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| DECISION-MAKER: | OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE |
| SUBJECT: | AIR QUALITY UPDATE |
| DATE OF DECISION: | 4 FEBRUARY 2016 |
| REPORT OF: | CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT |

CONTACT DETAILS

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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

None

BRIEF SUMMARY

In 2014/15 the Scrutiny Inquiry Panel carried out a review of Air Quality in Southampton and made a number of recommendations (Appendix 1). An Action Plan to deliver against these recommendations was approved by Cabinet on 14th July 2015 (Appendix 2). The purpose of this paper is to update the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on the progress made towards achieving these recommendations and the latest situation concerning the DEFRA government position, grant funding and how this will impact on the work programme to improve air quality going forward.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

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| | (i) | That the Committee notes the report and discusses with the Cabinet Member the latest developments concerning DEFRA. |
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REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

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| 1. | At the request of the Chair of the Committee. |
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ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

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| 2. | None. |
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DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)

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| 3. | Every year in the UK it is estimated that 29,000 premature deaths are caused by poor air quality. This equates to 110 deaths in our city each year. Approximately 6% of all mortalities in Southampton have been attributed to air pollution. Poor air quality and its associated effects on society cost England approx. £10 billion per year. |
| 4. | Generally road transport is the most significant contributor to poor air quality within the city with 34% attributed to heavy goods vehicles, 7.5% light goods vehicles, 4.5% buses and 24% cars. Recent work has shown that operations within the port are also significant along the middle part of the Western approach. |
| 5. | Local authorities are responsible for complying with the Governments local air quality regime which led to Southampton identifying exceedances of the |

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| | <p>annual mean nitrogen dioxide level at 10 locations across the city. Air Quality Management Areas were declared as part of an Air Quality Management Plan produced in 2007. An Air Quality Action Plan was first produced in 2009 and has been regularly reviewed since then, progressing work on 48 individual initiatives. These included sustainable transport initiatives to encourage people to use less polluting modes of transport (modal shift) later marketed under the “My Journey” branding; road improvement schemes; Air Alert; Port Master Plan actions including the introduction of a heavy goods vehicle booking system; land use planning and introduction of travel plans and private sector partnerships such as the freight consolidation project. These and other initiatives have delivered improvements alongside general reductions in emissions from the introduction of more modern vehicle engines. But this has not been enough.</p> |
| 6. | <p>The Scrutiny Panel therefore recommended that the Council learns from best practice, develops a Low Emissions Strategy that articulates the vision for a low emission city and provides a strategic focus to promote low emission technologies and improve air quality across Southampton. The Scrutiny Panel further recommended that the council ensures that the aims and objectives within the developing low emissions strategy permeates into the decision-making processes so that all relevant plans, policies and strategies give due consideration to air quality.</p> |
| 7. | <p>At a national level DEFRA is the government department responsible for ensuring compliance with the EU Ambient Air Quality Directive. Assessments are made using a UK wide system of over 145 air quality monitoring stations, known as the Automatic Urban and Rural Network, together with a Pollution Climate Mapping model. Member states were required to meet set limits for all pollutants by 1 January 2010. The UK was granted an extension until 1 January 2015. The levels set for all pollutants were achieved except for nitrogen dioxide. In the UK 38 zones including Southampton currently exceed the annual mean value for nitrogen dioxide levels. Southampton is one of only 8 areas in the UK where prediction modelling shows that nitrogen dioxide levels will still be above EU air quality limit values beyond 2020.</p> |
| 8. | <p>There are principally 2 reasons why nitrogen dioxide levels have not been met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction of increasingly strict standards for nitrogen dioxide emissions from diesel vehicles have not delivered the expected emission reductions in real world use. • The increased uptake of diesel vehicles was encouraged to reduce carbon dioxide emissions responsible for climate change which unfortunately produce significantly higher levels of nitrogen dioxide when compared to petrol engines. |
| 9. | <p>DEFRA published a consultation on the UK’s Plans to Improve Air Quality in September 2015. The plan set out actions being implemented at local, regional and national levels to meet the annual EU limit values for nitrogen dioxide in the shortest possible time. The plan acknowledges all the good work that has been done to date in Southampton and the implementation of future initiatives as part of the Low Emission Strategy. The plan specifically identifies a portion of the A33 Western Approach which is of particular concern. Whilst acknowledging that local authorities are best placed to identify what measures will deliver the required reduction in nitrogen dioxide</p> |

