

To: INFRASTRUCTURE, LAND AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY BOARD

On: 24 JANUARY 2018

Report by: DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITIES

Heading: RENFREWSHIRE'S AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN

1. Summary

- 1.1 Following the introduction of the Environment Act 1995, all local authorities have been required to undertake a regular review and assessment of air quality within their area and submit the findings to the Scottish Government. The Act and associated regulations specify objectives for air quality pollutants which must not be exceeded. Where exceedances are identified, local authorities must declare the area an Air Quality Management Area and thereafter prepare an Air Quality Action Plan containing action measures aimed at improving air quality within the Air Quality Management Area.
- 1.2 There are currently three Air Quality Management Areas within Renfrewshire: the Paisley Town Centre Air Quality Management Area declared in August 2009; and the Johnstone High Street and Renfrew Town Centre Air Quality Management Areas declared in August 2016. The pollutants of concern within each of the areas in Renfrewshire are nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter smaller than 10 microns in diameter (PM₁₀). This is consistent with the position in many town centres across the UK.
- 1.3 Following the declaration of the Johnstone and Renfrew Town Centre Air Quality Management Areas the Council is required to prepare a draft Air Quality Action Plan for these areas and to enter into a statutory consultation process prior to finalising the Air Quality Action Plan. The declaration of the above Air Quality Management Areas was agreed at the previous Environment Policy Board on 24 August 2016.

- 1.4 An Air Quality Action Plan for the Paisley Town Centre Air Quality Management Area was published in 2014 however the majority of measures contained within this are now complete or are ongoing measures. A new draft Renfrewshire Air Quality Action Plan has therefore been developed incorporating all three Air Quality Management Areas superseding and expanding the 2014 Paisley Town Centre Air Quality Action Plan.
 - 1.5 Renfrewshire's Air Quality Annual Progress Report was presented to the Infrastructure, Land and Environment Policy Board on 30 August 2017 and it was noted in the recommendations that the draft Air Quality Action Plan was being developed and that it would be brought back to a future Policy Board for consideration and approval.
 - 1.6 Development of the draft Renfrewshire Air Quality Action Plan has been led by Public Protection within Environment & Communities and has involved internal steering group meetings with contributions from several Council Services including Environment & Communities (Environmental Improvements, Roads and Transport), Development & Housing Services (Development Management, City Deal and Policy & Regeneration) and Finance and Resources (Energy Management). A range of measures have been identified and included within the draft Renfrewshire Air Quality Action Plan aimed at improving air quality within Renfrewshire.
 - 1.7 The Renfrewshire Air Quality Action Plan will be considered a draft document until a statutory consultation exercise has been undertaken in accordance with the Environment Act 1995. It is an extensive technical report that follows statutory guidance in relation to its content and is over 150 pages in length. It is available as a background paper to this report and copies can be made available to Board Members in advance of the Board if required. The key content, priorities and actions contained within the document are summarised in Section 4 of this report.
 - 1.8 Following this Board meeting, the draft Renfrewshire Air Quality Action Plan will be submitted to the Scottish Government and a number of statutory consultees including SEPA, neighbouring Local Authorities, other public bodies as considered appropriate, and bodies representing local business interests for their consideration and comments. The draft Renfrewshire Air Quality Action Plan will then be reviewed to take account of the comments received before being made available for wider consultation with local businesses, community groups and the general public. A report on the final Renfrewshire Air Quality Action Plan will be brought back to a future meeting of the Infrastructure, Land and Environment Policy Board meeting for approval, prior to being published later in 2018.
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2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Infrastructure, Land and Environment Policy Board:

- 2.1 Notes the Draft Renfrewshire Air Quality Action Plan,

- 2.2 Approves Environment & Communities following the statutory process and consulting on the Draft Renfrewshire Air Quality Action Plan with both statutory consultees and wider stakeholders, including members of the public,
 - 2.3 Requests that a further report be brought back to a future meeting of the Infrastructure, Land and Environment Policy Board on completion of the consultation exercise seeking final approval of the Renfrewshire Air Quality Action Plan.
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3. Background

- 3.1 Air Quality is directly related to a number of key Scottish Government National Outcomes and policy priorities, notably those focussed on the environment, sustainable places, environmental impact and healthier lives.
- 3.2 In accordance with the Local Air Quality Management statutory process introduced by the Environment Act 1995, all local authorities are required to undertake a regular review and assessment of air quality within their area and submit their findings to the Scottish Government for approval. The Act and associated regulations specify statutory air quality objective levels for local air quality pollutants which must not be exceeded. Where exceedances are identified, the relevant local authority must declare an Air Quality Management Area and thereafter produce an Air Quality Action Plan which sets out measures aimed at improving air quality.
- 3.3 Environment & Communities has been reviewing air quality in Renfrewshire since 1998 and currently monitors NO₂ concentrations using passive diffusion tubes located throughout Renfrewshire and at three automatic monitors located within Paisley and Renfrew. Two of the automatic monitors also measure PM₁₀ concentrations.
- 3.4 Previous monitoring identified exceedances of these pollutants in various locations across Renfrewshire. As a result there are currently three Air Quality Management Areas within Renfrewshire: the Paisley Town Centre Air Quality Management Area declared August 2009 and the Johnstone High Street and Renfrew Town Centre Air Quality Management Areas declared in August 2016.
- 3.5 The declaration of the Johnstone High Street and Renfrew Town Centre Air Quality Management Areas was approved by the previous Environment Policy Board on 24 August 2016. The report detailed the boundary options for these Air Quality Management Areas with the Board approving the recommendation that two new, discrete Air Quality Management Areas be declared. This option enables a more focused and detailed consideration of the particular issues in each area, compared to a general council wide Air Quality Management Area. Where air quality improvements are achieved this would also allow revocation of each individual area as necessary. The report also acknowledged the requirement to prepare and publish an Air Quality Action Plan for these areas.

