



Environment Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee 1 December 2020

Subject Heading:	Air quality Action Plan – Progress report
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Policy context:	The Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) has been produced to comply with Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 and outlines the actions Havering Council will take to improve air quality in the Borough between 2018 and 2023.
Financial summary:	A budget of £125,000 has been confirmed for the 2020-2021 period, allocated to Havering from Transport for London's (TfL) Local Implementation Plan (LIP) funding stream. The Council has already received £60,018 from that amount and a further £65,000 will arrive in the near future. Funding for future years is expected from the TfL LIP fund subject to successful submissions.

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

- Communities making Havering
- ☒ Places making Havering
- ☒
- Opportunities making Havering
- ☒
- Connections making Havering
- ☒

SUMMARY

This report outlines the progress made on the AQAP (see as appendix no. 1) - a 5 year strategic programme to improve air quality within Havering under the 4 themes of:

- Air quality modelling and monitoring;
- Public Health & awareness raising to encourage smarter travel;
- Emissions from buildings and development;
- Emissions from transport

Appendix 1 (AQAP) & 2 (Annual Status Report of progress reached in 2019) show the progress plan and the actions taken.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Environment Overview and Scrutiny committee note the report.

REPORT DETAIL

The key action areas within the Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) document include:

1. Air quality monitoring and modelling

- 1.1. Monitoring assists with air quality objectives, and provides a baseline by which to measure the effectiveness of the AQAP policies and projects. The implementation of the AQAP is also monitored on ExecView, the Council's project management tool. Monitoring also provides information to Havering's residents, workers and visitors when pollution levels are moderate or high.
- 1.2 Air quality is assessed by determining the levels of gaseous pollutants and particle pollutants in the air. Gaseous pollutants most commonly include nitrogen monoxide (NO) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) – these are collectively referred to as NO_x. Levels of ozone (O₃) can also be measured. Particle pollution refers to fine particles (PM_{2.5}) and coarse particles (PM₁₀). Interactive maps showing pollution levels across London can be seen at <http://www.londonair.org.uk/londonair/nowcast.aspx>, and also https://www.londonair.org.uk/london/asp/publicbulletin.asp?la_id=16&MapType=Google
- 1.3 Modelling air quality is also undertaken by developers as part of the planning requirement for major schemes and developments.

1.4 Levels of NO₂ pollution are measured using diffusion tubes. These are small plastic tubes which are placed above ground level in key monitoring areas e.g. roadside or kerbside. The diffusion tubes contain a steel mesh coated with a special chemical which absorbs NO₂ to give an indication of pollution levels. In 2019, six new air quality diffusion tubes were added to the Council's network, including sites at North Street roundabout in Romford, Station Lane in Hornchurch and the Front Lane/ Brunswick Avenue junction in Upminster. This takes the total number of tubes to 66 around the Borough.

1.5 An interactive map showing the air quality at the different diffusion tube sites across Havering has been developed using Power BI – (an interactive data visualisation tool). In the past, this was used by the Regeneration Team to provide advice on the position of a proposed primary school in Bridge Close, Romford.

1.6 The table below shows NO₂ levels at ten Havering schools between 2014 and 2019. The figures in red for Gidea Park Primary and St. Mary's RC school show NO₂ levels of greater than **40 µg/m³**, which is above the EU Directive Limit. Both of these schools are located on roads with high volumes of traffic. NO₂ levels in 2019 were lower at all school sites compared to 2014 levels, and the EU limit has not been breached since 2017.

