

EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION



REPORT OF:	Executive Member for Environmental Services Executive Member for Public Health and Wellbeing
LEAD OFFICERS:	Director of Environment and Operations Director of Public Health and Wellbeing
DATE:	4 July 2019

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:	Environmental Services	Public Health and Wellbeing
WARD/S AFFECTED:	All	
KEY DECISION:	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

SUBJECT: Update on Air Quality 2019

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides information for members about the following:

- UK Clean Air Strategy published in January 2019,
- DEFRA's response to the Blackburn with Darwen Annual Status Report on Air Quality for 2018
- Ongoing work to improve air quality in Lancashire and Cumbria

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:

Note the report.

3. BACKGROUND

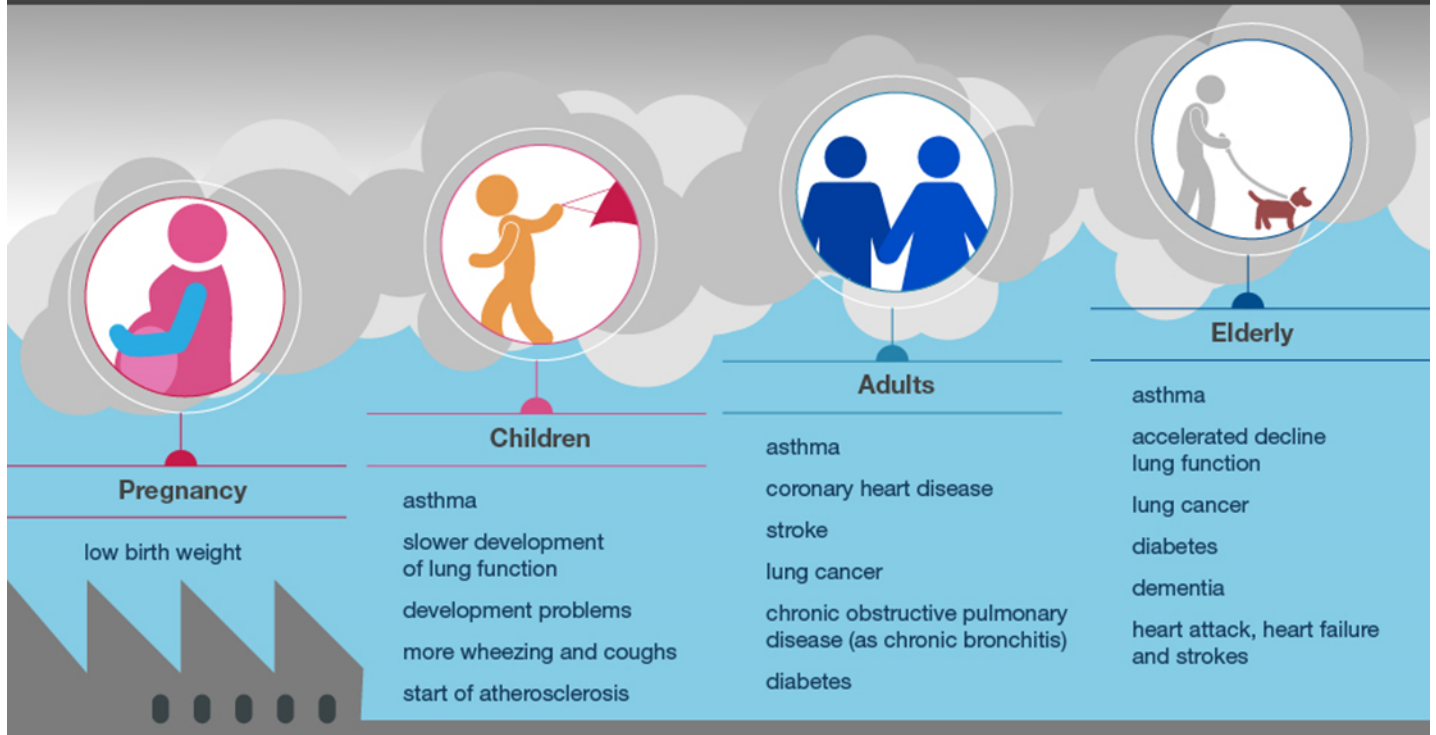
3.1 As recently as the nineties it was felt that air pollution was no longer a major health issue in the United Kingdom. Priority had been given to tackling the biggest individual sources of air pollution and legislation had made the smogs of the fifties a thing of the past. As these major sources of 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.

Air pollution affects people throughout their lifetime



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.

