

**REPORT TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - PLACE**

**Date of Meeting: 11 January 2018**

**Report of: Environmental Health and Licensing Manager**

**Title: Local Air Quality Management – Draft Air Quality Action Plan**

**Is this a Key Decision?**

No

**Is this an Executive or Council Function?**

Council

**1. What is the report about?**

To update Members on the Council's draft Air Quality Action Plan which will be released for public and stakeholder consultation.

**2. Recommendations:**

That Scrutiny Committee – Place:

- 1) notes the consultation draft of the Air Quality Action Plan;
- 2) supports the consultation process that Council officers will undertake; and
- 3) supports and actively encourages wider community engagement in the collective ambition to reduce transport emissions.
- 4) Requires a report to the committee on 14 June 2018 to summarise the outcomes of the consultation process and to seek approval of the final Air Quality Action Plan.

**3. Reasons for the recommendation:**

Action on local air quality is a legal duty placed upon the Council (and all district and county councils) by Part IV of the Environment Act 1995. Safeguarding air quality will help reduce any detrimental effects from air pollution on the health and wellbeing of Exeter's population.

The effects of local air pollution on health are undisputed, with the young, the elderly and those with existing medical conditions being particularly vulnerable. Modelling by Public Health England estimates that the equivalent of 42 lives per year could be saved in the city, if particulate air pollution (these are minute particles suspended in the air, e.g. from exhaust pipe emissions, brake dust, industry and in some cases the natural environment) were removed altogether. If the health effects of nitrogen dioxide were included as well, this figure is likely to be higher still.

Research published by Department for Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in 2014 shows the extent of the impact of air pollution on the economy as well. It looked at a fairly limited range of impacts for which there was robust evidence at that time, and

concluded that negative impacts of air quality on productivity were in the order of 0.1% of GDP. Since this report the evidence base has grown and it seems very likely that the actual costs are higher.

In Exeter, the main source of local air pollution is from road traffic. The areas most affected are those beside busy roads with queuing traffic, where the houses are close to the kerbside. Those that live in these specific areas are more affected by poor air quality.

Measured levels of nitrogen dioxide in Exeter have declined since around 2009, which is a similar trend to many other parts of the country. However, levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) in the worst affected parts of the city still exceed the objective. This means that Exeter has an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), where it must bring forward an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) to reduce concentrations of pollution to below the objective. The draft plan presented with this report is for the period 2018 to 2022, and replaces the previous version (Exeter Air Quality Action Plan 2011 – 2016).

This draft Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) outlines the Council's vision for air quality in the city and proposes measures that the Council will take during the period 2018 to 2023. It is released for public consultation and engagement. The closing date for responses to the consultation is 11 April 2018. All the responses to the consultation will be reviewed, and a final version of the AQAP will be produced to reflect these responses. The final plan will be presented to Scrutiny (Place) in June 2018.

Local air quality is not only the responsibility of the District Council. Other Local Authorities, the wider public sector, businesses and communities must also play their part. Informed, effective action by community or other groups who are wishing to achieve outcomes that reduce emissions should be encouraged. Transport emissions arise from the activities of all those who live, work or visit the city, and it is only if the general population are willing to make changes to their behaviour that emissions will fall significantly. Wider work in this area will be co-ordinated with Exeter City Futures.

**4. What are the resource implications including non financial resources.**

This report commences the consultation and engagement process for the draft AQAP. This process will be undertaken within existing resources. However business cases may need to be considered in future in relation to the delivery of the final agreed plan.

**5. Section 151 Officer comments:**

There are no financial implications contained within this report for Council to consider.

**6. What are the legal aspects?**

Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 sets out statutory provisions on air quality. Section 82 provides that local authorities shall review the air quality within their area. Section 83 requires local authorities to designate Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) where air quality objectives are not being achieved, or are not likely to be achieved (i.e. where pollution levels exceed the air quality objectives) as set out in the Air Quality (England) Regulations 2000. Where an area has been designated as an AQMA, section 84 requires local authorities to develop an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) setting out the remedial measures required to achieve the air quality

standards for the area covered within the AQMA. Where air quality issues have been identified, it is recommended that a steering group is formed to include the main parties involved in developing either Action Plans or Air Quality Strategies. The Department for Environment and Rural Affairs has recently provided new statutory guidance in the form of the Local Air Quality Management Policy Guidance (PG16). The guidance gives particular focus to so-called 'priority pollutants' such as Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and so-called 'Particulate Matter' (PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>) and is relevant to both district and county councils.

## **7. Monitoring Officer's comments:**

This report raises no issues for the Monitoring Officer.

## **8. Report details:**

The previous AQAP for Exeter ran from 2011 to 2016. Projects delivered during the last action plan period include:

- Exeter Low Emissions Strategy
- Newcourt station.
- Cranbrook station.
- Tithebarn link for new bus route to Cranbrook.
- Car clubs on new areas of development.
- Extensions and improvements to the cycling network.
- Personal exposure projects to highlight the beneficial effects of alternative travel modes, or travel routes on personal exposure to PM<sub>2.5</sub>.
- Taxi emissions licensing standards.
- Reductions in Exeter City Council fleet fuel use and roll out of electric pool cars.
- 6 diesel vans in the ECC fleet have been replaced with electric.
- Bridge Road widening.
- Car club electric bike hire scheme.
- Devon-wide Ecostars scheme to reduce emissions from commercial vehicle fleets

Over the same period, nitrogen dioxide concentrations have reduced. The number of areas which exceed the objective has also fallen so now only three locations remain. These are the Heavitree corridor, Alphington Street and the junction of Mount Pleasant Road, Blackboy Road, Pinhoe Road and Polsloe Road.

