air Quality across the Liverpool City Region, and to approve a draft response to the recommendations contained in that report from the Authority.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority:
 - (a) welcome the report of Overview and Scrutiny Committee into Air Quality as set out in Appendix One; and
 - (b) agree the draft response attached at Appendix Two and request that this is reported back to the next available meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At its meeting on 24 January 2018, the Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to undertake two further task and finish group reviews in the 2017/18 Municipal Year: these were Air Quality and Welfare Reform and Universal Credit.
- 3.2 The task and finish group's review into Air Quality is timely as a result of the following considerations:-
 - (a) the follow-on Devolution Deal between the Combined Authority and UK Government which committed the LCR to joint work to explore the merits of Clean Air Zones;

- (b) recent legal challenges against the UK Government for failures to meet European air quality targets, resulting in the publication of a Nitrogen Dioxide Action Plan in July 2017;
- (c) the proactive work by Liverpool City Council to tackle poor air quality within the city as part of the Liverpool Mayor's "Breathe Liverpool" campaign; and
- (d) the commencement of a feasibility study into options to address poor air quality as per the commitment within the Mayor Mayor's 100 Day Plan in 2017

3.3 There is now a growing consensus as to the need to take urgent action to address the challenges presented by poor air quality at a pan-city region level. In particular, the opportunity to link the scrutiny review with the on-going development of the technical feasibility study was valuable in securing complementarity between the two work streams.

3.4 An initial scoping session was held on 7 February 2018, with evidence sessions held on 21 February, 7 March and 21 March 2018: a final concluding session took place on 4 April 2018 to review the findings and proposed recommendations.

3.5 The group's ensuing report was considered and endorsed by members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 18 April 2018¹. It was requested that this be considered by the Combined Authority. An abridged version of this final report is attached as Appendix One to this report.

3.7 Attached at Appendix Two is a suggested set of responses to the issues raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Members of the Combined Authority are asked to agree those responses which will be presented to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial

There are financial implications associated with the implementation of the recommendations in this report, given the potential financial risks to the LCR and to its constituent local authorities as a result of failures to meet air quality targets. There are also likely to be costs associated with the implementation of measures to address poor air quality, which cannot be quantified at this preliminary stage.

4.2 Human Resources

There are no direct Human Resources implications associated with the implementation of the recommendations in this report.

4.3 Physical Assets

1

There are no physical assets associated with the implementation of the recommendations in this report.

4.4 Information Technology

There are potential information technology implications associated with the implementation of the recommendations in this report in terms of any proposals to upgrade or renew the air quality monitoring process and with potential communication and engagement plans. These cannot be quantified at this preliminary stage.

5. RISKS AND MITIGATION

- 5.1 There is a risk that the Combined Authority will not accept the recommendations made in this report. This has been mitigated by identifying a range of actions which reflect the findings of the Task and Finish Group which are in line with the Combined Authority's emerging policies and commitments on air quality. A failure to improve air quality across the Liverpool City region would also continue to pose significant health and wellbeing risks to the affected population.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The issues relating to individuals with protected characteristics, particularly people suffering from disability and ill health and in lower socio-economic groups (and who are more susceptible to the effects of poor air quality) were considered by the Task and Finish Group as part of its review into Air Quality.

7. COMMUNICATION ISSUES

- 7.1 Raising the profile of poor air quality, as communicating and engaging with members of the public is an important part of the review and ensuing recommendations.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 This report has tabled the drafted report of the Scrutiny Review into Air Quality for approval and onward consideration by the Combined Authority.

KIRSTY PEARCE
Lead Officer: Scrutiny

Contact Officers:

Huw Jenkins, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (0151 330 1393)

Appendices:

Appendix One – Report of Working Group review into Air Quality as presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Appendix Two – Proposed Action Plan in response to Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s review into Air Quality

**LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
REVIEW INTO AIR QUALITY ACROSS THE LIVERPOOL CITY REGION
FINAL REPORT BY THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

1. Chair's Introduction

This review was chosen by Members in recognition of the air quality issues which were evident across the Liverpool City Region, with 11 Air Quality Management Areas in place. Furthermore, this review sought to examine and challenge the Combined Authority's strategic role in addressing poor air quality across the City Region.