Scale of the problem

It is estimated that **long-term exposure to man-made air pollution in the UK** has an annual effect equivalent to:



**28,000 to
36,000
deaths**

Over the following 18 years a **1 µg/m³ reduction in fine particulate air pollution in England** could prevent around:



50,900 cases of coronary heart disease

16,500 strokes



9,300 cases of asthma

4,200 lung cancers

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

Local to Blackburn with Darwen

4.1 Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council has taken its responsibility to tackle air quality seriously. Each year an update report is submitted to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). The latest report, covering 2017, was submitted in 2018 and DEFRA has now responded to it. The full report can be found at <http://www.blackburn.gov.uk/Pages/Air-quality.aspx>

4.2 The key findings were:

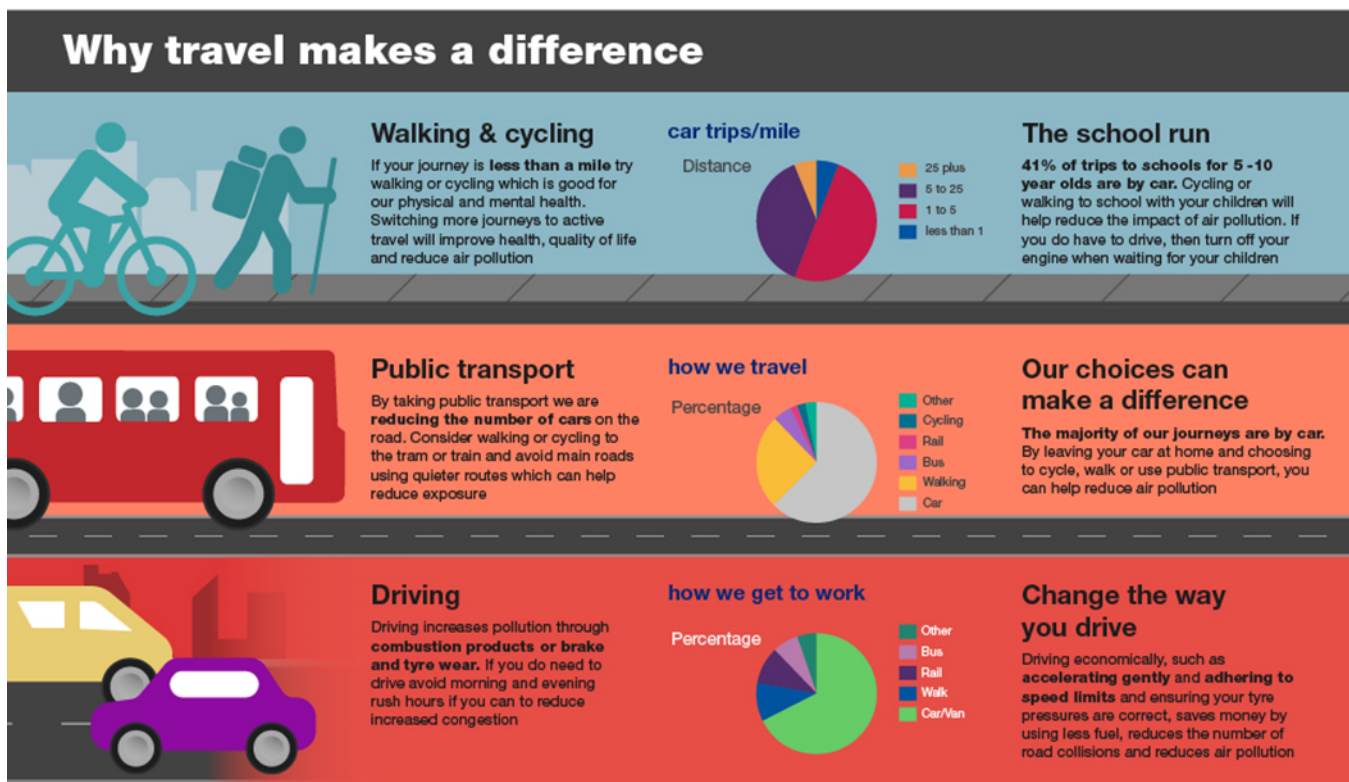
- 2017 was a particularly good year for air quality in our Borough, as none of the monitored levels exceeded the limits set by the Government for the first time in 20 years. Time will tell whether the excellent results will be sustained in coming years.
- Nevertheless, there has been definite long-term improvement at some of our former hotspots. The Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) at the junction of Accrington Road and Burnley Road was revoked in 2017, and Defra have agreed to further AQMA revocations at Witton, Earcroft, and Darwen Town Centre. Outside of the AQMAs there have been significant reductions between 2013 and 2017 with the majority of the reductions in 2017.
- Sites at Moorgate Street/Livesey Branch Road and Accrington Road/Fecitt brow junctions were being monitored closely because they were close to exceeding the air quality objective. In 2017 there were no exceedances.
- The Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) drawn up in 2010 contains 15 measures to tackle air quality problems, many of which are currently ongoing. This, alongside wider measures and significant infrastructure investments has been extremely effective in reducing local emissions.
- Plans for AQMAs at Blackamoor and Four Lane Ends include a number of infrastructure schemes – construction of new link roads and upgrading to intelligent traffic management systems – due to commence in 2019.

