

**To: City Executive Board**

**Date: 10<sup>th</sup> July 2013**

**Report of: Head of Environmental Development**

**Title of Report: LOW EMISSION STRATEGY AND AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN**

### **Summary and Recommendations**

**Purpose of report:** To agree the adoption of the Low Emission Strategy; and approve the Draft Air Quality Action Plan for public consultation

**Key decision?** No

**Executive lead member:** Councillor John Tanner

**Policy Framework:** Cleaner Greener Oxford

**Recommendation(s):** To approve:-  
(i) The Low Emission Strategy for adoption; and  
(ii) Draft Air Quality Action Plan for consultation

Appendix 1: Low Emission Strategy

Appendix 2: Air Quality Action Plan

Appendix 3: Risk Assessment

Appendix 4: Equalities Impact Assessment

Appendix 5: Public Consultation Questionnaire

### **Introduction**

1. Oxford City Council has begun to take large strides in developing programmes to respond to climate change by significantly reducing its carbon footprint for its own estate of buildings and vehicles and operations.
2. In the first phase to end March 2012, - *Getting Our House in Order* - measures were implemented to reduce carbon emissions by the target 28% relative to the 2005/06 baseline.

3. In the second phase - *Carbon at the Heart of Everything We Do* – the target is to implement measures for 5% year on year reduction in carbon emissions. This was achieved in the first year of this phase – 2012/13.
4. However, carbon emissions from Oxford City Council estate and operations are only about 1% of those from the city as a whole. It is in this context that the council established Low Carbon Oxford to bring together key local pathfinder organisations, and set an ambitious target for city-wide carbon emissions reduction of 40% by 2020 (relative to 2005 baseline)<sup>1</sup>.
5. It is recognised that in order to make further strides in combatting climate change across the city, it is necessary to consider activities that the Council can influence city-wide.
6. The strategy involves an integrated approach to climate change and air quality management, promoting a consideration of how policies from a number of disciplines can all contribute to a sustainable approach to development in the city.
7. The Oxford Economic Growth Strategy 2013 recognises that growth needs to be managed carefully, in order to ensure it is sustainable and well balanced.
8. In December 2011 CEB approved a Sustainability Strategy for Oxford. The Sustainability Strategy focuses on a number of core themes including Climate change and sustainable energy, and Sustainable transport and air quality. This paper presents two policies linked to the Sustainability Strategy:-
  - Low Emission Strategy and;
  - Air Quality Action Plan
9. The Low Emission Strategy (LES) provides a framework for integrating all of the Council's activities to reduce carbon and air quality related emissions across the City.
10. It will provide the framework to ensure that we maximise the co-benefits of tackling climate change and air quality in an integrated and co-ordinated way.
11. The Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) has been developed in response to the declaration of a city-wide Air Quality Management Area in 2010. This addresses issues relating to sustainable transport and air quality.

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<sup>1</sup> Sustainability Strategy for Oxford (2011-2020), Oxford City Council, 2011. Agreed by CEB 7<sup>th</sup> December 2011 and Council 19<sup>th</sup> December 2011

12. The AQAP involves an integrated approach to managing transport generated emissions impacting on climate change and air quality as promoted by the European Union and central government.

### **Low Emission Strategy**

13. The integrated approach within the Oxford Low Emission Strategy (LES) will fulfil the ambitions expressed by the UK Climate Change Committee for delivering a local low carbon plan<sup>2</sup>.

14. The Low Emission Strategy seeks to reduce the climate change and air quality related emissions generated from activities across the city.

15. Emissions come from three main sectors:

- Domestic activity – essentially emissions from domestic or residential dwellings
- Non-domestic activity – emissions from commercial, industrial, business and public sector premises
- Transport – all transport activity on the road and rail network in the City

16. As a City Council strategy the LES will focus on the measures and policies the City Council is responsible for or where we have clear influence.

17. The range of influence of the Council has is categorised into three main groups:

- City Council's own estate – measures to reduce emissions from the Council own estate defined as the council's own operational buildings, council owned housing and the Council's vehicle fleet;
- Direct influence – measures that will have a direct impact on the emissions of others through regulations, planning policies and procurement practices;
- Indirect influence – through partnerships, advice and leadership.

