

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET		
SUBJECT:	A GREEN CITY CHARTER FOR SOUTHAMPTON		
DATE OF DECISION:	19 MARCH 2019		
REPORT OF:	CABINET MEMBER FOR GREEN CITY		
<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

N/A

BRIEF SUMMARY

Last summer the council undertook a consultation exercise to seek opinions on measures needed to improve local air quality. The council had been required by government to assess if a Clean Air Zone was needed to deliver compliance with the European Union's limit level for Nitrogen Dioxide. The [consultation exercise](#) received an unprecedented response and there was significant support for delivering improvement. The subsequent proposal indicated that nitrogen dioxide concentrations have improved in recent years, by as much as 24% in some of our most polluted areas, as consequence of both local and national action. It recommends a package of measures to ensure the likelihood of compliance being achieved. However, the consultation illustrated that there is significant ambition and aspiration to achieve more than the CAZ project could deliver. A new set of objectives and actions are needed if this is to be satisfied.

The Government published its Environment Strategy in early 2018, '[A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment](#)' which proposes to deliver a range of measures to improve the environment within a generation. A set of priorities are identified and it recommends that local efforts be guided by the same goals. The UK [Clean Air Strategy](#) was published in January 2019 and advocates a joined up approach in delivering cleaner air, wider environmental and public health improvements and sustainable development. Both form part of a wider vision promoting sustainable development.

A special Cabinet meeting was held on the 22nd January where approval was granted to submit the proposed *Plan to Deliver Compliance with the EU Limit for Nitrogen Dioxide* to the Secretary of State. That Plan was submitted on the 31st January 2019. At the same cabinet meeting the recommendation to develop a Green City Charter was also approved. See agenda [here](#).

The Green City Charter ('the Charter') is intended to identify priorities and commitments that will facilitate the council and other city partners and stakeholders to deliver actions that will:

- reduce pollution and waste;
- minimise the impact of climate change;
- reduce health inequalities and;
- create a more sustainable approach to economic growth.

The Charter will identify a clear set of objectives which satisfy the local need and appetite for change whilst being aligned with national priorities.

A Green City Working Group comprising of council officers from across its services has been established to support the delivery of the Charter and has conducted both internal workshops and an engagement exercise with external stakeholders to ensure the Charter caters for all groups and identifies appropriate priorities for action.

The Green City Working Group will establish a delivery, action and governance plan (Green City Plan) that will establish how the commitments within the Charter will be satisfied and engagement with external stakeholders is maintained. The Green City Working Group will report to the Cabinet Member for a Green City and seek to have the plan implemented no later than 2020.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(i)	To adopt the Green City Charter as published in this paper.
(ii)	To delegate powers to the Director of Transactions & Universal Services to develop and introduce a Green City Plan by 2020 that will demonstrate how SCC will deliver on those commitments included in the Green City Charter.
(iii)	To support the promotion of the Green City Charter with stakeholders to encourage its wider adoption and the subsequent development of actions that will satisfy its aims, objectives and commitments.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1.	The development of a Green City Charter will facilitate the delivery of the Councils existing priority outcomes, refresh existing activities, and deliver new ones. It will ensure that environmental impacts are given due consideration in the delivery of services and decision making and where possible ensure we maximise the opportunity to deliver benefits. It will provide an opportunity to satisfy the expectations and ambitions identified in the Clean Air Zone Consultation exercise. It will seek to encourage city stakeholders to adopt the same set of principles and deliver their own actions. It will encourage all stakeholders including both business, community groups and public sector organisation to work together to deliver a shared outcome, making Southampton a cleaner, healthier, more sustainable and attractive environment for all.
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ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

2.	No alternative options considered.
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DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)	
3.	<p>Southampton is a large and diverse city, with a strong and growing economy (currently assessed 3rd in the PwC Good Growth for Cities index). Southampton is a regional hub for transport, business, commerce, leisure and retail as well as being home to a major international cargo and passenger port.</p>
4.	<p>Southampton is predominantly urban in character and the built up area and the city's influence extends beyond its administrative boundary. However, Southampton is also a city with a large amount of green space, with 49 parks and 1,140 hectares of open space, including the Common. It also neighbours the New Forest National Park, Southampton Water, the Solent and the range of protected environments within them.</p>
5.	<p>It is important to ensure that the city continues to support economic growth, but that this growth continues to support Southampton to be a green and environmentally sustainable city that will be resilient to the challenges of climate change. A move towards a low carbon, cleaner economy and greener landscape will enable the city to grow and evolve as a modern, healthy and attractive place to live, work and do business.</p>
6.	<p>Southampton City Council have been issued a Ministerial Direction requiring it to undertake a local assessment (feasibility study) of air quality in the city, and produce a business case for a Plan to demonstrate how compliance with the EU Ambient Air Quality Directive (AAQD) of 40 µg/m³ for Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) can be achieved in the shortest possible time. This was submitted to the Secretary of State for Environment for approval on the 31st January 2019.</p>
7.	<p>Between June 21st 2018 and the 13th September 2018 the council undertook a consultation exercise with neighbouring authorities, local communities and businesses to: explain the objectives of the Clean Air Zone study; consider the potential health and economic impacts; understand any concerns; and assess the need for any mitigating actions or identify alternative options for consideration.</p> <p>The response was unprecedented. 9,309 replies were received and have been accounted for in developing the Clean Air Zone business case and identifying a preferred option for the Plan that will deliver compliance. 75% of respondents indicated that they thought air quality was a fairly or very big problem in Southampton. 80% agreed with the overall aim of a proposed Clean Air Zone and 56% supported a vehicle charging scheme as a means of delivering improvement. 78% and 77% believed it would deliver positive impacts on the environment and public health respectively.</p> <p>Of the comments received some of the most significant topics raised concerned; the need for action to improve air quality, the proposed measures not being enough and, the need to focus on sources other than road transport.</p>

