

Item

# **CAMBRIDGE AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN 2018 - 2023**



**To:**

Councillor Rosy Moore, Executive Councillor for Environmental Services and City Centre

Environment Scrutiny Committee 13/03/18

**Report by:**

Jo Dicks, Environmental Quality and Growth Team Manager,  
Environmental Services

**Wards affected:**

Abbey, Arbury, Castle, Cherry Hinton, Coleridge, East Chesterton, King's Hedges, Market, Newnham, Petersfield, Queen Edith's, Romsey,

## **Key Decision**

### **1. Executive Summary**

The Cambridge Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP), 2018-23, sets out proposed actions for improving areas of poor air quality in the city and maintaining a good overall level of air quality.

Cambridge City Council, Public Health England, Greater Cambridge Partnership and Cambridgeshire County Council officers have worked together to identify the range of actions required and will also take responsibility for ensuring they are progressed.

The identified actions fall in to three main categories;

- Reducing local traffic emissions as quickly as possible to meet national objectives;
- Maintaining air pollutant levels below national objectives;
- Improving public health by reducing population exposure to air pollutants.

The AQAP details the proposed delivery timescales and reporting metrics for each proposed action over the period 2018-23. The AQAP is a 'live document', which will be reviewed and updated annually.

The AQAP contributes towards all three strands of the Cambridge City Council Vision

- One Cambridge – Fair for all
- Caring for our environment and our people
- Creating a great place to live, learn and work

## **2. Recommendations**

The Executive Councillor is recommended to adopt the Cambridge Air Quality Action Plan 2018 – 23, as attached in Appendix A.

## **3. Background**

3.1 Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) is the statutory process by which local authorities monitor, assess and take action to improve air quality. Where a local authority identifies areas of non-compliance with air quality objectives and there is relevant public exposure, there is a statutory requirement to declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and to draw up a plan (an Air Quality Action Plan, AQAP) detailing the remedial measures to address the problem<sup>1</sup>.

3.2 The historic city centre and the inner ring road of the city have been in an Air Quality Management Area since 2004. The first Air Quality Action Plan was integrated into the Local Transport Plan (2006-2011) and a joint second AQAP was prepared with Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire District Councils in 2009.

3.3 Although air quality in central Cambridge has been improving slowly, it is still not compliant with EU Limit Values/UK National Air Quality Objectives, with elevated levels of nitrogen dioxide in the historic city centre and the inner ring road, so the Air Quality Management Area remains in place. Therefore, a new approach is needed to make a real difference to air quality and public health. An outline AQAP was adopted by the Environment Scrutiny Committee in March 2015.

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<sup>1</sup> Defra LAQM Technical Guidance (TG16) April 2016

3.4 Some progress has been made during the period between the adoption of the outline Plan and the preparation of the full documents. . For example, in 2016, Cambridge City Council submitted a bid to the Office for Low Emission Vehicles for funding for Rapid and Fast Charge Electric Vehicle Charge Points for Taxis. We were awarded £426,000 in 2017. The first Rapid Charge Point installations are due before the end of June 2018. The Cambridge City Council taxi licensing policy was also revised in 2016; the updated policy was agreed in principle by the Licensing Committee in October 2016. The new policy will offer fee discounts or exemptions for low emission taxis and consider extending the age limit.

3.5 The Cambridge Air Quality Action Plan 2018-23, is based on the outline measures in the Plan adopted in 2015. This full AQAP sets out the revised approach to improving air quality in Cambridge. This is important because:

- Emerging evidence shows that air pollution is detrimental to public health at all levels, not just levels above the Limit Values
- Planned growth in the greater Cambridge area will result in significant increases in population and jobs and so result in increased traffic levels.
- Improvements in emissions from vehicles has not been realised,

3.6 The main actions in the Plan will continue to focus on continuously improving emissions from vehicles, as well as infrastructure changes, public transport improvements, demand management, lowering emissions from buildings, promoting smarter travel choices, strategic planning, planning policies and development control. The evidence shows that improvements in emissions from the internal combustion engine are not coming forward; therefore alternatives will need to be found and implemented. A significantly lower emission passenger transport fleet will be required to deliver air quality improvements in central Cambridge and beyond.

3.7 The ongoing growth in the greater Cambridge area could result in significant increases in vehicular traffic levels. Therefore, the County Council's transport policies and Greater Cambridge Partnership's infrastructure plans need to be realigned to allow the local transport network to accommodate the additional transport demands of new residents and workers without adversely impacting on air quality

3.6 This full version of the AQAP was prepared by the Environmental Health team of Cambridge City Council under the direction, support and agreement of the Air Quality Action Plan Steering Group. The Steering Group is made up of officers and departments across the city and county councils, including the Greater Cambridge Partnership and Public Health England. Defra guidance released in 2016 indicates that the Air Quality Action Plan should have a five year review period so the duration of the Plan was amended accordingly; the dates were revised to reflect the official start date of the work packages. The Steering Group will oversee the delivery of the AQAP, once adopted.

3.8 Air quality is now at the heart of the Greater Cambridge Partnership infrastructure investment programme, with all projects being assessed for their air quality impacts. This covers both the immediately relevant City Access projects, such as the potential Workplace Parking Levy and the longer term projects, such as the Low Emission Bus project and a potential Clean Air Zone.

3.9 The AQAP Measures in Chapter 4 are grouped into sets of measures for the three priority areas

- reducing emissions in the centre of Cambridge,
- reducing emissions across all of Cambridge,
- and keeping emissions low in the future.