This Task and Finish Group met five times during February 2018 and April 2018. Members heard extensive evidence from a number of high profile witnesses which included those with expertise in the monitoring and management of air quality across the City Region, a panel of witnesses which comprised of experts from public health and medical and the final panel of experts who explained how policies, plans and funding programmes from Merseytravel, Constituent Local Authorities and the Combined Authority could influence improvements to Air Quality.

The extensive evidence and insight gained enabled the Task and Finish Group to identify six recommendations and sought to complement the air quality feasibility study which was being developed by the Combined Authority.

2. Background to the Review

Action to manage and improve air quality is largely driven by European legislation, which sets legally binding limits for air pollutants that impact on public health, such as particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide. Related UK legislation requires local authorities in the UK to review air quality in their area and designate air quality management areas (AQMA) where pollution levels exceed these limits. The legislation does not directly apply to the Combined Authority. The briefing paper in Appendix 1 summarises the legislation and legal powers.

Across the UK, road transport has been identified as the most significant source of emissions locally, related to transport. Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter (PM₁₀s) are the main pollutants breaching legal limits, mainly stemming from the combustion of diesel fuel.

Where AQMA are designated, local authorities are required to work towards improvement, and an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) must be developed. The City Region currently has 11 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA), and all of Liverpool City Council is designated an AQMA on account of its poor air quality. Many of these designations have been in existence for over a decade, and the problems associated with poor air quality are, generally, worsening rather than

improving. The briefing paper in Appendix 2 provides additional information on the local air quality problem.

Linked to the City Region's Devolution Deal, and related commitments in the Metro Mayor's 100 Day Plan from the summer of 2017, the Liverpool City Region (LCR) is currently finalising an initial feasibility study to test, model and evaluate a range of measures that could improve air quality across the LCR, and to test their costs, relative benefits. This work commenced before the Task and Finish Group's work began, and it was possible to engage the feasibility study's lead consultant in this review. The Task and Finish Group's brief is considered wholly complementary with the scope of the technical feasibility work.

3. Developing the Scoping Document

An initial scoping meeting of the Task and Finish Group took place on 7 February 2018, where members were briefed on the current position relating to air quality management in the Liverpool City Region.

Members discussed the complexity of the issues at stake, and the large number of factors that affected air quality, such as traffic, freight, shipping, industrial pollution from commercial premises. Equally, it was appreciated that responsibilities fell to many organisations and indeed, to individuals, whose travel choices affect air quality.

Members considered the universities' involvement in the work to be important, specifically referencing air quality studies which had been undertaken across the City Region.

The effect of air pollution on health was highlighted and it was suggested that health professionals should be invited to provide statistics on related illnesses. It was noted that there was a correlation between low income areas and poor air quality and more information on this was requested.

Members were also keen to understand variations in air quality across the boroughs with a view to understanding how requirements stemming from European Regulations could be exceeded.

It was agreed that the aim of the review would be as follows:-

To examine and challenge the Combined Authority's strategic role in addressing poor air quality across the Liverpool City Region, aided by an understanding of the risks to public health that are presented, and the plans, policies and proposals of both Authority and the six constituent local authorities in seeking to address these air quality problems.

The review would go on to examine and make recommendations on:-

- The context to the local air quality management regime, legal requirements and the causes and effects of poor air quality locally;
- Existing approaches locally and across the city region in tackling poor air quality, including initiatives by the Liverpool City Mayor, Merseytravel, and Public Health practitioners;

- The commitment in Liverpool City Region's follow-on Devolution Deal, that has led to the commissioning of an (ongoing) Preliminary Air Quality Feasibility Study, due to complete in March 2018 ;
- Approaches and best practice from others towns and cities across the UK and beyond; and
- Other actions and priorities that the Combined Authority could explore in the context of improving air quality.

4. What we did and who we spoke to

The panel was fortunate to hear evidence from a sizeable, highly proactive group of prominent experts in the field. The evidence gathering sessions ran for over six hours in total, in response to members' questions and ensuing discussions, linked to the interest in the issues at stake.