Exeter City Council is committed to reducing the exposure of people in Exeter to poor air quality in order to improve health. This draft Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) outlines the Council's vision for air quality in the city, which is for a city where emissions are reduced because:

- The private car is seldom used for journeys within Exeter;
- Business travel and servicing is by Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) and shared;
- Development creates sustainable car-free communities; and
- Internal combustion engines are discouraged in a vibrant centre, where active or Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) travel is the norm.

Also the exposure of people in the city to air pollution will also be reduced because:

- Decision makers have clear understanding of air pollution and its impacts;
- Residents, employers and visitors understand the impact of air pollution and the effect of their travel choices;
- Healthy and active travel options are promoted; and

- Everyone is more active.

In order to achieve this vision, the Council is seeking views on a developing series of actions for the period 2018 to 2023. This AQAP is a draft document, released for public consultation and engagement. It uses the prescribed DEFRA template for Air Quality Action Plans. The consultation questions are listed in Annex 1 to this report, and a detailed consultation plan will be developed with support from the Director of Communications and Marketing.

The draft plan makes suggestions of what actions can be taken. Some will be within the control of Exeter City Council to deliver alone. Consultees should recognise that suggestions which require input from others may take longer to develop and implement. It is expected that measures will develop further as the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan (GESP) and the Exeter Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) emerge. Any resulting updates to the final AQAP will be made as required and reported through the annual Air Quality report to Scrutiny (Place).

In this draft AQAP we outline how Exeter City Council plans to tackle air quality issues within our control and with local partners. However, we recognise that there are a large number of air quality policy areas that are outside of the Council's direct influence (such as vehicle emissions standards agreed in Europe). We will continue to seek opportunities to lobby regional and central government on policies and issues beyond Exeter City Council's direct influence.

It is also clear that for any action to reduce emissions to be effective, it needs not only the support of the local population, but also their action. Individual behaviour will have to change, starting in small ways. For example turning off engines when idling, or using alternative travel modes where these are practical for the journey in question should become the social norm. Leadership and assistance from businesses and community groups will be needed to make this happen. Exeter City Council and Devon County Council can support people to make these changes, and provide them with the infrastructure to do so, but ultimately the community needs to shift its attitudes and expectations. Positive action by informed and engaged community groups will receive the full support of the Council to achieve this. There are now many examples of such action available online, as well as packs for community organisers to help them facilitate particular campaigns.

As part of this consultation, Exeter City Council would like to hear from community and other groups about projects that they would like to take forward, and will provide what support it can to such projects. Through the recently announced successful bid for Sport England Local Delivery Pilot status we will have a programme of work within which community projects relating active travel may be supported.

## **9. How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?**

The main contribution of effective management of air quality is to support the purpose of "keep me / my environment safe and healthy" and "building a stronger city". However in achieving this, it is necessary to proactively engage with other key purpose areas that could be affected by or through poor air quality. These include working with developers through the planning system to "deliver good development" including infrastructure, and working with business to run a successful business to ensure that any emissions to air that they may produce are kept within legal limits.

**10. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?**

Various risks have been identified to the successful publication of an AQAP. These include failure to engage effectively with partners during the consultation process and failure to reach agreement on financial implications. These risks will be monitored as the consultation period progresses and steps taken to mitigate and risks as appropriate.

**11. What is the impact of the decision on equality and diversity; health and wellbeing; safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, community safety and the environment?**

Areas with high levels of air pollution also tend to be relatively deprived. This means that more deprived populations are disproportionately affected. There is also a higher incidence amongst deprived populations of the types of diseases that are exacerbated by poor air quality. Thus the most vulnerable members of society are often worst affected by air pollution. The actions described in this report work to reduce the health impacts of poor local air quality.

**12. Are there any other options?**

Action to reduce exposure to PM<sub>2.5</sub> and to reduce local air pollution where levels exceed the government objectives are legal duties imposed on local authorities through Part IV of the Environment Act 1995.

**Simon Lane**  
**Environmental Health and Licensing Manager**

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)**

**Background papers used in compiling this report:-**

Exeter Air Quality Action Plan 2008  
Devon County Council Third Round Local Transport Plan 2010  
Exeter Second Air Quality Action Plan 2011-2016  
Exeter City Council Core Strategy 2012  
PHE-CRCE-010: Estimating local mortality burdens associated with particulate air pollution 2014  
COMEAP 2015 Nitrogen Dioxide: interim view on long-term average concentrations and mortality  
Devon County Council Transport Infrastructure Plan 2015  
Exeter Low Emissions Strategy 2016  
Exeter City Council Annual Status Report 2017

Contact for enquires:  
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## Annex 1: Consultation Questions

1. Do you agree with the vision for emissions reduction in Exeter?
2. Do you agree with the vision for exposure reduction in Exeter?
3. Do you think that the areas of work set out in table 3.2 capture all that is necessary to deliver the vision?
4. Do you think that the areas of work listed in table 3.2 are achievable?
5. How do you think that projects and programs taken forward by organisations listed in section 4.2 could best be co-ordinated? What body do you think is best placed to do this?
6. Do you agree with the proposed measures set out in table 5.1?
7. Do you have any comments on the key performance indicators listed in table 5.1?
8. Do you have any comments on the Target Pollution Reduction for each proposed measure in table 5.1?
9. Do you think that the proposed measures set out in table 5.2 will work over the period 2018 to 2022 towards delivery of the vision?
10. Do you think that the details of proposed measures set out in table 5.2 are achievable?
11. Do you have any comments on the items listed in Appendix B?
12. Do you have any other comments?