These are the most effective measures that we can take to improve air quality.

3.10 As well as the main measures, there are many other areas of work which will help to improve air quality. These are included in Table 4.1 of the AQAP which lists all of the measures in the standardised format required by Defra for reporting to the EU. A simplified list of measures is set out in Appendix C.

3.11 Defra requires AQAPs to include measures to ensure that the National Air Quality Objectives are reached in the shortest possible time. The main aim of the proposed Cambridge AQAP is to reduce local traffic emissions as quickly as possible to meet national objectives, but it will also be important to maintaining pollutant levels below national objectives and improve public health by continuing to reduce population exposure to air pollutants.

3.12 A table detailing the consultation representations received from statutory consultees, together with the Council's proposed response to each and any associated recommended amendments to the AQAP, is included in Appendix D (of the Air Quality Action Plan). The main themes arising from the statutory consultees' representations are as follows:

- Reduce traffic in general but specifically the city centre and the arterial roads
- Improve public transport – more services, better waiting facilities, more P&R sites, especially to north and west of city, subsidised bus fares/P&R parking
- Prioritise emissions reduction from buses, coaches and HGV including EV charging provision for buses, idling control for tourist buses, driver training, require buses, coaches, taxis to be electric
- Improve traffic flow by optimising signalling and reconsidering bus stop locations
- Consider congestion charge/charge for non-electric vehicles
- Stronger emphasis on development planning process and S106 agreements
- Strategic planning to encourage more employment development in residential areas outside Cambridge
- High profile forum for employers and transport providers to promote active travel and reduce travel by private car
- Work with Environment Agency to deliver the air quality requirements from the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2018, regarding emissions from combustion plant

Overall, the responses are supportive, but there is a clear steer that more needs to be done to reduce traffic in Cambridge, as well as to reduce emissions from buses, coaches and HGV.

## **4. Implications**

### **(a) Financial Implications**

Funding for the development and delivery of specific actions will be sought, where possible, from external sources, such as the Defra Air Quality Grant, Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV), Greater Cambridge Partnership

and s106 developer contributions. Where external funding sources are not available, appropriate capital and/ or revenue bids will be made through the Council's budget setting process.

**(b) Staffing Implications**

Local authorities have a statutory responsibility to work towards reducing levels of air pollution under the Local Air Quality Management regime. This works forms part of the job description of the Scientific Officer (Air Quality) and the Environmental Quality & Growth Team Manager. A further 2 FTE posts have been funded by the GCP for 18 months to work on the delivery the air quality work streams for the GCP.

**(c) Equality and Poverty Implications**

The EqIA, as attached in Appendix B, demonstrates that the implementation of the proposed AQAP will have positive impact on public health and especially for both young and older people groups and those on low incomes. Research nationally has shown a correlation between low income neighbourhoods and poor air quality.

**(d) Environmental Implications**

The Climate Change Rating Tool indicates that the proposal will have a net low positive impact (on climate change). The use of transport, and fossil fuel based transport will be reduced. This will be a result of more public transport, and reducing the need to travel.

**(e) Procurement Implications**

Any projects requiring the engagement of external contractors will be subject to the Council's procurement policies.

**(f) Community Safety Implications**

Public Health data attributed 257 premature deaths in Cambridgeshire in 2010 to Particulate Air Pollution. Quantification of evidence provided by the World Health Organisation (2013) of premature deaths attributable to nitrogen dioxide will increase this figure.

Any steps taken to lower pollutant levels will improve public health by lowering rates of death and illness, and thus increase community safety.

**5. Consultation and communication considerations**

In accordance with the Defra guidance, and city council's own guidance, the proposed AQAP will be subject to the following consultation process:

1. Consultation with Statutory Consultees (completed)

2. Launch and full public consultation after the Plan has been adopted
3. Refinement and revision of Plan if required
4. Ongoing consultation during the lifetime of the Plan if and when any substantive changes are proposed.

The proposed Plan will be publicised through the media using news releases, Cambridge Matters, content on the council's website, Twitter and/or Facebook, as appropriate and at relevant points during the lifetime of the Plan. Special care will be taken to consult fully with those who may be affected by actions in the Plan. This can be managed within existing resources.

## **6. Background papers**

These background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

World Health Organisation (2013) Health risks of air pollution in Europe – HRAPIE project. Recommendations for concentration–response functions for cost–benefit analysis of particulate matter, ozone and nitrogen dioxide.

<http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/environment-and-health/air-quality/activities/health-aspects-of-air-pollution-and-review-of-eu-policies-the-revihaap-and-hrapie-projects>

Fecht, D. et al. (2014) Associations between air pollution and socioeconomic characteristics, ethnicity and age profile of neighbourhoods in England and the Netherland, Environmental Pollution

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.envpol.2014.12.014>

Defra (2016) LAQM Policy Guidance (PG16)

<https://laqm.defra.gov.uk/documents/LAQM-PG16-April-16-v1.pdf>

## **7. Appendices**

- A. Cambridge City Council Air Quality Action Plan 2018 – 2023
- B. Equalities Impact Assessment of the Air Quality Action Plan 2018 -2023
- C. Simplified list of Measures

## **8. Inspection of papers**

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Anita Lewis, Environmental Health Scientific Officer, tel: 01223 - 457616, email: [anita.lewis@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:anita.lewis@cambridge.gov.uk).