

EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION



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| REPORT OF: | Executive Member for Health and Adult Social Care Executive Member for Environment |
| LEAD OFFICERS: | Director of Public Health Director of Environment and Leisure |
| DATE: | 11 October 2018 |

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| PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED: | ALL |
| WARD/S AFFECTED: | All |
| KEY DECISION: | YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

SUBJECT: An update on action to reduce deaths and ill health caused by poor air quality In Blackburn with Darwen and across Lancashire and Cumbria

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is:

- To provide an update on health related air quality both nationally and locally
- To provide information on recent work in Blackburn with Darwen and sub-regionally to improve air quality
- To outline next steps for action on air quality in both Blackburn with Darwen and sub-regionally

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:

Note the content of the report.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 As recently as the nineties it was felt that air pollution was no longer a major health issue in the United Kingdom. Priority had been given to tackling the biggest individual sources of air pollution and legislation had made the smogs of the fifties a thing of the past. As these major sources of emissions decreased, the relative contribution of smaller and more dispersed sources of air pollution has increased, which requires new types of action.

3.2 In more recent years evidence has emerged that small particles emitted to the air from various sources, such as road transport, industry, agriculture and domestic fires, are still having a considerable effect on health. Indeed, diesel engine exhaust, outdoor air pollution and particulate air pollution have been classified by the World Health Organization as carcinogenic. This type of air pollution is so small that it can't be seen by the naked eye, but can get into our respiratory system.

3.3 Air pollution reduces life expectancy by increasing deaths from heart disease, lung disease and circulatory problems and can have a short term impact over a single highly polluted day as well as long term impacts from low level exposure over a longer period of time. The majority of health problems result from long-term exposure to air pollution. In addition, air pollution can reduce lung development in children, which may increase symptoms in those young people who develop conditions like asthma.

3.4 The impact of air pollution on health is not distributed equally within a population, often falling on the most deprived communities and the most vulnerable individuals. There is a larger risk to health for young children and older adults, for whom air pollution causes more harm than passive smoking.

3.5 Public Health England (PHE) estimates that poor air quality contributes to around 4% of all deaths across Lancashire and Cumbria. The figure for Blackburn with Darwen is 4.7% compared with Lancashire 4.4%; Blackpool 4.3%; and Cumbria 3.4% (PHOF, 2016). For Blackburn with Darwen this is equivalent to 62 deaths per annum however, air pollution is likely to contribute a small amount to the deaths of a larger number of exposed individuals rather than being solely responsible for the calculated figure of attributable deaths.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

4.1 Much of the action required to improve air quality will need to be taken by people without any specific statutory role to improve health and wellbeing. The impact of the individual household or business may be small, but the combined impact of actions taken by national and local government, large and small businesses and individuals can make a significant difference.

Local Action on Air Quality:

4.2 Local authorities have a central role in achieving improvements. District and unitary councils have responsibility for monitoring air quality and reporting on the action being taken to improve areas of poor quality. Action to address the health impacts of air pollution on local populations can play a critical role in supporting other local priorities such as active travel and physical activity, health inequalities, sustainability, growth and regeneration and community engagement.

4.3 All district and unitary councils are required to submit an Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) to Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) each year giving an overview of air quality in their area and actions planned, in progress or completed to improve air quality. Examples of these measures may include:

- Initiatives to increase uptake in cycling and walking
- Travel planning information – identifying alternatives to car use
- New roads – bypasses and link roads
- Intelligent traffic light systems
- HGV bans on specific roads
- Camera systems providing information for transport/air quality action plans
- Electric vehicle charging points – on-street, at homes and at new commercial developments
- Cheaper parking for less polluting vehicles
- Bus and rail improvements
- Living green walls
- Planning guidance – improving the assessment of air quality impact and identifying mitigation
- Targeting of vehicle fleets – e.g. increasing the number of low emission vehicles

4.4 Monitoring and modelling of air quality is undertaken in Blackburn with Darwen by Environmental Health staff to fulfil the requirements of the Local Air Quality Management regime, and to report on compliance with EU air quality targets. Air quality is monitored at 47 sites across the Borough and an

automatic monitor at Accrington Road Community Centre. The outcome of this work is reported in an Annual Status Report. Blackburn with Darwen's ASR for 2017 can be found on the Council website: <http://www.blackburn.gov.uk/Pages/Air-quality.aspx>

4.5 If a local authority finds any places where the national air quality objectives are not likely to be achieved, it must declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). Where an AQMA is declared the local authority will put together a plan to improve the air quality - a Local Air Quality Action Plan. There are currently 7 AQMAs in the Borough. These were declared because of unacceptably high levels of nitrogen dioxides, mainly from road traffic.




