

LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY

To: The Metro Mayor and Members of the Combined Authority

Meeting: 1 November 2019

Authority/Authorities Affected: All

EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL ITEM: No

Key Decision

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER: TRANSPORT AND AIR QUALITY AND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR POLICY AND STRATEGIC COMMISSIONING

DEVELOPING AN AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN FOR THE LIVERPOOL CITY REGION

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The aim of this report is to present to members of the LCR Combined Authority an interim Liverpool City Region Air Quality Action Plan. This is for members' consideration and endorsement.
- 1.2 This plan has been developed by the Air Quality Task Force that the LCR Combined Authority agreed to establish in October 2018. This in turn stemmed from a series of recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Air Quality Task and Finish Group during the spring of 2018, agreed by the Authority in June 2018.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority:
 - (a) considers and endorses the draft, interim Air Quality Action Plan set out within Appendix Two to his report;
 - (b) reiterates its support for taking urgent, collective action to tackle poor air quality across the city region, linked to its commitments around Climate Emergency, net zero carbon by 2040 and key messages in the emerging Local Industrial Strategy around clean growth; and
 - (c) receives a draft final version of the Air Quality Action Plan ahead of the end of the 2019/20 financial year, following pre-decision scrutiny by the LCR Combined Authority's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 There is consensus locally, nationally and internationally around the need to take urgent action to address the significant challenges presented by poor air quality, and nitrogen dioxide specifically. This is a problem affecting most major towns and cities globally as a result of traffic and transport emissions in the main.
- 3.2 Public Health England reiterates that air pollution has a significant impact on our health; between 28,000 and 36,000 deaths each year are attributable to human-made air pollution in the UK and that more action is needed. More locally, Public Health England estimates that air pollution – of which cars are a key cause - contributes to around 700 deaths a year in the Liverpool City Region. Most recently in late October 2019, a report by King's College London and UK100 calculated that days with above average pollution levels would see an extra 124 cardiac arrests over the year. The response of the Chief Executive of NHS England was as follows:-
- “...air pollution is now causing thousands of strokes, cardiac arrests and asthma attacks, so it's clear that the climate emergency is in fact also a health emergency”¹.*
- 3.3 In the spring of 2018 the LCR Combined Authority's Overview and Scrutiny Committee established a Task and Finish Group to explore and make recommendations upon the issue of poor air quality. A detailed report was developed together with a series of recommendations². These were presented to the Combined Authority in June 2018 and were unanimously agreed.
- 3.4 Of the recommendations agreed by the Combined Authority, one related to the development of this action plan. This was considered vital in clearly setting out the Combined Authority's approach to taking action on a Liverpool City Region footing. Allied to this was the importance of working collaboratively with the constituent local authorities, local partners and central government to tackle the problem.
- 3.5 It was also agreed that this collaborative approach would be formalised through a Liverpool City Region Air Quality Task Force³, convened by the Authority, comprising officers from the local authorities, Combined Authority, key agencies and from business, to progress the actions needed in order to improve air quality. As no individual body holds all of the powers needed, effective collective actions are required to tackle the problem. Membership of this group is summarised in Appendix One to this report.
- 3.6 At present, the LCR Combined Authority is not specifically covered by local air quality management legislation. However, members have agreed that the Authority can and must act in response to the problem and in order to raise the profile of the issue. Importantly, as the main nitrogen dioxide emissions locally stem from transport sources, and given the Combined Authority's statutory responsibilities for transport policy and funding, LCR's policies and priorities have a direct bearing on transport, on

¹ <https://www.londonair.org.uk/LondonAir/general/news.aspx?newsId=3nYBcvoi2pTRRDvF2MjBEQ>

² <https://moderngov.merseytravel.gov.uk/documents/s26022/CAairqualityscrutinyreportJune2018.pdf>

³ <https://moderngov.merseytravel.gov.uk/documents/s32330/Item%207%20-%20Report%20Appendicies.pdf>

transport emissions and local air quality. Equally, the LCR Combined Authority's emerging Local Industrial Strategy, spatial plan and housing plan, as examples, affect atmospheric emissions and air quality.

4. THE AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN

4.1 The Task Force has developed an interim plan that has been developed to coincide with the Air Quality Task Force's initial 6-month work programme. The draft plan is set out in Appendix Two to this report.