- 3.6 The previous Air Quality Action Plan for the Paisley Town Centre Air Quality Management Area was published in 2014. The most significant measures delivered through this plan included improvements to Central Road, Paisley and implementation of a Statutory Quality Bus Partnership Scheme across Paisley town centre. The majority of measures contained within the Paisley Town Centre Air Quality Action Plan are either now complete or are ongoing measures. A new Renfrewshire wide Air Quality Action Plan has therefore been developed incorporating all three Air Quality Management Areas and replacing the 2014 Paisley Town Centre Air Quality Action Plan.

4. Summary of Key Content, Priorities and Actions in the Draft Renfrewshire Air Quality Action Plan

- 4.1 Development of the new Air Quality Action Plan has been led by Environment & Communities, Environmental Improvements section, involving internal steering group meetings with input from several Council Services including Environment & Communities (Environmental Improvements, Roads and Transport), Development & Housing Services (Development Management, City Deals and Policy & Regeneration) and Finance and Resources (Energy Management). Potential action measures have been assessed in terms of their feasibility, cost, air quality benefits and other socio-environmental impacts. A range of measures have been identified which, when the plan is approved following a statutory consultation process, the Council will take forward to secure improvements in air quality within Renfrewshire. Measures include a number that are specific to each Air Quality Management Area, as well as some generic measures which will offer Council wide air quality improvements. The proposed action measures cover various broad topic areas including:

- freight and delivery management
- policy guidance and development control
- promoting low emission transport and travel alternatives
- provision of public information
- transport planning and infrastructure
- traffic management
- vehicle fleet efficiency

- 4.2 Recommended priorities within the draft Renfrewshire Air Quality Action Plan include: tackling emissions from congestion; infrastructure improvements; promoting low emission transport and encouraging active travel alternatives. Some of the more significant measures included within the draft Renfrewshire Air Quality Action Plan to address these priorities are detailed below:

Tackling Emissions from Congestion

- Improvements to the Council's Urban Traffic Control (UTC) system SCOOT which has been installed at numerous traffic signal locations throughout Renfrewshire, including locations within Paisley and Johnstone. The system is designed to automatically minimise traffic queues but has not been subject to

revalidation with current traffic data since its installation in 2008 and is unlikely to be operating at its optimal performance. A review of SCOOT has been identified as an action measure to help improve localised congestion issues within Paisley town centre and Johnstone High Street.

- The development of Town Centre transport strategies including the 'Paisley Transport Strategy' Feasibility Study and the Johnstone Town Centre Transportation Plan. The Paisley Study details potential transport interventions for Paisley to improve connectivity, linkages and accessibility issues in the town centre and deliver environmental and air quality benefits. The Johnstone Town Centre Strategy identifies better traffic management to improve traffic flow along the High Street as a priority. Congestion as a result of traffic signal operations and illegal parking is identified as a significant issue within the Johnstone High St area and therefore a review of yellow line restrictions and traffic signals in this area is also proposed.

Infrastructure Improvements

- The Renfrewshire City Deal projects, specifically the Clyde Waterfront & Renfrew Riverside Project will see the construction of a new bridge across the River Clyde and the Renfrew North Development Road. This new road will provide an alternative route for through traffic to avoid Renfrew Town Centre which will optimise the operation of the local road network, resulting in a reduction in congestion and improved journey time reliability. A cycleway will also be provided on both sides of the Renfrew North Development Road.

Promoting Low Emission Transport

- Continuing improvements to the Council's vehicle fleet efficiency via various means including the vehicle replacement programme and the introduction of electric and alternative fuel vehicles into the Council fleet.
- Further development of the ECO Stars (Efficient and Cleaner Operations) Fleet Recognition Scheme within Renfrewshire. The scheme is a fuel management and operational efficiency support programme aimed at operators of: goods vehicles; vans; buses; taxis and coaches. The scheme's core objective is to encourage commercial fleet operators based (or with significant operations) within Renfrewshire to adopt operational and environmental best practice. Within the three Air Quality Management Areas both Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV's) & congestion contribute to pollutant levels to varying degrees dependant on location. HGVs, despite being in lower numbers compared to Light Goods Vehicles, make a significantly higher contribution to pollutant levels due to the higher levels of emissions produced by these vehicles. Action plan measures targeted at HGVs and buses across all three Air Quality Management Areas are therefore considered beneficial and ECO Stars has a key role to play.