Location	NO ₂ Annual Mean Concentration (µg/m ³)					
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Gidea Park Primary School	36.8	37.4	43	41.6	36.6	32.4
Ravensbourne School	25.8	26.6	28.3	30.4	25.3	24.5
Mawney School	32.3	31.4	31.7	31.6	30.8	29.7
Upminster School	35.0	38.2	35.9	35.6	32.2	34.3
Ardleigh Green School	37.7	37.1	37.9	36.7	34.4	31.6
St. Marys School RC	37.2	35.7	40.7	37.7	35.6	31.8
Rainham Village School	32.9	31.3	34.5	33	32.2	30
Parkland School	27.3	28.4	30.7	37.8	25	26.4
Newton's School	29.1	26.8	27.9	28	34.3	26.6
St. Edwards School	26.5	24.3	24.1	24.9	23.4	21.6

2. Public Health & awareness raising to encourage smarter travel

2.1 "Walk to School" week was promoted by fifteen schools in Havering between the 5th and the 9th October 2020, with the event having been delayed from May due to COVID-19. Resources had been purchased using 2019/2020 funding.

2.2 “Bikeability” training was held in September for adults and in schools, along with Dr Bike maintenance sessions. The training and the maintenance sessions were funded through an emergency Department for Transport (DfT) funding stream, with £60k funding having been awarded.

2.3 Havering’s Air Quality Champion, Miles the Mole, visited schools as part of the Theatre in Education programme, through virtual sessions between the 3rd and the 13th of November to educate pupils about air pollution. The number of the participating schools was 20, which is the maximum capacity for this year’s programme.

2.4 Cycle storage facilities were installed at all Council offices and staff buildings in 2019.

2.5 AirTEXT, a free service for the public providing air quality alerts and forecasts by SMS text message, email and voicemail, is being promoted by the Public Health Team to residents of the Borough as well as at school events. In addition to featuring on the Council’s website (at <https://www.havering.gov.uk/airquality>), we ensure that airTEXT is promoted through Havering’s social media platforms a few times per year, particularly in winter. The Pollution and Communications Teams receive daily emails from its operators and on high pollution days the Communications Team put out alerts on social media. In 2019, reminder leaflets about airTEXT were sent out to doctor’s surgeries. The use of the “Air Text” subscription allows residents to sign up to receive alerts about air quality.

2.6 In 2019, Queen’s Hospital received a grant of £3,000 in LIP funding to encourage a higher numbers of staff to commute to work by physically active means (known in other words as “active travel”). In 2019, Business packs were sent out to 500 firms that contain information on Electric Vehicles and cycling (including details about our grant scheme for active travel methods such as walking or cycling to name but a couple). Active Travel grants are currently on pause because of the frozen funding from part of TfL, but it is hoped that we are going to be able to offer them again in the future once the TfL funding position is clarified.

2.7 The Council is continuing to promote Smarter Travel Initiatives to businesses via monthly bulletins, however physical events have been put on hold due to COVID-19. The largest employers in the Borough, Queen’s Hospital and Sapphire Ice and Leisure Centre, both have ongoing Travel Plans. In due course, the Council is planning to resume discussions with the Centre for Engineering and Manufacturing Excellence (CEME) and the North-East London NHS Foundation Trust to support them in the development of travel plans.

2.8 The Council is continuing to promote the TfL STARS (Sustainable Travel: Active, Responsible, Safe) scheme among schools. The accreditation rate for the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school years out of the 88 schools in the

Borough is the following: 37 gold; 1 silver; 9 bronze (47 accredited schools altogether). Surveys were sent out in October 2020 to monitor the modal shifts in transportation methods, and will be repeated in April 2021.

2.9 Idling of vehicles' engines is an area of focus, and the Council has joined the London-wide Anti-Idling campaign (funded by the Mayor's Air Quality Fund) to reduce this kind of unnecessary emissions throughout the whole Borough. The campaign works with trained volunteers and council staff to engage and educate motorists and passers-by about the effects of engine idling on local air quality using a friendly and non-judgemental approach. However, this method is not applicable since March 2020 due to the need for social distancing amidst the COVID-19 pandemic situation. The campaign has been cooperating with schools in Havering to provide them with educational material. Furthermore, the Council is currently preparing its own anti-idling strategy to raise awareness about the dangerous effects of engine idling, and to promote ways to avoid it. The goal is to reach the Council's internal employees, businesses and the wider public with the messages.