8.	<p>The subsequent Plan being proposed indicates that nitrogen dioxide concentrations have improved in recent years as consequence of both local and national action. It also recommends a package of measures to ensure the likelihood of compliance being achieved. However, the consultation illustrated that expectations and ambitions for cleaner air in Southampton extended beyond achieving legal compliance and the objectives set by the governments Clean Air Zone Framework.</p> <p>A new set of objectives and actions is needed if this is to be satisfied. To satisfy this expectation a proposal to introduce a Green City Charter is recommended which will provide an opportunity to establish more ambitious improvements through alternative long-term, far-reaching projects.</p>
9.	<p>The Clean Air Zone consultation and the wider stakeholder engagement work has identified that there is a significant appetite amongst stakeholders to contribute to delivering improvements. Although the council has far reaching responsibilities it recognises that it cannot deliver the scope of change needed to achieve the standard of air quality that many want. The council also believes that encouraging and supporting voluntary change can be more effective in the long term than enforcing it.</p> <p>The Green City Charter can provide a vehicle to harness the enthusiasm seen during the Clean Air Zone Consultation and seek to maintain and even accelerate to momentum apparent during this exercise.</p>
10.	<p>The principles driving improved air quality support wider environmental improvements and benefits to the city. Similarly, the approach to delivering improved air quality (like partnership working) can be applied more generally to create a set of objectives and commitments that are mutually beneficial and can collectively build a more sustainable city.</p>
11.	<p>Making Southampton a greener city can only be achieved through partnership working with local residents, businesses and other stakeholders. Everything we do, whether as an individual in work, at home or visiting the city, or as an organisation, has an environmental impact. The council's intention is to work with partners to develop a shared set of principles that will ensure the environment is at the forefront of all decision making whether at work or at home.</p>
12.	<p>Government published its Clean Air Strategy on the 14th January 2019. This forms part of a wider government vision on the environment including the vision for a Green Brexit (the new Environment Bill) and A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment. Section 3 identifies the link between clean air, the wider environmental and public health agenda and sustainable development. It states that <i>"in the past, pollution was sometimes seen as a price we had to pay for progress, but that is outdated thinking. We now know that clean, green and healthy environments in urban and rural areas are an essential component of progress, not a barrier to economic development"</i>.</p>

13.	<p>Government published 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment' in January 2018. This identifies key environmental benefits and pressures and sets out goals and targets for improving the environment within a generation. It details how government will work with communities and businesses to do this. It recognises many organisations and partnerships pursue their own plans, and opportunities for joining up and integrating environmental work are missed. At a local level it suggests that environmental effort be guided by the goals it has outlined but also to reflect local needs and priorities as well as being more integrated and efficient.</p> <p>A Green City Charter can achieve this and can ensure Southampton is best placed to benefit from the support, initiatives and funding that central government will provide through the delivery of its own strategy.</p>
14.	<p>Southampton City Council is already actively delivering schemes that support sustainable living. These include its Clean Air Strategy, the MyJourney sustainable travel programme, Fuel Poverty Action Plan and CitizEn Energy. But there is scope to build on these and an opportunity to use the experiences gained in delivering them to invest in a wider range of opportunities that will benefit the council and the city.</p>
15.	<p>Other cities have been recognised as Green Cities for the efforts they have made to promote sustainable living. They have been able to demonstrate the significant benefits a more sustainable economy can deliver. Southampton can learn from these cities, identify good practice and how to deliver it.</p>
16.	<p>An internal Green City Working Group of Southampton City Council officers developed a draft Charter. An initial workshop session on the 11th December 2018 was used to identify the key objectives and themes for further development using the priorities published in the government's 25 Year Plan and feedback from the CAZ consultation as a guide. A subsequent session on the 9th January 2019 attended by cabinet members and a wider range of officers developed the objectives further and developed some specific commitments around the identified themes. The draft charter was included with the proposal for a Green City Charter presented to cabinet on the 22nd January 2019.</p>
17.	<p>A programme of external stakeholder engagement was subsequently undertaken to develop the Charter further to ensure it is suitably extensive; focused on the key priorities; inclusive to all and capable of delivering the positive outcomes needed to achieve its aims. This engagement included an online survey, a Youth Forum event, People's Panel poll and three workshops attended by members of the local business community and health community, academia, community and campaign groups, neighbouring councils and government agencies. Feedback from the engagement exercises has been used to generate the Green City Charter as published in appendix 1.</p>
18.	<p>During the external engagement exercise some stakeholders have expressed a wish to become "early adopters" and have indicated a commitment to sign-up as part of the Charter's official launch.</p>