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| | <p>by 2020, DEFRA suggests that vehicle access restrictions (based on a national framework for new Clean Air Zones) should be considered. SCC responded to the consultation, supporting the idea in principle and suggesting that a voluntary scheme had the potential to deliver the necessary improvements without impeding businesses.</p> |
| 10. | <p>In anticipation of the emerging UK plan, Regulatory Services submitted a bid to DEFRA's Air Quality Capital Grant Scheme to facilitate the introduction of a Voluntary Clean Air Zone and Clean Air Partnership. This was successful and £97k was secured to highlight air quality issues and promote the uptake of voluntary actions to reduce emissions.</p> |
| 11. | <p>DEFRA subsequently published the final version of the UK's Plans to Improve Air Quality in December 2015. This will be submitted to the European Commission to address the current infraction. The document differs from the draft plan in that it identifies Southampton as one of five cities which will be required to implement a mandatory Clean Air Zone (CAZ) by 2020. This will introduce penalty charges for the most polluting HGV's, buses and taxis. A national framework and legislation to facilitate this are expected in 2016. Government have allocated funding to support those Local Authority's affected.</p> |
| 12. | <p>The Low Emission Strategy for Southampton is being progressed with the help of Ricardo consultants who also happen to support DEFRA. This work will focus on promoting the introduction of clean technologies to reduce emissions from vehicles. An initial long list of measures have been produced as detailed in the attached report (Appendix 3). These were produced in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and are currently being assessed by an internal project board assisted by cost benefit analysis and a health assessment to provide a shortlist for consideration. As well as tackling nitrogen dioxide levels the low emission strategy is also considering other pollutants, in particular small particles (PM10) which have the greatest health impact.</p> |
| 13. | <p>Ricardo are working closely with Regulatory Services and other internal stakeholders to develop the Low Emission Strategy so that it supports the full range of air quality actions existing and emerging. This includes developing a Clean Air Strategy that will demonstrate how SCC will;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce traffic flows – through mode shift and trip reduction; • Improve traffic flow – by better management of the network to ease congestion and increase average speeds; • Promote clean technologies – to directly reduce emissions from vehicles. <p>The proposed Voluntary Clean Air Zone and Clean Air Partnership will still be introduced to facilitate the latter introduction of the mandatory Clean Air Zone.</p> |
| 14. | <p>Reducing and managing traffic flow is the focus of the Local Transport Plan (LTP) and Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) complemented by the Low Emission Strategy which focuses on the promotion of clean technologies.</p> |
| 15. | <p>There is some confidence that these measures will achieve the legal compliance required to avoid a hefty fine.</p> |
| 16. | <p>Progress on the other recommendations made by the scrutiny panel are included in Appendix 2.</p> |

| RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS | |
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| <u>Capital/Revenue</u> | |
| 17. | £97k one off grant funding has been obtained from DEFRA to support the implementation of a Voluntary Clean Air Zone and Clean Air Partnership. |
| 18. | The Local Transport Fund is in its final year with all current activity due to finish on 31 st March 2016. The government's recent Spending Review set out an intention to continue this activity through an "Access Fund" of £500M ring-fenced capital and £80M revenue committed over 5 years. Details on the bidding process are expected soon. Should it be secured it is anticipated that this funding will support the continuation of the sustainable city project and in particular the My Journey programme. In the absence of LSTF funding in 2016/17, a My Journey-lite programme will be funded by existing Council resources. This includes the LTP Integrated Transport Programme, Transport Policy (Revenue), Regulatory Services and Public Health. |
| <u>Property/Other</u> | |
| 19. | None. |
| LEGAL IMPLICATIONS | |
| <u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u> | |
| 20. | The UK Plan to Improve Air Quality identifies Southampton as one of five cities which will be required to implement a mandatory Clean Air Zone (CAZ) by 2020. A national framework and legislation to facilitate this are expected in 2016. Government have allocated funding to support those Local Authority's affected. |
| <u>Other Legal Implications:</u> | |
| 21. | None |
| POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS | |
| 22. | Improving air quality may contribute to the following priorities within the Council Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting vulnerable people • Prevention and early intervention. |
| KEY DECISION | No |
| WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED: | None directly as a result of this report |
| <u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u> | |
| Appendices | |
| 1. | Air Quality Inquiry - Conclusions and Recommendations |
| 2. | Scrutiny Panel Report – Action Plan & Progress Jan 2016 |
| 3. | Initial long list of measures for the Southampton LES |
| Documents In Members' Rooms | |
| 1. | None |

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| Equality Impact Assessment | |
| Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessments (ESIA) to be carried out. | No |
| Privacy Impact Assessment | |
| Do the implications/subject of the report require a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) to be carried out. | No |
| Other Background Documents | |
| Equality Impact Assessment and Other Background documents available for inspection at: | |
| Title of Background Paper(s) | Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable) |
| 1. | Scrutiny Inquiry Panel – Air Quality Inquiry Final report (item 76) http://www.southampton.gov.uk/modernGov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=126&MId=2848&Ver=4 |