3. Reducing emissions from buildings and developments

3.1 New major developments are required to be air quality neutral as a minimum via the Planning process. Progress of this action is assessed annually by monitoring the number of planning applications with these conditions applied.

3.2 The London Borough of Havering, in the same way as all the other parts of Greater London, is a designated Smoke Control Area, and our website provides information to residents and businesses about what this means at <https://www.havering.gov.uk/airquality>. All chimney smoke complaints are investigated to determine if the correct fuels are being used by the resident. If non authorised fuels are being used, our enforcement officers educate the residents on Smoke Control Areas, and for a first complaint provide details from the website of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). If further complaints are made and substantiated, then enforcement action is taken. However, our Food inspectors had a campaign in 2019 visiting all food premises with coal tandoor ovens and oversaw their conversion to gas. This consequently contributed to reducing smoke emissions. This project was partnered with health and safety inspectors who also had concerns due to carbon monoxide emissions from coal tandoor ovens. At the time of writing, there are no wood-fired oven pizza premises in the borough

3.3 Havering has joined the London-wide scheme of the Mayor's Air Quality Fund (MAQF) on Non-Road Mobile Machinery (NRMM) which is managed by LB Merton, to combat air pollution (dust and emissions) at construction sites, through enforcement. All major planning applications are conditioned with the NRMM standard condition where this machinery is to be used

during site works. Havering has been ensuring that dust management plans are conditioned as part of the construction management plan for planning applications, including smaller developments for which air quality neutral conditions may not apply. Conditions are not discharged until satisfactory plans and diagrams are submitted. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has proven a challenge for the inspections, normal visits started again in September. Out of the 49 active machinery on the 19th of November, 2020, 37 were compliant; 3 were non-compliant with exemptions given; 6 were non-compliant (with no clear indication on whether exemptions were given); and 3 were non-compliant and also rejected.

3.4 There is ongoing work towards the Council's new energy strategy that would cover our housing stock of approximately 12,000 properties. It is expected to be launched in April 2021.

3.5 Development projects at Beam Park Way and Romford Ring Road are both progressing, with high quality sustainable transport infrastructure expected to be installed. The Council is assessing the amount of funding required to complete the project. S106 funding has already been made available for Beam Park Way, and a cycleway will be installed with work due to start in 2021 (the technical design yet to be delivered). A funding bid has been submitted for the Romford Ring Road area, but the exact source of financial contribution is not known yet (it could be through either S106 or CIL). For the latter, the final public consultation needs to be completed along with the completion of the planning design phase.

4. Reducing emissions from transport

4.1 TfL is working on reducing tailpipe emissions from bus fleet across London and all Havering buses will comply with EURO VI standards by the end of 2020. For buses, the EURO VI standard means that their NO_x emissions can be up to 95% lower than of the Euro V ones.

4.2 The Transport Planning team is currently looking at Electric Vehicle (EV) charging options at the car park of the Town Hall, and possibly wider opportunities across the Borough. External funding is expected from the next financial year (possibly from external sources such as the Government Office for Low Emission Vehicles or the GLA). An additional carpool scheme is also likely to be deployed in the future.

4.3 School Streets are temporary road closures that operate around the areas of schools in drop-off and pick-up times. The main goal is to stop through traffic passing by (e.g. using the area for rat runs) during these times, since it is a significant source of air pollution and a factor of danger to the children

crossing the streets. Those who breach these measures are fined. In October 2020, the School Streets were introduced in four schools in three locations: Squirrels Heath Infant & Junior School, Branfil Primary School, Hylands Primary School. At the moment, there are no plans for expanding this scheme, although a significant amount of schools have already expressed their interests in participating. Should external funding become available, it may be possible to add more schools, after the careful observation and evaluation of the current schemes.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

5. Financial implications and risks:

5.1 A budget of 125,000 has been confirmed for the 2020/21 period to Havering from Transport for London's (TfL) Local Implementation Plan (LIP) funding. The Council has already received £60,018 from that amount and a further £65,000 will arrive in the near future. Future similar levels of funding will be subject to TfL approval through the LIP on an annual basis. Lack of adequate funding may result in non-delivery of the Air Quality Action Plan. If the Council does not receive adequate funding to deliver the AQAP, there may be financial impacts for continuing to breach the national Air Quality Standards.