4.2 The Task Force identified a wealth of opportunities and best practice to address the air quality challenge. Some of these are ongoing activities, others would be new. And in many instances these actions need to apply more consistently across the city region. These are set out under four main categories:-

- Political commitment (e.g. the declaration of Climate Emergency, and commitments on clean energy and alternative fuels)
- Use of regulatory powers (e.g. on anti-idling measures or fleet accreditation)
- Strong policies and funding packages (e.g. £172m of Transforming Cities Funding)
- Education and awareness and the delivery of a range of campaigns, communications and events (e.g. on Clean Air Day and Car Free Day)

4.3 As the Task Force was in the process of being established in March 2019, the LCR Combined Authority concluded a high level study to better understand, and gauge the relative impacts of various measures available in which to tackle air quality problems. This provided a valuable source of material in the identification of potential actions and measures. In particular, it helped to identify a number of "quick wins" versus more complex, policy, delivery or funding-led approaches. Several are behavioural or regulatory in their nature and have been considered in the development of the action plan.

4.4 The Plan is also aligned with the work that Liverpool City Council has been mandated to investigate around Clear Air Zone options in response to air quality compliance problems within the city. At the time of writing this report, the study work is still in development and issues and implications will be addressed in a later iteration of the Action Plan. However, dependent upon the options that are ultimately shortlisted or mandated, these interventions are likely to be significant in both scale and impact.

4.5 The Action Plan is structured into short and longer-term actions across four main areas. It is reiterated, however, that there is fluidity across these four areas, again recognising the collective approach needed to improving pollution levels, and that no individual body has all of the required levers or powers to tackle the problem. The four main areas of the action plan are as follows:-

- a) Actions by the LCR Combined Authority;
- b) Actions by the constituent local authorities and partners, supported by the LCR Combined Authority;

- c) Actions for the Liverpool City Region's residents, communities and businesses; and
- d) Actions for escalation nationally with central government or its agencies

4.6. Across these areas, examples of key actions include the following:-

- a) Embedding clean growth principles into the LCR Combined Authority's emerging Local Industrial Strategy, and which are being positively received through the #LCR Listens consultation and engagement programme.
- b) the commissioning and delivery of a radical and comprehensive programme of walking and cycling upgrades within the next 4 years, linked to the Transforming Cities Funding programme and the development of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan to boost walking and cycling levels.
- c) working with Highways England to explore the scope of rolling-out their electric van pilot scheme, working closely with all parties, including local Chambers of Commerce to engage local small businesses and end users.
- d) investigating options for an LCR scrappage scheme to phase out dirty vehicles, including taxis, private hire vehicles, and light goods vehicles, targeted at small local businesses.
- e) championing greater consistency of taxi and private hire vehicle standards across the city region, to create higher environmental standards overall, building on earlier scoping work led by Knowsley Council in 2018.
- f) Through the Transforming Cities Fund's Green Bus Route proposals, developing a new approach to bus quality, convenience and punctuality, by giving buses the right priority on our highways to make bus travel a more attractive opportunity. Bus delivery options are also being tested, linked to powers in the Devolution Deal.
- g) Delivering measures to improve housing stock and domestic emissions. Potentially, this could be around an energy retrofit programme and city region domestic boiler scrappage scheme to help local residents reduce domestic consumption.
- h) developing and delivering a consistent marketing campaign on Air Quality, including public information and an agreed calendar of events linked to consistent press and PR messaging.
- i) piloting an approach to greening development across all districts to absorb pollutants, for consideration as part of the development of the LCR Combined Authority's Spatial Development Strategy.
- j) engaging government on initiatives to remove the oldest and dirtiest engines from the vehicle fleet through scrappage schemes or similar for domestic vehicles.

- 4.7 This initial plan will be refined further by the end of the financial year and updated in light of new considerations which include: the “mandated” air quality study underway in Liverpool. It will also be informed by legislative change, budgetary changes locally and nationally, “Climate Emergency” responses, and in response to the emerging Local Industrial Strategy, highlighted above.
- 4.8 Recognising the important work undertaken by the LCR Combined Authority’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee on air quality in 2018, and the transposition of this work into the action plan, this interim plan will also be presented a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This will be ahead of its finalisation by the Task Force and agreement by the Combined Authority at the end of the current financial year.
- 4.9 This process of refinement and engagement will also help to strengthen emerging recommendations in the plan, recognising that many need further testing and exploration in order to make harder-hitting and more precise, to have the desired effect. However, it is considered an important start in drawing together partners across the city region as a whole together and coalescing around a shared vision and action plan.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

There are financial implications associated with the implementation of the recommendations in this report, given the potential financial risks to the Liverpool City Region 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 stage.

