

GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 6
8 JANUARY 2020	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Air Quality Task and Finish Group	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Marco Cereste Cabinet Member for Waste, Street Scene and the Environment	
Contact Officer(s):	Charlotte Palmer, Group Manager Transport and Environment	Tel. 453538

REPORT OF THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP TO INFORM THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN AIR QUALITY AMBITION STATEMENT AND ACTION PLAN

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S	
FROM: Air Quality Task and Finish Group	Deadline date: 13/01/2020
<p>It is recommended that Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider and comment on the Task and Finish Group report at Appendix a. 2. Endorse the report and recommendations for submission to Cabinet on 13 January 2020. 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 At Annual Council on 21 May 2018, Cllr John Holdich OBE, Leader of the Council requested that a cross-party scrutiny Task and Finish Group be established to inform the development of the Council's air quality ambitions and make recommendations for specific actions that should be taken by the Council and partners to achieve such ambitions.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 This report is submitted to the Committee following a review of air quality work undertaken locally and further work that is required. The purpose of this report is to seek the Committee's approval for submission of the recommendations contained within the report to Cabinet on 13 January 2020.

2.2 This report is for the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference No. Part 3, Section 4 - Overview and Scrutiny Functions, paragraph 2.1, Functions determined by the Council:

4. Environmental Capital;

2.3 The outcome of this work has the potential to directly and indirectly support all of the council's corporate priorities.

2.4 The recommendations included in this report are designed to improve air quality across the city which will therefore also have a corresponding benefit for Children in Care.

3. TIMESCALES

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
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4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 As recently as the Nineties, it was felt that air pollution was no longer a major health issue in the United Kingdom as legislation had made the great smogs of the Fifties a thing of the past. However, pollutants such as Particulate Matter (PM) and Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) are still at levels which can harm health.

Nationally, poor air quality is considered by the Government to be “the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK”. As well as human health, air pollution also has implications for the natural environment and for the economy (House of Commons, May 2019).

Whilst Peterborough does not currently have any exceedances of relevant National Air Quality Objectives the Council recognises that there are no absolute safe levels of exposure to particulate matter. As such, the Group feel that the Council should aim to make improvements in air quality in recognition that any such effort is likely to have positive impact both in terms of health and climate change. There are a number of activities already undertaken by the Council which are likely to have a positive impact on air quality, health and climate change. However, the group feels that further investment is required to undertake the following recommendations which, where appropriate, will also be linked to the emerging Carbon Management Action Plan:

Recommendation 1: Work with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) to encourage them to use their Passenger Transport Powers to secure air quality benefits. This should include: supporting the Council and Stagecoach to relocate the bus depot; improve vehicles to reduce emissions from the fleet; ensure the lowest emission vehicles only are used in areas of poorer air quality; and, encourage young people to use public transport.

Recommendation 2: Undertake a parking review with the aim of discouraging single occupancy car travel and prioritising Ultra Low Emission Vehicles.

Recommendation 3: Increase the activities undertaken to encourage residents to opt for active modes of transport including robust evaluation and monitoring.

Recommendation 4: Identify the feasibility of introducing a new policy to ensure that all taxi and private hire vehicles use alternative low emissions fuels only by 2030.

Recommendation 5: Work in partnership with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) to develop a Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) proposal for the city.

Recommendation 6: Support local businesses to make the investment necessary to encourage the transition to active modes of travel and alternatively fuelled vehicles.

Recommendation 7: Identify opportunities to install or maximise the benefits of green infrastructure to provide barriers between people and emissions.

Recommendation 8: Explore opportunities to for further pedestrianisation in all future public realm works.

Recommendation 9: Work in partnership with Fenland District Council to evidence the basis for revocation of AQMA No1.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 A number of organisations, detailed in section 4.3 of appendix A, were invited to be interviewed to

share their expert knowledge in specific matters. This included:

- Andrew Allen, Campaign for Better Transport
- Darren Roe, Engineering Director, Stagecoach East and Sam Greer UK Bus Engineering Director, Stagecoach
- Dr James Levine - Principal Investigator / Impact Fellow at the Birmingham Institute of Forest Research, University of Birmingham
- Steven Bishop, Head of Transport Strategy & Economics, Combined Authority and Rowland Potter, Head of Transport, Combined Authority

In addition to those detailed above the Group invited, on a number of occasions, a representative from the Road Haulage Association in order to understand the impact of Heavy Goods Vehicles on air quality. However, no response to any of the Groups communications attempts was forthcoming until the later stages of finalising this report where they provided a written note which is included in the main report.

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

- 6.1 It is anticipated that Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee consider and comment on the Task and Finish Group report at Appendix A and endorse the report and recommendations for submission to Cabinet on 13 January 2020.

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 Having spoken to various key witnesses and having received information and evidence from officers to understand the current situation and what evidence-based actions could be taken locally by different stakeholders the Task and Finish Group concluded that there are a number of recommendations required, detailed in section 10 of appendix a.

Each of these recommendations have been indicatively assessed using guidance from the Department for Environment and Rural Affairs (February 2018): Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance (TG16) and Public Health England (March 2018): Review of interventions to improve outdoor air quality and public health.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 The alternative option is to take no further action to improve air quality, but this has been dismissed because the Task and Finish Group recognises that there are no absolute safe levels of exposure to particulate matter. As such, the Group feel that the Council should aim to make improvements in air quality in recognition that any such effort is likely to have positive health benefits.

9. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 9.1 It is recognised that the Council is already undertaking a number of activities that have a positive impact on air quality across the city. However, the group is also aware that the rate at which Peterborough is growing, alongside the recognition that any improvement in air quality is likely to have positive impacts on health, means that there is clear evidence that further investment should be made to improve air quality.

The majority of the recommendations detailed in this report above have no additional resource implications for the Council and can be delivered within existing resources. Two of the recommendations will involve additional investment amounting to £67k annually. However, officers are in the process of exploring the feasibility of seeking additional external funding and/or delivering the recommendations within existing resources. As such these recommendations will not result in a budget pressure at this stage. It is recommended that this is revisited in six months' time and a capacity bid developed if no alternative sources of funding are forthcoming

In addition to the financial implications detailed above the Group recommends that officers continue to seek sources of alternative funding as and when opportunities arise.

Legal Implications

- 9.2 In Peterborough there are no exceedances of relevant National Air Quality Objectives, which the Council reports on annually.

The Council is currently fulfilling its legal obligations in relation to air quality. The recommendations proposed in this report will further strengthen the Council's position but are not legally required.

Equalities Implications

- 9.3 There are no equality implications arising as a result of this report.

Rural Implications

- 9.4 There are no equality implications arising as a result of this report.

Carbon Impact Assessment

- 9.5 The recommendations detailed in this report will not have a direct impact on the Council's own carbon emissions. However, for each of the recommendations an indication of the 'Likely impact on the climate emergency declaration' has been included and these are all positive or neutral.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 10.1 A list of background documents can be found in appendix a.

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix A – report of the Task and Finish Group to inform the development of an air quality ambition statement and action plan.