The Green City Working Group will establish a delivery, action and governance plan that will establish how the council will deliver on the commitments included in the Charter and how it will ensure wider adoption of the Charter and delivery of actions amongst other stakeholders, including joint working opportunities. It intends to introduce a stakeholder group that will be able to scrutinise adoption of the Charter, provide steer on subsequent actions and develop ideas and joint working. Green City Working Group will report to the Green City Cabinet Member and seek to have the plan implemented no later than 2020.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital/Revenue

There is currently a budget of £30k set aside for delivery of the Green City Charter in the 2019/20 budget proposals agreed at Council on 20th February.

The Charter represents an opportunity to establish more ambitious improvements through alternative long-term, far-reaching projects which will be developed during Action Planning exercise. This will involve a full assessment of any costs associated with the delivery of the proposed actions that are not covered by existing budgets, identification of appropriate funding streams (including new grant opportunities) and approvals made in line with financial regulations.

There are a number of existing projects and budgets across the Council that will support the Green City Charter and become part of that programme. These will need to be assessed and built into the Green City Action Plan, but are likely to include;

Capital & Revenue Projects	General Fund Capital Budgets		General Fund Revenue Budgets	
	2018/19	2019/20 - 2020/21	2018/19	2019/20
	£M	£M	£M	£M
Cycling & cycle network improvements	2.734	0.809		
Urban Freight Strategy	0.008	0.047		
Electric Vehicle Action Plan	0.270	0.812		
Proposed electric vehicle fleet replacements	-	0.820		
Green Projects – partnership with Environment centre	0.063	-		
City wide insulation projects	0.056	-		
Bus retrofitting	1.170	1.500		
MyJourney behavioural change (Transport Access Fund)			0.695	0.795
Totals	4.301	3.988	0.695	0.795
Grand Total		8.289		1.490

The Council also submitted a business case to government for reducing Nitrogen Dioxide levels within the City with a funding request of up to £6.4M and, if accepted, it will also form part of the Green City Charter work stream.

Property/Other

None associated directly with adoption of the Charter. The delivery and action plan will confirm implications associated with specific actions that subsequently emerge.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

s.1 Localism Act 2011 allows the Council to do anything deemed necessary or desirable to deliver or support its functions and duties providing that action is not otherwise prohibited by statute (the general power of competence). The preparation and delivery of a Green City Charter is authorised by virtue of s.1.

Other Legal Implications:

The contents of a Green City Charter and its subsequent actions may be authorised by a variety of statutory powers and duties, depending on what those actions are. Legal powers to undertake those actions emerging from the Charter will be further investigated as part of the delivery process and be subject to the democratic process as applicable. In undertaking the preparation of the Charter and subsequent actions the Council needs to have regard to the impact of any proposals on protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010 and s.17 Crime & Disorder Act (the duty to reduce or remove opportunities for crime and disorder in the area) as well as the duty to secure the rights and freedoms protected under the Human Rights Act 1998. These duties will be addressed by the preparation of an Equalities and Safety Impact Assessment ('EISA'). The Council also has various duties under the Environment Act 1995 and Environmental Protection Act 1990 to address air quality and other environmental pollutants and the proposals under the Charter will assist in delivering this duty.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are is a potential reputational risk for SCC if it is not seen to be 'delivering' the stated goals in the Charter.

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

A Green City Charter will support the delivery of the Council Strategy 2016-2020 outcome "People in Southampton live safe, healthy, independent lives".

A Green City Charter will support the delivery of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017-2025 outcomes "People in Southampton live active, safe and independent lives" and "Inequalities in health outcomes are reduced".

A Green City Charter will support the Clean Air Strategy by providing a mechanism to deliver further improvements in local air quality.

A Green City Charter is consistent with the principles outlined in the Government's Environment Strategy, '[A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment](#)' and their [Clean Air Strategy](#).

KEY DECISION?	No
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	All
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>	
Appendices	
1.	A Green City Charter for Southampton
2.	Engagement Summary Report
Documents In Members' Rooms	
1.	None
Equality Impact Assessment	
Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) 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)
None	