

To: Scrutiny Committee
Date: 6th September 2018
Report of: Environmental Sustainability Manager
Title of Report: Air Quality Annual Status Report 2017

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	The Scrutiny Committee requested a report to update them on the results of the air quality annual status report for 2017
Key decision:	No
Executive Board Member:	Councillor Tom Hayes, Board Member for Safer, Greener, Environment
Corporate Priority:	Clean and Green Oxford
Policy Framework:	Air Quality Action Plan
Recommendation(s): That the Scrutiny Committee resolves to:	
1. Note and comment on the report	

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Air Quality Annual Status Report 2017

Introduction and background

1. As a local authority, Oxford City Council carries out air quality monitoring because we have a statutory duty to review local air quality in Oxford under Part IV (Sections 80 to 91) and Schedule 11 of the Environment Act 1995.
2. Air pollution is damaging to people's health and we want to ensure we know of the locations where air quality is poor, so that measures can be developed to tackle air pollution.
3. The Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) regime is the name given to the statutory process by which local authorities officially have to monitor, assess and take action to improve local air quality.

4. As part of the LAQM process local authorities are required to annually produce a report, based on a DEFRA issued template, on the status of air quality in the local authority area called an Annual Status Report

Annual Status Report 2017

5. The air quality annual status report for 2017 was published in June 2018. It summarises air quality measurements for 2017 and provides an update on actions to tackle air pollution.
6. Transport is by far the most significant source of emissions of oxides of nitrogen in the city, accounting for 75% of emissions, 17% of emissions come from commercial and residential heating, 6% from industry and 2% from energy production.
7. Air pollution has reduced significantly over the last 10 years (2007-2017). Over this time period, we have seen a 43% decline in NO₂ levels, 17% of which result from the contribution of 2017 alone.
8. The annual mean legal objective for NO₂ is 40 µg^m-³. In 2017, this objective was met for the first time since monitoring began at Oxford Centre Roadside and Oxford High Street automatic monitoring stations. Oxford Centre roadside registered an annual mean for NO₂ of 40 µg^m-³, High Street annual mean was 39 µg^m-³. The results obtained represent an average reduction of NO₂ of 18% at those sites, when compared with the results from 2016.
9. Significant decreases of NO₂ levels were observed in the city centre in 2017, the largest drops being observed along Beaumont Street, George Street, St Clements, Speedwell Street and Castle Street. In 2017, NO₂ pollution levels saw an overall reduction of 23% in the city centre when compared with the figures obtained in 2016.
10. The diffusion tube results show that the annual mean legal objective of 40 µg^m-³ for NO₂ was exceeded at only 4 of 71 monitoring locations in 2017, a reduction of 76% of the amount of sites registering exceedances, when compared with the results obtained in 2016.
11. The annual mean legal limit value for PM₁₀ is 40 µg^m-³. World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines for PM₁₀ however recommend that the annual mean limit for this pollutant should be much lower at only 20 µg^m-³. The PM₁₀ annual mean results obtained from the two automatic monitoring stations (Oxford High Street and St Ebbe's) were of 18 µg^m-³ and 13 µg^m-³ respectively. Those figures show that both legal limit and WHO limit values were achieved in 2017 for this pollutant.
12. PM_{2.5} has a non-mandatory annual mean compliance target of 25 µg^m-³. As for PM₁₀, WHO guidelines are much stricter for this pollutant. Those recommend an annual mean limit value of 10 µg^m-³ for this pollutant. St Ebbe's recorded PM_{2.5}

annual mean of 11 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ in 2017, which shows compliance with the non-mandatory target and it is 1 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ above what is considered to be a safe level by current WHO Guidelines;

Actions to Improve Air Quality

13. The following are actions that Oxford City Council has undertaken since 2016 to improve air quality in the city:

- Launched an educational toolkit for primary and secondary schools in Oxford, which provides science teachers with a range of interactive activities, based both in the classroom and outdoors, to raise awareness about the causes and impacts of air pollution ([link to toolkit](#));
- Launched, a city wide anti-idling campaign in partnership with Friends of the Earth called 'Oxford Air Needs Your Care', particularly focused on tackling idling vehicles around schools during drop off and pick up times ([link to Anti-Idling campaign](#));
- Completed a feasibility study and public consultation to investigate options for the introduction of a Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ) in Oxford city centre starting in 2020, which would then be expanded so that the entire city is covered by 2035. The study was supported by Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council ([link to further information](#));
- Launched the Go Ultra Low Oxford project (GULO), with the aim of increasing uptake of ultra-low emission vehicles through support for individuals and provision of enabling infrastructure ([link to website](#));
- Launched a project for the provision of 19 electric vehicle charging points for the use of hackney carriages and private hire taxis in the city. The scheme also includes a review of licensing requirements for hackney carriage vehicles, in order to drive improvements in emissions standards; an investigation of the business case for investment in ultra-low emissions taxis based on local Oxford duty-cycles; and bringing vehicle manufacturers to Oxford to showcase their vehicles and offer test drives ([link to press release](#));
- Secured £1.7million from the Clean Bus Technology fund (CBTF) for the retrofit of 5 buses to fully electric and 78 to euro VI standard, with expected NO_2 savings of 5.5 tonnes/year and a total of 27.6 tonnes over the lifetime of the project ([link to press release](#));
- Secured nearly £200,000 from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) Air Quality Fund for the purchase of electric delivery vehicles and installation of charging points to address the specific issue of Covered Market deliveries, to help retailers get ready for the introduction of the world's first Zero Emission Zone, to be introduced progressively across the city centre from 2020 ([link to press release](#));

- Ran the “*Test Drive the Future*” annual event to introduce the public to a range of electric vehicles (EVs) and the financial and environmental benefits of going electric. The event provides every year an opportunity to test drive vehicles, and outlines the options for driving an electric car ‘*pay as you go*’ through one of Oxford’s car clubs ([link to press release](#));
- Developed a set of air quality stickers, to be placed in all our monitoring locations, with relevant AQ information and direct link to Oxfordshire’s air quality website, in order to improve communication around air quality with members of the public;
- Supported the ‘School’s Tackling Air Pollution’ (STOP) Project, which provides real-time NO₂ and PM₁₀ air quality monitors for installation in 6 schools;

Further Work

14. The reduction we have seen in air pollution is very good news for everyone living in or visiting Oxford as the air they breathe is now cleaner than any time in the last 10 years. However, despite these improvements there is still much that needs to be done to ensure that Oxford’s air is not just cleaner, but safe to breathe. We need to ensure that the reductions are sustained and that the levels of air pollution we see in the city are indeed safe.

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