Encouraging active travel alternatives

- Publication of the Renfrewshire Cycling Strategy 2016 – 2025 provides an up to date framework reflecting the increased focus on cycling across Scotland along with aiming to achieve the National targets that have been set for cycling. The strategy contains a Cycling Action Plan which sets out a programme of activities and network interventions for the coming ten years including upgrades and expansion of cycle networks, upgrading the Council's facilities for cyclists and updating the Council's Travel Plan.

- 4.3 The draft Renfrewshire Air Quality Action Plan also considers the Scottish Government's Cleaner Air for Scotland – The Road to a Healthier Future (CAFS) strategy (which was the subject of a report to the Environment Policy Board on 9 November 2016). Cleaner Air For Scotland is a national cross-government strategy which sets out how the Government and its partner organisations e.g. Transport Scotland and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) propose to achieve reductions in air pollution by outlining a series of action measures to be implemented. Whilst the majority of actions will be implemented by the Scottish Government and its partner organisations there are some actions that local authorities are expected to deliver and these include production of corporate travel plans and the encouragement of Freight Quality Partnerships. Where relevant these actions have been included within the draft Renfrewshire Air Quality Action Plan.
- 4.4 The Renfrewshire Air Quality Action Plan will be considered a draft document until statutory consultations have been undertaken in accordance with the Environment Act 1995. The draft Renfrewshire Air Quality Action Plan will be submitted to the Scottish Government and other statutory consultees for consideration following approval by this Policy Board. The draft Renfrewshire Air Quality Action Plan will then be reviewed to take account of comments received from the Board and statutory consultees before being made available for wider consultation with local businesses including local transport companies, community groups, members of the public etc. A final Renfrewshire Air Quality Action Plan will then be brought back to a future meeting of the Infrastructure, Land and Environment Policy Board for approval, prior to being published in 2018.
- 4.5 Once approved, the Renfrewshire Air Quality Action Plan will be a live document which will be updated with amendments and additions in response to future work, including any feasibility studies and further modelling work that is undertaken for some of the action measures. The Renfrewshire Air Quality Action Plan will therefore be subject to an annual review and progress on action measures will be detailed within the statutory Annual Progress Reports submitted to the Scottish Government at the end of June each year. These Annual Progress Reports are also submitted annually for approval, to meetings of this Board.
- 4.6 It is worth noting that whilst three Air Quality Management Areas have been declared in Renfrewshire, the Council's most recent 2017 Annual Progress Report identified no exceedances of air quality objective levels anywhere throughout Renfrewshire based on 2016 data. Within the Paisley Town Centre Air Quality Management Area,

there are now two years of monitoring data with no exceedances recorded. However, whilst there has been a gradual improvement in air quality across Renfrewshire since 2015, there remain some monitoring sites where levels are close to the statutory objectives and monitoring will continue as part of the Council's commitment to continually improving the quality of the air within Renfrewshire.

- 4.7 By developing and implementing the Renfrewshire Air Quality Action Plan, not only is the Council striving to meet statutory air quality objectives but also it is working to secure the improvement of air quality within Renfrewshire as a whole, which is integral to the Council's strategic, Council and Community plans, aiming to create a sustainable Renfrewshire for all to enjoy.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Submission of the draft Renfrewshire Air Quality Action Plan to the Scottish Government and other statutory consultees for comment and approval.
- 5.2 Wider consultation with local businesses including local transport companies, community groups, members of the public etc.
- 5.3 Finalisation of the Renfrewshire Air Quality Action Plan with a report being brought back to a future Infrastructure, Land and Environment Policy Board meeting for approval, prior to publication of the Renfrewshire Air Quality Action Plan later in 2018.
- 5.4 Ongoing monitoring and review of the Renfrewshire Air Quality Action Plan on an annual basis.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** - there may be cost involved in implementing action measures however the Council can apply for funding from the Scottish Government in relation to any measures incorporated within an Air Quality Action Plan. Some of the measures are also funded via other Council budgets/funding sources.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – None
3. **Community / Council Planning**
- Creating a sustainable Renfrewshire for all to enjoy** – improving air quality will have a beneficial impact on Renfrewshire's natural environment.
4. **Legal** - None
5. **Property/Assets** - None

6. **Information Technology** - None
 7. **Equality & Human Rights** - The recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
 8. **Health & Safety** – None
 9. **Procurement** – None
 10. **Risk** – None
 11. **Privacy Impact** – None
 12. **CoSLA Policy Position** – None
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List of Background Papers

- a) Renfrewshire's Local Air Quality Management (Declaration of Air Quality Management Areas & Review of Performance Indicator for Reporting on Air Quality) & Establishment of Environmental Quality Management Areas presented to the Environment Policy Board on 24 August 2016.
- b) Renfrewshire Council Draft Air Quality Action Plan, January 2018.

The foregoing background papers will be retained within Environment & Communities for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting. The contact officer within the service is the Regulatory and Enforcement Manager.

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