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<sup>2</sup> How local authorities can reduce emissions and manage climate risks. Committee on Climate Change May 2012

18. The scope of activities is shown in the diagram below.

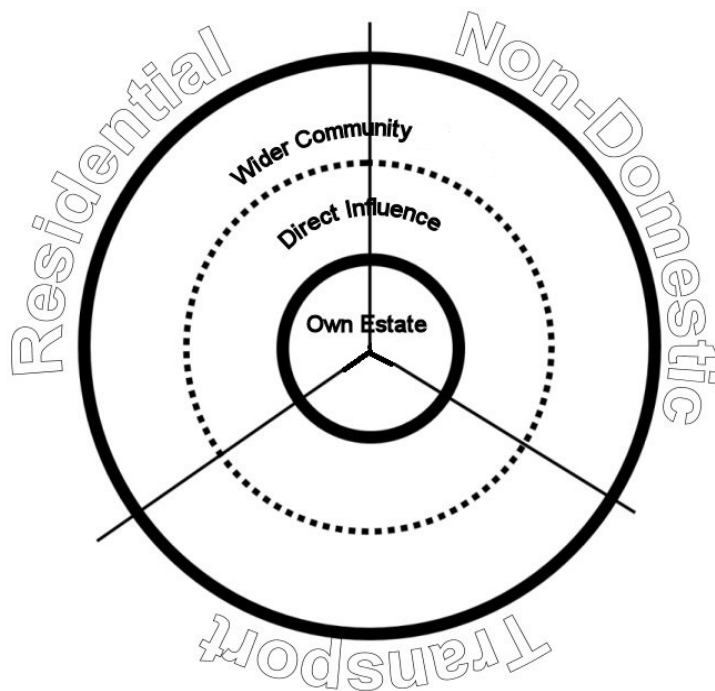


Figure 1: Scope of activities with the LES

### LES Objectives and Targets

19. The objectives of the LES reflect the aspirations of the Sustainability Strategy, as well as national targets and obligations with respect to climate change and air quality. The goal of the LES is :*“To provide an integrated approach to the reduction of emissions of carbon dioxide, oxides of nitrogen and particulate matter in Oxford.”*

20. The overarching target for the LES is to achieve:

***40% reduction in the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions footprint***

***50% reduction in the NO<sub>x</sub> and PM emissions footprint of the city from 2005 to 2020***

## **Implementation of LES Action Plan measures**

21. The implementation of measures will take place through existing programmes and policies owned by specific departments in the Council.
22. Therefore the LES will pull together and track existing activity and help formulate new measures, within existing policies and programmes. The benefit of this approach is that the delivery of measures lies within the programmes and policies of departments responsible for their delivery.

## **Priority Actions - Residential**

23. Priority R1: Improve the average energy efficiency of private sector homes. Our target is to improve the energy efficiency of private sector homes by 25% by 2020.
24. Priority R2: Develop a programme of community renewable energy schemes. We have set a target of a 20% reduction in residential CO<sub>2</sub> emission through the use of renewable energy.
25. Priority R3: Ensure all Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO's) have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) and the average rating is improved. From 2016 the Council will have powers to require energy efficiency improvements.

## **Priority Actions – Non-Domestic**

26. Priority N1: Continued annual reduction in Low Carbon Oxford pathfinder's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Pathfinders have committed themselves to at least, an annual 3% reduction in their carbon footprint.
27. Priority N2: Improve the energy efficiency of OCC leased estate. Explore options for a more rapid roll out of EPC assessments by 2015 and generate improvements to ensure an average EPC rating of "C" by 2020.
28. Priority N3: Planning for low carbon developments.  
The Council will seek to strengthen its activity in this area in particular through:
  - continuing to update planning policy and supporting documents which require low carbon and energy efficient development;
  - supporting the use of renewable or low-carbon technology within qualifying developments, to supply a minimum 20% of their energy needs;
  - promoting the use of district heating and other larger scale renewable energy schemes.

29. Priority N4: Showing leadership with continued reduction of the Council's own carbon footprint

### **Priority Actions – Transport**

30. Priority T1: A City wide sustainable travel plan  
We will set an improvement target for this measure in terms of a reduction in car vehicle-kilometres (vkm) in the city, with complementary targets on walking and cycling trips. These targets will be developed as part of the overall travel plan. However, an indicative target is suggested of a 10% reduction in car vkm by 2020.
31. Priority T2: Emission reduction measures for the freight sector  
The City Council will work closely with the County Council to develop a set of measures to reduce emissions from the freight sector, including:-
- A freight consolidation centre
  - A freight Low Emission Zone
32. Priority T3: Promote zero emission vehicles in the light duty fleet  
Our aim is to facilitate a 10% uptake of electric vehicles in the light duty sector, in both the business and private fleets by 2020.