- AQMA 1 - Intack, Blackburn (Junction of Whitebirk Rd and Accrington Rd)
- AQMA 2 - Bastwell, Blackburn (Junction of Whalley New Road and Whalley Range)
- AQMA 3 – Darwen Town Centre (A666 between Robert Street and Wraith Street, Darwen)
- AQMA 4 – Witton, Blackburn (Junction of Preston Old Road and Buncer Lane, Blackburn)
- AQMA 5 – Earcroft, Darwen (Junction of the A666 with M65 Link Road)
- AQMA 6 – Blackamoor, Blackburn (Junction of Stopes Brow, Blackamoor Road and Roman Road, Blackburn)
- AQMA 7 – Four Lane Ends, Blackburn (Junction of Pleckgate Road, Revidge Road, Lammack Rd and Shear Brow)

An AQMA at the junction of Accrington Road / Burnley Road (AQMA 8) was revoked in 2017 due to improvements in the air quality as a result of Pennine Reach diverting traffic away from the affected area.

4.6 The table below shows how nitrogen dioxide levels have changed in the AQMAs over time. It can be seen that nitrogen dioxide in 2017 was below the level of concern in all AQMAs. Compared with previous years, there has been an improvement at almost all of the 46 monitoring locations. These improvements occurred across the Borough, so they can't be attributed to changes at individual junctions. The 2017 results are welcomed but should be treated with caution because some factors, like the weather, can cause short term changes in the build-up of pollution. The results of monitoring in the next few years will determine if 2017 was an anomaly or part of a lasting improvement. It is good practice to base decisions on trends evident in the previous 5 years of monitoring.

Table 1: AQMA Trends Over Time

| Year | AQMA 1 Intack | AQMA 2 Bastwell | AQMA 3 A666 Darwen | AQMA 4 Witton | AQMA 5 Earcroft | AQMA 6 Blackamoor | AQMA 7 Four Lane Ends | AQMA 8 Acc. Rd/ Burnley Rd |
|------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2005 | Red | Red | Red | Red | Red | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| 2006 | Green | Green | Red | Red | Red | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| 2007 | Red | Green | Red | Green | Green | n/a | n/a | Green |
| 2008 | Red | Red | Red | Red | Red | n/a | n/a | Green |
| 2009 | Red | Green | Green | Red | Green | Red | Green | Red |
| 2010 | Red | Red | Red | Red | Green | Red | Red | Red |
| 2011 | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green | Red | Red |
| 2012 | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green | Red | Red | Green |
| 2013 | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green | Red | Red | Red |
| 2014 | Red | Red | Green | Green | Green | Red | Red | Red |
| 2015 | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green | Red | Red | Green |
| 2016 | Red | Red | Green | Green | Green | Red | Red | Green |
| 2017 | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green |

 - Exceedance of annual mean NO₂ objective
  - Complies with annual mean NO₂ objective
 - Further monitoring ongoing to determine the existence or extent of any remaining pollution hotspot and whether it affects any residents in town centre flats.

4.7 The Long term trends at AQMAs 3, 4, and 5 indicate that future exceedances of the national objective are unlikely. These AQMAs may be revoked once Defra have peer reviewed the monitoring data and agreed to the conclusions in the 2018 Annual Status Report.

4.8 AQMAs No.6 and No.7 present the most significant challenge. The action plan will be updated to include new measures to tackle problems at Four Lane Ends, as this junction remains a significant challenge. Funding has been secured for a new link road at Blackamoor and it has been identified in the relevant planning master plan. The impact of the new road will be modelled when more is known about the new road layout and anticipated traffic flows.

4.9 In order to achieve these improvements within Blackburn with Darwen a range of actions have been taken which can be split into 3 broad categories:

1. Physical changes – Physical changes at junctions that will address congestion and reduce emissions. The Pennine Reach £40m rapid bus transport scheme was completed in April 2017 and has already brought about a dramatic improvement in air quality at the Accrington Rd / Burnley Rd AQMA. Growth Deal 3 funding has been secured for local road projects including the Blackamoor Link Road (estimate c£3m). New intelligent traffic signals have been installed at Blackamoor.
2. Choices - People will be given more choices about how they travel, and less polluting options will be made more appealing. The Authority is backing cycling and walking, improving public transport and providing travel planning advice, raising an awareness of the positive benefits that more sustainable and healthy options can provide. Major improvements in the quality of bus services have been delivered by Pennine Reach. In terms of cycling, there has been a 670% increase in leisure rides, the introduction of a new cycle pump track and the £600K 26km Witton Wheel Cycling route. Walking and other active transport choices are being promoted by Public Health initiatives, such as the Eat Well, Move More, Shape Up Physical Activity and Obesity Strategy 2017-2020, and the commitment to support physical activity, active travel, cycling and walking through the Pennine Lancashire Health and Social Care LDP Prevention Strategy. It is recognised that there is a significant overlap between the need to address poor air quality and ill-health resulting from inactivity.
3. Managing Development - Consideration will be given to the impact of development upon existing and potential air pollution hotspots – a new air quality Planning Advisory Note has been adopted, which sets out how we intend to deal with site specific issues that need to be addressed and provides guidance which identifies how developers can take action that will reduce the health impact associated with development and transport emissions. It has been published on the Council's website: <http://www.blackburn.gov.uk/planningdocs/policies/Air-Quality-PANv7-July-2018.pdf>. For example, most new residential developments are required to include low emission gas boilers and electric vehicle charging points, and charging points are also being required at some commercial developments.

