

Meeting date: 7th February 2019
Report to: Cabinet
Subject/report title: Solihull Clean Air Strategy 2019 - 2024
Report from: Councillor Karen Grinsell, CPH Adult Social Care & Health
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Wards affected:

- All Wards | Bickenhill | Blythe | Castle Bromwich | Chelmsley Wood |
 Dorridge/Hockley Heath | Elmdon | Kingshurst/Fordbridge | Knowle |
 Lyndon | Meriden | Olton | Shirley East | Shirley South |
 Shirley West | Silhill | Smith's Wood | St Alphege

Public/private report: Public

Exempt by virtue of paragraph: Select an Exemption paragraph from the 'Quick Parts' drop-down list

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide an update to Cabinet on the process undertaken to develop Solihull's first Clean Air Strategy.
- 1.2 To seek Cabinet approval to endorse the Solihull Clean Air Strategy 2019 – 2024 (attached).
- 1.3 To seek Cabinet approval for the governance and scrutiny processes to oversee delivery of the Strategy.

2. Decision(s) recommended

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves the Solihull Clean Air Strategy 2019 – 2024.
- 2.2 That Cabinet approves a formal launch of the Solihull Clean Air Strategy 2019 – 2024 in February 2019.
- 2.3 That the delegated authority for decision making to ensure delivery of the Solihull Clean Air Strategy, and the accountability sits with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Housing.
- 2.4 That delivery against the action plan be monitored and reviewed by the Economic Development & Managed Growth Scrutiny Board on an annual basis.

3. What is the issue?

- 3.1 The Solihull Clean Air Strategy sets out the case for action and outlines the measures that will be taken over the next five years within the borough of Solihull in order to improve air quality and reduce population exposure to the pollutants known to be the most harmful to human health.
- 3.2 Poor air quality is recognised as a significant public health issue, increasing the risk of some cancers and cardiovascular disease, and potentially exacerbating existing conditions, such as respiratory disorders.
- 3.3 It disproportionately affects those who live in more deprived and congested areas, and those who are more vulnerable to the effects of air pollution such as children, older people, and those with existing medical conditions.
- 3.4 There are many pollutants that can impact on health. Of particular concern are nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}). PM_{2.5} has the highest epidemiological link to health outcomes and is used nationally for the Public Health Outcomes Framework indicator. These particles have the potential to be inhaled deep into the lungs.
- 3.5 The Solihull Clean Air Strategy therefore focuses on actions to reduce the primary air pollutants particulate matter (PM) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) which are both major components of urban air pollution.
- 3.6 Evidence indicates that even slight reductions of PM or NO₂ concentrations below air quality standards are likely to bring additional health benefits.
- 3.7 The Solihull Clean Air Strategy focuses on short, medium and long term actions led by Solihull Council to improve air quality across the borough. The strategy acknowledges that air quality will also be influenced by the wider national and regional strategic context.
- 3.8 The themes identified for action within this strategy are those deemed to have the greatest impact on improving air quality within Solihull. The themes are: Education; Planning; Transport; Environment; Public Messaging & Procurement.
- 3.9 Action plans for each of the themes were developed following consultation workshops to which all elected members were invited to attend.
- 3.10 Each theme is presented within the strategy with a summary of existing action already being taken which will have an impact on reducing air pollution, followed by proposed actions for the next five years. These actions are identified as short, medium and long term actions and will be revised and updated annually as appropriate.
- 3.11 In order to be effective, the Solihull Clean Air Strategy and associated action plan will be reliant on an integrated approach which encompasses behavioural, strategic and infrastructure changes. These will be considered within the wider context of the West Midlands Combined Authority and the Birmingham & Solihull Sustainability and Transformation Partnership.