As noted in the scoping document, the review comprised three evidence sessions:-

a) The first session heard from witnesses with expertise of the air quality monitoring and management regime across the city region:-

- Paul Farrell, Public Protection at Liverpool City Council
- Vicky Jackson, Atmospheric Emissions Officer, Merseytravel/Sefton MBC
- Duncan Urquhart, AECOM (consultant commissioned by Merseytravel to develop the preliminary air quality feasibility study)

b) The second session examined the impacts of poor air quality of health and comprised a panel of public health and medical experts on the issues:-

- Dr Emer Coffey – Liverpool City Council
- Dr Richard Jarvis - Public Health England
- Dr Ben Barr – University of Liverpool
- Linda Turner – Sefton MBC Public Health
- Dr Rob Barnett – General Practitioner within the LCR

c) The final evidence session looked at the policies, plans and funding programmes that were being taken forward across the LCR:-

- Mick Noone – Director of Integrated Transport Merseytravel and Chair of the Transport Advisory Group (TAG)
- Colleen Martin - Liverpool City Council
- Dr Stephen Birch – Sefton MBC
- Matt Goggins – Head of Bus, Merseytravel
- Mark Dickens- LCRCA Planning Lead

A representative from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders Limited (SMMT) was invited to give evidence, and whilst fully willing to participate, was unable to attend the planned evidence session due to prior commitments. However, SMMT have been approached for further written information which is being circulated to members separately, for their consideration.

5 What did we hear and from whom?

a) Evidence session one

This session sought to set the scene from a factual and regulatory context, to understand the location, extent and causes of poor air quality across the Liverpool City Region, together with an understanding of the local air quality management system.

Witnesses set out changes to air quality trends from the 1960s through to the present day and explained the changes seen in the composition of air pollution. For example, there has been a downward trend in pollutants like lead and sulphur dioxide, but Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) and PM₁₀ emissions in England remain a cause for concern. This comes as a result of the growth in vehicle use, despite an improvement in engine and emissions standards.

Air Quality is monitored through automatic monitoring stations and diffusion tubes located on street furniture across the City Region to undertake the required air quality management assessments. The Atmospheric Emission Inventory (AEI) that the LCR has invested in also provides a valuable tool for quantifying emissions of pollutants and assessing the impact of activities that release them.

b) Evidence session two

This session sought to understand the public health context arising from poor air quality stemming from transport emissions across the Liverpool City Region. Poor air quality has a stark impact on public health. Air pollution can cause a range of cardiovascular diseases, lung cancer, respiratory diseases, asthma as well as eye and throat irritations, leading to premature deaths.

Dr Coffey showed that, across the LCR, 1 in 3 die young (defined as less than 75 years), which translates as some 6,000 deaths each year. This is linked to a range of factors, including high rates of asthma, chronic bronchitis and coronary heart disease. Life expectancy is significantly reduced in more deprived areas. The LCR's health gap compared to the rest of the UK is widening. Improving socio-economic conditions in the LCR is key to improving people's health, building on earlier "health is wealth" studies and evidence.

Dr Barr referenced research by the University of Liverpool, which sought to quantify the savings to the health service if air pollution could be reduced.

Dr Jarvis considered there to be a need to invest in sustainable travel infrastructure and encourage the population to walk, cycle and exercise more as this has a contributing effect on pollution. Levels of pollution breathed in by cyclists are less than for those sitting in a car, for example.

The panel of experts considered there to be an urgent need to inform the public in terms of the impact that air pollution is having on health. In summary, the panel's evidence informed the Task and Finish Group that the city region should build a coalition of stakeholders and establish an air quality network, to help provide simple consistent messages. Recognising that air pollution needs to be tackled in

partnership with a wide range of bodies and not just the local government, underpinned by senior level, long term commitments.

c) Evidence session three

The session sought to understand and assess the plans, policies and activities that are being developed and/or implemented across the city region that have the aim of addressing poor air quality. A large number of transport-related policies exist, with the overriding aim of promoting more sustainable travel choices, such as walking, cycling and public transport. Funds are available that could support the roll-out of such measures, such as the Transforming Cities fund and to promote the uptake of alternative fuels in the bus fleet. More needs to be done to encourage people to change their travel choices in practice, however.

Liverpool City Council had received a ministerial direction to advance improvements on air quality before 2020. The City Council had identified a range of areas to improve emissions e.g., changing LCC fleet to non-diesel alternatives and commitments to a diesel free city centre.

Sefton Council had also received ministerial direction and has identified a series of measures to address the problem through an Action Plan, a communications strategy, an air quality study as examples. Growth and development in the Port of Liverpool is a big issue for air quality as a result of an increase in container ship traffic. Better rail infrastructure and more use of inland and coastal shipping is needed to reduce these traffic levels. The Manchester Ship Canal is considered an important asset, but a balance needs to be struck between promoting greater use of the canal for the carriage of freight, and the impacts caused by the opening of swing bridges in Warrington upstream.