4.10 Air pollution doesn't just affect people living in AQMAs. It is evident that the Local Air Quality Management Regime and UK ambient air quality standards haven't adequately protected public health. For example no AQMAs have been declared in Lancashire and Cumbria because of particulate levels. Particulates are the tiny particles of soot produced when fuels are burnt. They are invisible to the naked eye but are able to pass deep into a person's lungs. Yet the fraction of mortality attributable to man-made particulates is significant. Action taken to reduce the impact of air pollution should not, therefore, be limited to measures designed to address problem in AQMAs only.

Action on air quality across Lancashire and Cumbria:

4.11 The Lancashire and Cumbria Directors of Public Health identified action on air quality as a sub-regional priority and hosted a Lancashire and Cumbria Air Quality Summit on 28th February 2018 to explore ways to accelerate action. The purpose of the summit was to;

- Improve participants' understanding of air pollution, the health risks of air pollution and the scale of the problem
- Improve participants' understanding of what actions could be taken to reduce population exposure to air pollution with additional co-benefits to health, economy, sustainability
- Share good practice including national and local examples of air quality improvement work
- Strengthen participants' understanding of their own and each other's' roles in tackling air pollution
- Consider ways of improving public awareness and engagement for action on air quality
- Define the agenda for collective action to prevent air quality attributable deaths across Lancashire and Cumbria

4.12 The event was attended by Elected Members, Local Government Public Health, Planning and Transport and Environmental Health, Public Health England, special interest groups, citizen representatives and academics. The Programme included an opening from Cllr Brian Taylor (Blackburn with Darwen Council) followed by presentations from Public Health England, Prof Barbara Maher (Lancaster University Environment Centre) talking about emerging evidence of particulate matter in the brains of people with Alzheimer's disease and local authority representatives talking about local approaches and the importance of coordinated action. The final presentation was from Prof John Whitelegg (Liverpool John Moores University) who challenged participants regarding further action to improve air quality in the region.

4.13 Attendees put forward ideas and suggested ways in which we can encourage and mobilise action on air quality, which were incorporated into a collective report of the Lancashire and Cumbria Directors of Public Health entitled [Reducing deaths and ill-health caused by poor air quality in Lancashire and Cumbria](#). Attached as Appendix 1 The purpose of the report is to:

- Improve awareness and engagement for action on air quality and understanding of everyone's role in tackling air pollution, building on existing plans and strategies
- Start a conversation about the ways in which we can all work together and hold each other to account for action to improve air quality
- Outline areas for further action to reduce population exposure to air pollution, as identified at the Summit.

4.14 The report was launched on 21st June 2018 to coincide with Clean Air Day which is a national drive to help people find out more about the issues surrounding air pollution and how they can make a difference. On this day people up and down the country take part in events and make personal pledges for action for example to walk to work or school instead of driving, switch off their engines when they can and encourage others to do the same.

4.15 The suggestions put forward at the Summit are captured in Appendix 2. This list is not intended to be exhaustive but will act as a guide for further discussion and local action.

Next Steps:

4.16 Bringing about change on a significant scale is not easy. Investment and growth are considered essential for the delivery of challenging targets relating to key objectives, such as employment and housing. As a consequence, there are conflicting priorities and air quality concerns can be marginalised in some circumstances. This represents a challenge to us all.

4.17 We will further explore the list of suggestions generated at the Lancashire and Cumbria Summit

and work with all stakeholders to turn them into appropriate actions. We will do as much of this work in collaboration with the public as possible and be as transparent as we can about what we are doing and what difference it is making.

4.18 To work through how we might better mobilise the support of wider society in this challenge we will work with the NHS leadership Centre to explore how to better create public health leadership outside of the health sector. This will be a critical success factor if we are to make a difference.

Blackburn with Darwen AQMA action priorities:

- Blackamoor and Four Lane Ends are a priority. Four Lane Ends junction remains a significant challenge and an Action Plan needs to be developed for this AQMA. The outlook for Blackamoor has improved now that funding has been secured for a new link road. The impact of the new road can be assessed once more information is known about the layout and anticipated traffic flows.
- Monitoring to determine if some AQMAs can be revoked – as detailed earlier in the report.
- Close monitoring of the Moorgate Street / Livesey Branch Road and the Accrington Road Toll Bar Junctions because they hover below the target nitrogen dioxide level at which new AQMAs may need to be declared.
- Delivering the DfT’s Access Fund project “CONNECTING East Lancashire” where we will work with businesses, educational establishments, residents and commuters in relation to raising the awareness of travel options and the choices available, in addition to delivering interventions that address specific barriers to active travel.
- Emissions from factories, domestic and commercial bonfires, and also from stoves and fireplaces in smoke control areas are regulated to minimise emissions.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

None

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

10. CONSULTATIONS

None

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

VERSION: 1

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| CONTACT OFFICER: | Denise Andrews Laura Wharton |
| DATE: | 11 September 2018 |
| BACKGROUND PAPER: | None |