- 3.12 *It should be noted that the Solihull Clean Air Strategy is independent of the Ministerial Direction requiring Solihull Council to implement measures on the two sections of the A45 previously identified by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) as potentially exceeding roadside NO₂ concentration limits as set out in the national air quality objectives.*
- 3.13 *A paper was considered by Cabinet on 17th January 2019 seeking Cabinet approval to accept funding from DEFRA to deliver the Ministerial Direction over the next 2 years to bring forward compliance through intensive workplace travel planning.*

4. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

- 4.1 Local authorities have a duty under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 to review and assess air quality in their areas and where air quality is poor (where there is or likely to be non-compliance with objectives and there is relevant public exposure) they have a duty to declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and formulate and adopt an action plan which outlines remedial measures to address the problem.
- 4.2 Solihull Council does not have an air quality monitoring station however, since July 2017 diffusion tubes have been used across a number of sites to measure Nitrogen Dioxide levels within the borough. None of these locations exceeded the annual mean NO₂ limit value of 40 µg/m³ (as set out by DEFRA) in 2017/18.
- 4.3 Whilst the Solihull monitoring data does not warrant declaring any part of the borough as an Air Quality Management Area, there is recognition that measures could still be taken to reduce pollution levels across the borough.
- 4.4 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Health therefore recommended that a Clean Air Strategy be developed for the borough containing a wide range of evidence based actions. The Strategy has been developed by the Cabinet Member led Air Quality Steering Group.

5. Reasons for recommending preferred option

- 5.1 The West Midlands Combined Authority have a key role in co-ordinating the actions of individual authorities and mitigating any negative effects that the Birmingham mandatory Clean Air Zone might have on adjoining local authorities, as well as leading on strategic transport projects that benefit the region and reduce emissions. In addition, the Solihull Connected Transport Strategy, the Solihull Connected Cycling and Walking Strategy and Solihull's Green Prospectus recognise the importance of reducing emissions across the borough, and a number of activities are already in place to improve air quality.
- 5.2 By bringing current and proposed actions together into a Solihull Clean Air Strategy & action plan, the authority will be better placed to ensure a coordinated approach and response to air quality in the future.

6. Implications and Considerations

6.1 Delivery of the Council Plan:

How will the options/proposals in this report contribute to the delivery of the Council Plan?
(select which of the below apply and also specify which key programme/s):

- Improve Health and Wellbeing - Even slight reductions of PM or NO2 concentrations below air quality standards are likely to bring additional health benefits to the population.
- Managed Growth -
- Build Stronger Communities -
- Deliver Value -

6.2 Implications for children and young people, vulnerable groups and particular communities:

6.2.1 Air pollution disproportionately affects children, older people and those who live in more deprived and congested areas.

6.2.2 The strategy seeks to address these inequalities through the proposed actions.

6.3 Consultation and Scrutiny:

6.3.1 Two consultation workshops were held in October 2018 to which all elected members were invited to attend to input practical solutions for the action plan.

6.3.2 The strategy and action plan has been presented to a number of meetings for consultation, with minor amendments being made following discussion at the meetings. These were:

Solihull Health & Wellbeing Board on 27th November 2018

Cabinet/Corporate Leadership Team meeting on 29th November 2018

Solihull Council Assistant Directors meeting on 13th December 2018

Economic Development & Managed Growth Scrutiny Board on 17th January 2018

6.3.3 Delivery against the strategy's action plans will be monitored and reviewed by the Economic Development & Managed Growth Scrutiny Board on an annual basis.

6.4 Financial implications:

6.4.1 There will be financial implications associated with delivery of the strategy. Business Cases will be required to secure funding related to individual schemes and interventions. The Air Quality Steering Group will advise and assist the Cabinet Member for Environment and Housing in development of the business cases.

6.5 Legal implications:

Although the Strategy is voluntary, it will enable the Council to continue to meet its statutory duty and be prepared for any future change in central government strategy.

6.5.1 Risk implications:

6.5.2 N/A

6.6 Statutory Equality Duty:

6.6.1 The Council's tool of Fair Treatment Assessment (FTA) has been used to help identify the likely impacts on certain protected groups and whether such impacts disproportionately affect any protected group.

As part of the planned programmes of work, but before implementation, equality considerations will be assessed against all key action areas of the Strategy. This will ensure that any negative impacts across any of the protected groups are addressed.

7. List of appendices referred to

7.1 N/A

8. Background papers used to compile this report

8.1 Draft Solihull Clean Air Strategy 2019 - 2024

9. List of other relevant documents

9.1 N/A