

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee:	Economy, Transport and Environment Select Committee
Date:	14 November 2017
Title:	Air Pollution and Air Quality
Report From:	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Select Committee on the Government's recently published National Air Quality Plan, its implications for Hampshire and the measures and proposed working arrangements being established to enable the County Council to work effectively with those Hampshire borough councils, particularly where Clean Air Zones (CAZ) have been designated.
- 1.2 This report also provides information on the wider context for tackling air quality issues through the land use planning system.

2. National context

- 2.1 Air quality in the UK has significantly improved over recent decades. Since 1970 sulphur dioxide emissions have decreased by 95%, particulate matter by 73%, and nitrogen oxides by 69%. Total UK emissions of nitrogen oxides fell by a further 19% between 2010 and 2015.
- 2.2 However, air pollution remains a serious public health issue. Evidence collated by Defra, Public Health England and the Local Government Association shows that short-term exposure to high levels of air pollution can cause a range of adverse health effects from exacerbation of asthma to increased hospital admissions and mortality. Defra has estimated that nitrogen dioxide contributes to shortening lives by an average of 5 months. The overall population burden is estimated to be equivalent to nearly 23,500 deaths in the UK per year.
- 2.3 The Government regard further improving air quality, and particularly reducing pollution from nitrogen oxide to be an urgent priority. This follows on from the government announcement in 2011 that conventional car and van sales in the UK would end by 2040, and for almost every car and van on the road to be a zero emission vehicle by 2050.
- 2.4 Earlier this summer, the Government published a ['UK Plan for Tackling Roadside Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations'](#) (July 2017), setting out its ambitions for a better environment and cleaner air and the steps needed to

deliver cleaner air in the shortest possible time, including requiring relevant local authorities to put in place Clean Air Plans by March 2018.

- 2.5 The Plan has been jointly published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Department for Transport (DfT). Its implementation will be led by a Joint Air Quality Unit (JAQU) which has been charged to work with local authorities where Clean Air Zones (CAZ) have been designated.
- 2.6 The primary aim of the Plan is to achieve compliance with EU legislation. This requires nitrogen dioxide concentration to be reduced to no more than an annual mean of 40 micrograms per cubic metre in the shortest possible time but in any event by 2020. It is important to note that in two-tier authority areas, the Government has placed the duty for legal compliance upon the local authorities with responsibility for environmental health ie district or borough councils.
- 2.7 In responding to the consultation on the Plan the County Council was able to highlight the positive interventions it has made to address air quality issues in recent years. However, it also stressed that the ability of the County Council to respond to national policy on air quality at the local level is directly linked to available funding, both in terms of capital allocations through the Local Transport Plan and in terms of revenue, for example to support local bus services. Whilst local interventions are proving to have some impact, this is in the face of rising traffic levels with the County Council struggling to hold the line given its much reduced resources and the competing transport pressures. Further action at national level is required to bring about significant change.

3. Implications for Hampshire

- 3.1 The original National Air Quality Plan, published in 2015, designated five cities as Clean Air Zones where nitrogen dioxide concentrations needed to be tackled. Members may be aware that this included Southampton where the City Council has been developing plans for the introduction of a charging zone covering certain areas of the city.
- 3.2 The latest Plan goes further in designating additional local authorities where nitrogen dioxide exceedances of above 40 milligrams per cubic metre have been identified and which require additional action to achieve legal compliance by 2020. For Hampshire, this includes areas within the boroughs of Fareham, Rushmoor and the New Forest.
- 3.3 In Fareham the roads concerned are the A27 (between Delme Roundabout and Station Roundabout) and the A32 from Quay Street junction to Newgate Lane junction. The road identified in Rushmoor is the A331 and Blackwater Valley Road between the junctions with A31 and M3. The A331 crosses the boundary into Surrey and therefore this is a joint designation with Surrey Heath and Guildford Borough local authorities. The road affected in the New Forest is the A35 at Redbridge and is effectively a result of a minor extension of the Southampton CAZ into the New Forest District Council administrative area. It is worth noting at this stage, primarily due the nature of the roads concerned (bypasses), it is unlikely that a 'charged' CAZ would be a feasible or sensible option.
- 3.4 In order to demonstrate compliance within the 'shortest possible time', the Government has set a challenging timetable for the local authorities to develop

and submit their proposals. Within two-tier authority areas, this will require joint working with the local highway authority, in order to collect evidence, develop well thought out proposals and bid to JAQU for available funding. For the A331, this is further complicated by the road falling within three boroughs and two county council jurisdictions.