### **Air Quality Action Plan**

33. Oxford City Council has a duty to “prepare a written plan in pursuit of the achievement of the air quality standards and objectives in the designated Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)<sup>3</sup>”. In addition, as recognised in the City's Low Emission Strategy, there is significant added value in integrated action to reduce air quality related emissions with those for reducing carbon emissions in order to mitigate climate change.
34. The overall objective of the integrated air quality and low carbon transport plan for the whole of the Oxford City area is to:
- "Pursue the achievement of air quality standards and objectives across the city, and reduce carbon emission from transport activity"**
35. A top level target for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, along with NO<sub>x</sub> and PM emissions has already been set within the Low Emission Strategy and reflects the City's Sustainability Strategy and the need to meet air quality objectives.
36. These top level targets are based on emissions from surface transport across the City and are as follows:

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<sup>3</sup> DEFRA Local Air Quality Management. Policy Guidance (PG09)

- a 35% reduction in transport CO<sub>2</sub> emission from 2005 to 2020;
- a 50% reduction in transport NO<sub>x</sub> and PM emissions from 2005 to 2020.

37. In addition to these emission-based targets we also propose a concentration –based air quality target for the AQAP in relation to the national air quality standards and objectives as follows:

- Achieve annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations levels of 45 µg/m<sup>3</sup> by 2020 and 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup> by 2025;

38. In addition, we propose activity-based theme level indicators and targets against which to measure progress within each of the main themes. These targets, set out in the table 1 below, are consistent with those previously set for priority actions in the Low Emission Strategy and other City Council policies.

**Table 1 Theme level targets**

Theme	Indicator	Target
City-wide sustainable travel strategy	Car vehicle-km measured on key routes into the city.  (supporting indicators in bus patronage, and walking and cycling trips)	10% reduction in car vkm by 2020
Support for the uptake of low and zero emission vehicles	% of EV's in the cities light duty fleet (based on DVLA data for vehicles registered in the city)	10% of light duty fleet in the city zero emission (electric) by 2020
Reducing freight emissions	Freight vehicle-km on key routes in the city.  Modelled freight NO <sub>x</sub> emissions in the City	10% reduction in freight vkm in the city by 2020  45% reduction in freight NO <sub>x</sub> emission by 2020
Reducing emissions from Council transport activity	Estimated CO <sub>2</sub> and NO <sub>x</sub> emission from the Councils own transport activities	An annual 5% reduction in CO <sub>2</sub> and NO <sub>x</sub> emissions

### **Monitoring and Assessment**

39. The key to the success of the Air Quality Action Plan will be the ability to monitor and report the progress of measures and assess their impact. This will allow the AQAP to be developed and ensure transparency and accountability.

40. The City Council has commissioned an integrated emissions database to allow the tracking of actions and impacts of its Low Emission Strategy. This database also provides the mechanism to track actions within the Air Quality Action Plan as the main delivery mechanism for transport measures within the LES.

### **Public Consultation**

41. The success of the action plan will depend on consultation with our delivery partners, in particular, Oxfordshire County Council. Discussions with the County have opened, and a formal response is being considered whilst the current LTP is being refreshed.
42. There is a statutory duty to conduct public consultation on the AQAP for between 8-12 weeks. It is proposed to do this between late July and mid-September, enabling a post-consultation report to CEB in November 2013.
43. The questions for public consultation are appended at Appendix 5.

### **Risk**

44. The Low Emission Strategy and Air Quality Action Plan sit within the Council's Sustainability Strategy which has already been risk assessed. The risk assessment for the sustainability strategy has been updated within Appendix 3 to reflect the links to the LES and AQAP.

### **Climate Change / Environmental Impact**

45. The LES and AQAP contain objectives and targets to reduce emissions from a range of the Councils' programmes that are designed to reduce impacts on climate and air pollution.

### **Equalities Impact**

46. There are no likely equality impacts and an equalities impact assessment is attached as Appendix 2.

### **Financial Implications**

47. There are no immediate direct financial implications of the LES, as the LES reflects programmes that are funded within existing budgets. However there is likely to be an extension of programmes to deliver further carbon and emissions reductions in later years, which will all be subject to individual approvals to extend or develop new programmes. The AQAP includes aspirations to work with the County Council to develop further sustainable strategies, including development of infrastructure to promote low emission vehicles, and



development of strategies for reducing freight emissions. All these initiatives require a partnership approach with other Local Authorities and local businesses, and will be the subject of further consideration.

48. The City Executive approved in a report presented to CEB, 4<sup>th</sup> July 2012 to:-  
“Approve the use of more electrically driven vehicles in the council’s vehicle fleet, where viable and cost effective”.

### **Legal Implications**

49. There is no statutory requirement for a Low Emission Strategy.
50. All Local Authorities have a statutory duty to review and assess local air quality, within the programme of Local Air Quality Management established under requirements within Part IV of the Environment Act 1995. There is a statutory requirement upon the Council to develop an Air Quality Action Plan and conduct a Public Consultation, following declaration of the City-wide Air Quality Management Area.

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**List of background papers: None**  
**Version number: Final v7**

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