5.2 Human Resources

There are unquantified direct Human Resources implications associated with the implementation of the recommendations in this report, especially in terms of proposed actions such as the collection of better data sets, marketing and PR campaigns and better understand the impacts on air quality.

5.3 Physical Assets

There are no direct implications arising from this report, but as the Authority owns land and property, there is a potential impact in the event that green infrastructure retrofitting is assets in an attempt to tackle poor air quality and to capture pollutants.

5.4 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 to enhance modelling and scenario-testing tools. These cannot be quantified at this preliminary stage.

6. RISKS AND MITIGATION

- 6.1 There is a risk that the LCR Combined Authority and in turn, its partners, 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 Force and 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, and prove inconsistent with the Authority's clean growth and zero carbon commitments.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 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 Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Task and Finish Group in 2018 as part of its review into Air Quality.

8. COMMUNICATION ISSUES

- 8.1 Raising the profile of poor air quality is a core part of the draft action plan, and this action plan itself is wholly dependent upon buy-in from a wide range of organisations. Ultimately, responsibility for actions and behaviours that affect air quality rest with the people of the Liverpool City Region and ongoing communication, awareness raising and campaigning is essential to achieve change. Parallels can be drawn with concerted programmes and campaigns on the dangers of smoking tobacco that have greatly reduced levels of smoking over the last 50 years.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The aim of this report is to present to members of the Combined Authority an interim Liverpool City Region Air Quality Action Plan. This builds on the consensus locally, nationally and internationally around the need to take urgent action to address the significant challenges presented by poor air quality, and nitrogen dioxide specifically.
- 9.2 The Action Plan is structured into short, medium and long-term actions across four main areas:

- a) Actions by the LCR Combined Authority;
- b) Actions by the constituent local authorities and partners, supported by the LCR Combined Authority;
- c) Actions for the Liverpool City Region's residents, communities and businesses; and
- d) Actions for escalation nationally with central government or its agencies

9.3 This plan will be refined further by the end of the financial year and updated in light of new considerations. Recognising the important work undertaken by the LCR Combined Authority's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on air quality in 2018, and the transposition of this work into the this action plan, this interim plan will also be presented a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This will be ahead of its finalisation by the Task Force and agreement by the LCR Combined Authority at the end of the current financial year.

9.4 This initial plan is considered a very important start in drawing together partners across the city region as a whole together, and coalescing around a shared vision and action plan. This collective and iterative approach is commended to members.

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Appendices:

Appendix One – Membership of the LCR Air Quality Task Force
Appendix Two – Interim LCR Air Quality Action Plan

Background Documents:

High Level LCR Air Quality Feasibility Study, AECOM consulting – March 2019

Appendix One

LCR Air Quality Task Force Membership – October 2019

Chair	Cllr Liam Robinson	Portfolio Member – Transport and Air Quality, Liverpool City Region CA
Elected members		
Halton	Cllr Stef Nelson	Portfolio holder for Environment
Knowsley	Cllr Frank Walsh	Chair of Planning Committee
Liverpool	Cllr Laura Robertson-Collins	Cabinet Member for Environment and Sustainability
St Helens	Cllr Lynn Clarke	Portfolio Holder for Better Neighbourhoods
Sefton	Cllr Paulette Lappin	Cabinet Member - Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services
Wirral	Cllr Elizabeth Gray	Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change
LCR officers		
Combined Authority	John McGee	Head of Government Relations
	Huw Jenkins	Lead Officer – Transport Policy
Merseytravel	Gerry Nolan	Technical Services Manager, Asset Management
	Matt Goggins	Head of Bus
Halton	Sarah Johnson Griffiths	Consultant in Public Health.
Knowsley	Sarah McNulty	Acting Director of Public Health
Liverpool	Colleen Martin	Assistant Director – Supporting Communities
Sefton	Matt Ashton	Director of Public Health, Sefton
St Helens	Tony Smith	Service Manager, Regulatory Services
Wirral	Daniel Dawson	Environmental Health Operations Manager
External		
Defra/DfT Joint Air Quality Unit	Faye Williams	Joint Air Quality Unit, Department for Transport / Department for Environment
LCR Local Enterprise Partnership	-	-
Liverpool and Sefton Chamber of Commerce	Michelle Cameron	Senior Policy and Communications Advisor
Public Health England	Dr Richard Jarvis	Consultant in Health Protection, Cheshire & Merseyside Health Protection Team, PHE North West
Highways England	John Hope	Spatial Planning Manager, Operations North West