- 3.5 In terms of resources, JAQU has designated project officers to support the work of the local authorities and are publishing guidance to support evidence gathering, the preparation of feasibility studies and submission of full CAZ proposals.
- 3.6 The Government has identified a range of funding totalling £2.7 billion to be made available to address air quality issues. In addition £255m has been made available to support local authorities in implementing targeted action to improve air quality. Hampshire County Council will work closely with the relevant borough councils and, where appropriate, with Surrey County Council to ensure that delivery plans are developed that are both realistic and achievable within the timescale set and make best use of available funding opportunities.
- 3.7 Hampshire County Council has recently been successful in securing £6.93m funding from the Government's National Productivity Investment Fund towards the construction of the [next phase of the Eclipse bus rapid transit](#) which would run from Tichborne Way to Rowner Road. This scheme will help to address air quality concerns in the Fareham area by enhancing bus travel as an alternative to car travel on and off the Gosport peninsular, particularly via the A32 which is identified as an air quality concern.
- 3.8 As set out in the recent report to the Executive Member for Environment and Transport ([19th September 2017](#)) the County Council is developing a range of transport strategies which cover most of the main urban areas and will collectively help improve air quality in Hampshire. Examples include the Winchester Movement Strategy, which is currently being developed by the County Council, in conjunction with Winchester City Council, has a specific Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) for Winchester city centre, and the Botley Bypass which will deliver capacity and air quality improvements. Through such means, the County Council is able to prioritise transport intervention packages across the county in a way that supports district and borough council duties to improve air.

4. Wider Air Quality Issues

- 4.1 On 12 October 2017 the Government published its [Clean Growth Strategy](#) which sets out proposals for de-carbonising all sectors of the UK economy through the 2020s. The basic premise being that economic growth can be sustained through exploiting the benefits of developing a low carbon economy, whilst also meeting national and international commitments to tackle climate change.
- 4.2 Hampshire County Council is committed to helping deliver clean air as a basic need for its residents, workforce and visitors.
- 4.3 Increasingly local planning authorities need to consider the impact of traffic on air quality for existing and new communities. This should be an integral part of an assessment in the development of local plans and also in consultation responses by Hampshire County Council as the local highway authority.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 Hampshire County Council takes the issue of air quality seriously in discharging its duties as both the local highway authority and as public health authority and this is integrated into its planning and decision making processes.
- 5.2 The recent Government strategy and funding announcements provide an opportunity to address serious air quality issues for local residents and the travelling public in specific locations. However it also presents a challenge in terms of having adequate resources locally to ensure these potential benefits can be fully realised.
- 5.3 County Council Officers are currently working with relevant borough officers to develop initial joint working arrangements for activities where Clean Air Zones have been designated. As these arrangements advance appropriate political representation will be sought to secure agreement on both the principles and implementation plans.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Strategic Plan**

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	no
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	no

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u> Hampshire Strategic Transport Priorities	<u>Date</u> 9/09/17
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>UK Plan for Tackling Roadside Nitrogen Dioxide</u>	<u>July 2017</u>

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

1.1. The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

1.2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

Impact assessments are undertaken in advance of any formal executive decision. Information about those impact assessments, including equalities and impact on crime and disorder and on climate change, will be set out in the appendices to the relevant decision making reports. This report is an update to the Select Committee and is not proposing any change or decision, therefore impact assessments have not been undertaken.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

2.1. Impact assessments are undertaken in advance of any formal executive decision. Information about those impact assessments, including equalities and impact on crime and disorder and on climate change, will be set out in the appendices to the relevant decision making reports. This report is an update to the Select Committee and is not proposing any change or decision, therefore impact assessments have not been undertaken.

3. Impact on Climate Change:

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?
- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

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