- The Council achieved a number of milestones in 2017, including: the Pennine Reach rapid bus transport scheme, 26km of cycling infrastructure, installing intelligent traffic management systems, securing funding for local road schemes and awareness campaigns.
- The Council's other priorities over the coming year are to: continue monitoring and delivering the DfT Connecting East Lancashire scheme.

4.3 A comment in the report from DEFRA states :

1. While the report notes that limited resources are a barrier, as with most Local Authorities, the levels of reductions achieved across all sites (especially in the last year) are exceptional and stand out. The Council has successfully implemented many mitigation measures and has a well-defined and maintained monitoring network.
2. The Council should continue their extraordinary work, implementing/developing mitigation measures, securing funding, and monitoring. This report is detailed yet concise and clearly communicates the issues and actions the Council face with regards to air quality. It satisfies the criteria set out in relevant Policy and Technical guidance; and acts as an excellent first point of reference for concerned members of the Public.

4.4 We have shown that taking positive action to tackle air quality brings about improvement.



4.5 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 in February 2018 to explore ways to work together and accelerate action on air quality. The suggestions 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". https://www.healthierlsc.co.uk/application/files/7315/2950/2309/Air_Quality_and_Public_Health_report.pdf

4.6 Clean Air Day is a national drive to help people find out more about the issues surrounding air pollution and how they can make a difference. This year we chose to focus on the issue of idling, defined as leaving a car engine running when parked.

National

- 4.7 In January 2019 the Government published its 25 year Clean Air Strategy. This sets out the actions required by government and society as a whole to work towards improved air quality. New legislation is proposed in a number of areas to support this work. The strategy can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-air-strategy-2019> Further details will be included in an Environment Bill due to be published later in the year.
- 4.8 The strategy focuses on the five most damaging air pollutants: ammonia, fine particulate matter, nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide, and non-methane volatile organic compounds. It says that there will be a shift in the focus towards prevention rather than tackling air pollution only when limits are surpassed.
- 4.9 The strategy has strands explaining Government's intentions including:
- Better understanding the problem through monitoring, modelling, data and analytical tools.
 - Setting targets to protect people's health.
 - Improving public awareness of places and times when there is poor air quality.
 - Improving the knowledge of health professionals about the health impact of poor air quality.
 - Protecting the environment.
 - Encouraging innovation in clean air technology.
 - Reducing emissions from all forms of transport – air, sea, rail, car and freight (including the phasing out of petrol and diesel powered vehicles by 2040).
 - Reducing emissions from the home including wood and coal burning.
 - Raising public awareness about chemicals in the home which are a source of pollution – examples are from carpets, upholstery, paint, cleaning materials, fragrance and personal care products.
 - Reducing emissions from farming and industry.
- 4.10 Local government has been a main player in dealing with air pollution locally since before the Clean Air Acts of the 1950s. However, the legislation available has not been enough to prevent poor air quality. The main implications for local authorities of the new legislation and guidance proposed in the strategy include:
- The focus will be to shift from dealing with pollution once it has got to too high towards planning to prevent pollution.
 - Introduction of a local lead authority for air quality who will coordinate actions to improve air quality. Local collaboration between neighbouring authorities and others will be encouraged.
 - Tackling the UK's biggest source of particulate matter – open fires and solid fuel stoves – by banning the sale of wet wood, prohibiting the most-polluting fuels and ensuring that only the cleaner models of stoves are available by 2022. The local authority enforced Smoke Control Area framework, which is deemed to be 'difficult to enforce and out of date' will be updated. It will become easier to declare Smoke Control Areas – areas where there are restrictions on what can be burnt and the kinds of appliances which can be used.
 - Requiring local authorities to create an action plan to reduce exposure of people during Air Pollution Episodes, which are periods when weather conditions cause pollutant concentrations to build up above normal levels.
 - Strengthening guidance for councils to follow when regulating those businesses who need a permit to create industrial emissions; and for licensing taxi and private hire vehicles.

- Strengthening planning guidance on air quality to ensure planning decisions help to drive improvements in air quality.
- Directors of Public Health to lead and inform local decision making to improve air quality more effectively.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Local authorities have a statutory duty to assess air quality in their area and designate Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) if improvements are necessary.

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

Not applicable.

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 – Business Compliance and Licensing Manager Laura Wharton – Public Health Specialist (All Age)
DATE:	8 May 2019
BACKGROUND PAPER:	An update on action to reduce deaths and ill health caused by poor air quality in Blackburn with Darwen and across Lancashire and Cumbria