Merseytravel set out how the bus is part of the solution to improving air quality. For example, the LCR has the biggest electric bus fleet outside of London. Increased use of the bus is needed to reduce private car use and cut down on congestion and pollution. Prioritising bus services above general traffic is essential to do this, and measures such as bus lanes, red routes and intelligent traffic signals are considered part of the solution in order to attract people from their cars. Improved bus punctuality and reliability also reduces the number of buses needed to maintain a service, offering cost and environmental benefits.

6. What conclusions did we reach?

From the evidence sessions the following conclusions were reached:-

1. Although the Combined Authority is not specifically covered by local air quality management legislation, it *can* and *must* act in response and in order to raise the profile of the issue. The main cause of NO₂ exceedances locally stem from transport emissions and as the Combined Authority has statutory responsibilities for transport policy and funding, the policies and priorities of the Combined Authority have a direct bearing on transport, and thus on transport emissions and local air quality management. Likewise, the role of the Authority's Spatial

Development Strategy needs to be maximised in terms of its emerging policies on air quality.

2. The problems and risks associated with poor air quality from NO₂ emissions should be a higher priority, and awareness needs to be raised. The problem is not as visible as it was in the past, when smog and soot from coal burning blackened building across the region. As a result, the health and social implications of the problem are not fully realised or appreciated. Much better communication and education is needed across the city region to raise awareness. The Combined Authority should promote best practice in this respect and seek to encourage a more consistent approach across the LCR to working with schools, communicating with the public and stakeholders and so forth, so as to allow people to take appropriate action.
3. Further work is needed to improve the air quality monitoring and modelling processes across the LCR, to make them “real time” and consistent, given the manual processes associated with collecting data from diffusion tubes on street furniture.
4. There needs to be greater commitment by the Combined Authority and a wide range of bodies alike towards the delivery of measures that support cleaner air and which reduce emissions from vehicles. Promoting more walking, cycling and public transport use is essential and there is an urgent need to actively plan for, and create a Liverpool City Region that fosters more sustainable travel choices. Land use planning guidance is considered vitally important in this respect, in order to future-proof new development and to promote sustainable design and “place-making”. Supplementary Planning Documents, produced by the local authorities are considered important to translate these principles into action.
5. The Combined Authority has an important role to play in terms of acting as a champion for the range of potential solutions available. Its emerging air quality preliminary feasibility study will be an important springboard for further action. This action plan should be considered in more depth by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at a later date.

7. What recommendations are we making?

1. That the Metro Mayor, on behalf of Combined Authority, acts as a political “champion” for a series of long term measures to improve air quality across the Liverpool City Region, involving a wide range of influential bodies and decision-makers. The preliminary air quality feasibility study which is in the process of being finalised, and the action plan that needs to be developed in response, should be formally considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in due course. This will come ahead of consideration by the Combined Authority.
2. Allied to this, the Metro Mayor and the Combined Authority should champion a communications plan to set out a commitment to engage with people across the LCR. This should be targeted as follows:-

a) to engage with schools and young people who are particularly vulnerable to the effects of poor air quality, aided by consistent educational materials and best practice across the LCR;

b) to engage with the public protection and public health sectors to jointly raise awareness, which could be through roadshows and events, as examples; and

c) to promote National Clean Air Day and related campaigns.

3. The communications plan needs to explain clearly that the LCR has a problem and set out what can be done to both alleviate symptoms, and help address the root of the problem.
4. The Combined Authority needs to fully utilise and align its funding, transport, planning and economic development powers to create an environment where people have reduced reliance on road transport and make greater use of walking, cycling and public transport. For example, this could be linked to the Authority's emerging digital strategy and the powers that it has over a Key Route Network of local roads. This also needs to be consistently applied through the Authority's plans and strategies, e.g. through the Freight Strategy and Local Journeys Strategy.
5. The Combined Authority should use its emerging Spatial Development Strategy to address poor air quality and to raise air quality as a policy consideration.
6. The Combined Authority should give prominent and consistent consideration to air quality implications in its decision-making processes and in its investment decisions. This could include much better 'before and after' analysis in project and programme evaluations.
7. The Combined Authority should support the six constituent local authorities in their statutory duties to monitor and address air quality, and seek to foster a more "high tech", consistent and extensive air quality monitoring regime across the LCR. The Combined Authority also needs to work collectively with the constituent local authorities and with central government to tackle the problems caused by vehicles and engines that create the most pollution. This should take the form of an LCR air quality task force, convened by the Authority, comprising officers from the local authorities, Combined Authority and public health bodies, to progress the actions needed in order to improve air quality.

LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY

PROPOSED ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT ON AIR QUALITY

JUNE 2018

No	Recommendation	Responsible Officer(s)	Agreed Action	Date
1.	That the Metro Mayor, on behalf of Combined Authority, acts as a political “champion” for a series of long term measures to improve air quality across the Liverpool City Region, involving a wide range of influential bodies and decision-makers. The preliminary air quality feasibility study which is in the process of being finalised, and the action plan that needs to be developed in response, should be formally considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in due course. This will come ahead of consideration by the Combined Authority.	Lead Officer – Transport and Air Quality Director of Policy and Strategic Commissioning	To develop a Combined Authority air quality action plan that will be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee initially.	End of October 2018
2.	Allied to this, the Metro Mayor and the Combined Authority should champion a communications plan to set out a commitment to engage with people across the LCR. This should be targeted as follows:- a) to engage with schools and young people who are particularly vulnerable to the effects of poor air quality, aided by consistent educational materials and best practice across the LCR;	Lead Officer – Transport and Air Quality Director of Policy and Strategic Commissioning	To forge ever closer alliances with the health sector (Directors of Public Health, CHAMPS and Public Health England) in order to jointly develop communications and campaigning matters on air quality and transport choices. With the Mayoral Advisor for the Natural Environment and other key partners, promote	Ongoing During 2019

No	Recommendation	Responsible Officer(s)	Agreed Action	Date
	<p>b) to engage with the public protection and public health sectors to jointly raise awareness, which could be through roadshows and events, as examples; and</p> <p>c) to promote National Clean Air Day and related campaigns.</p>		<p>Year of the Environment in 2019 to raise the profile of issues affecting the LCR, including air quality.</p> <p>The Combined Authority is engaged with, and supporting Clean Air Day 2018.</p>	June 2018
3.	<p>The Combined Authority needs to fully utilise and align its funding, transport, planning and economic development powers to create an environment where people have reduced reliance on road transport and make greater use of walking, cycling and public transport. For example, this could be linked to the Authority's emerging digital strategy and the powers that it has over a Key Route Network of local roads. This also needs to be consistently applied through the Authority's plans and strategies, e.g. through the Freight Strategy and Local Journeys Strategy.</p>	<p>Lead Officer – Transport and Air Quality</p> <p>Director of Policy and Strategic Commissioning</p>	<p>As an immediate priority, to propose that the utilisation of the city region's Transforming Cities Fund (£134m over 4 years) gives prominent attention to the challenges of poor air quality and the need to develop and encourage walking, cycling and public transport measures as alternatives to the use of the car.</p>	2018 - 2022
4.	<p>The Combined Authority should use its emerging Spatial Development Strategy to address poor air quality and to raise air quality as a policy consideration.</p>	<p>Director of Policy and Strategic Commissioning</p>	<p>For air quality considerations to be fully considered as part of evidence base for the Spatial Development Strategy</p>	Ongoing
5.	<p>The Combined Authority should give prominent and consistent consideration to air quality implications in its decision-making processes and in its investment decisions. This could include much better 'before and after' analysis in project and programme evaluations.</p>	<p>Director of Policy and Strategic Commissioning</p> <p>Director of Commercial Development & Investment</p>	<p>For air quality issues to be factored into the Investment Strategy and emerging Local Industrial Strategy as an integral component of inclusive growth.</p>	Ongoing

No	Recommendation	Responsible Officer(s)	Agreed Action	Date
6.	The Combined Authority should support the six constituent local authorities in their statutory duties to monitor and address air quality, and seek to foster a more “high tech”, consistent and extensive air quality monitoring regime across the LCR. The Combined Authority also needs to work collectively with the constituent local authorities and with central government to tackle the problems caused by vehicles and engines that create the most pollution. This should take the form of an LCR air quality task force, convened by the Authority, comprising officers from the local authorities, Combined Authority and public health bodies, to progress the actions needed in order to improve air quality.	Director of Policy and Strategic Commissioning	<p>To be considered as part of the scoping of the evidence and intelligence function within the Authority’s Policy and Strategic Commissioning directorate</p> <p>To establish an LCR Air Quality Task Force, led by the Combined Authority</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>September 2018</p>