6. Legal implications and risks:

6.1 The Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) was approved by Cabinet in June 2018. To monitor the progress, Annual Status Reports have been prepared in 2019 and 2020 to review the progress of the preceding one-year long periods.

6.2 The air quality strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland sets out the way forward for work and planning on air quality issues such as setting the standards and objectives to be achieved. Under Part IV of the Environmental Act 1995 (the Act), local authorities are required to review and assess current and likely future air quality in their areas. Where the required standards and objectives are not being met, or are not likely to be met within a relevant period, they must declare that area an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) which will cover the area where problem is arising or expected. Local authorities must take action with other organisations and agencies to work towards meeting the air quality objectives in the AQMA. This is emphasised in the Government's Clean Air Strategy issued by Defra in 2019.

6.3 The Act places a legal duty on local authorities to undertake periodic assessments and reviews of current and future air quality in their borough and to produce an Air Quality Action Plan once an Air Quality Management

Area has been declared within a Local Authority's boundaries. Since the concentration of air pollutants still exceeds the prescribed objectives on the AQAP the Council must work towards reducing these. Any limitations due to the ongoing pandemic must be identified at an early stage and addressed where possible. The Mayor of London is legally required to review all air quality reports produced by London Boroughs. The Mayor considers the quality of the report and has powers of direction to boroughs when work or reports are not completed satisfactorily and if any objectives are not met within action plans from the Mayor's Air Quality Strategy for London.

7. Human Resources implications and risks:

7.1 There are no HR implications arising from this report. Teams have been consulted prior to the AQAP being published and have signed up to help support or lead on the actions within. A dedicated full time officer has been secured through LIP funding to work solely on managing the AQAP and its projects.

8. Equalities implications and risks:

8.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to:

8.1.1 The need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;

8.1.2 The need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;

8.1.3 Foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

8.2 Note: 'Protected characteristics' are: age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment. The Council is committed to all of the above in the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and the employment of its workforce. In addition, the Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all Havering residents in respect of socio-economics and health determinants.

8.3 Any projects delivered as a result of this decision are expected to have beneficial impacts on protected equality groups within Havering. Young and old residents are disproportionately impacted by poor air quality, as are certain disabilities groups and action to improve air quality in the borough will be of particular benefit to these groups.

8.4 An Equality and Health Impact Assessment (EqHIA) was undertaken for the pre-consultation AQAP and was approved by the Corporate Policy & Diversity Team. No negative impacts on protected groups were identified. A new EqHIA for the post-consultation draft AQAP is not considered necessary because there are no new equality implications.

8.5 EqHIAs were also completed for Mayors Air Quality fund bids.

CONCLUSION

9. Conclusion of the report

9.1 The London Borough of Havering has much more cleaner air than most of the other Boroughs in London in general. However, the concentration of pollutants in the air still exceeds the prescribed objectives on some locations. Therefore, it is essential to do everything we can to reduce the number of pollutants to an acceptable level, where they don't harm the health of anyone who lives, works or studies in Havering.

9.2 The Air Quality Action Plan is part of a wider sustainability and energy efficiency framework, and an essential part of its policy. The recent years has seen a consistent improvement in the Borough regarding the air we breathe, as a result of our sustainability initiatives.

9.3 In the future, the Council aims to further increase our efforts in terms of communication, raising awareness and working together with partners as well as other local authorities for the sake of mutual environmental goals.

9.4 Havering is in a close working relationship with organisations such as the Greater London Assembly and London Councils on multiple sustainability projects and initiatives. The Council is also part of London Council's Transport and Environment Executive Committee, and has formally agreed to find political and practical solutions to reduce the emissions of pollutants as well as carbon in order to improve the wellbeing of all Londoners. The officers of Havering are deeply committed in reaching these objectives.