

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director (Communities) Introduced by the Executive Member (Economic Development and Public Service Reform))	Executive Cabinet	25 February 2021

## **Chorley Clean Air Strategy**

### **Purpose of the report**

1. To seek approval from the Executive Cabinet to consult upon the proposed draft clean air strategy and secure approval to publish via delegated decision.
2. Upon establishment of a resource to deliver the strategy and in the first instance, complete the options appraisal for a new method of collecting data on air quality, a Member Learning Session on air quality will be delivered.

### **Recommendation(s)**

3. That the Executive Cabinet agree the proposal involving a clean air strategy and formal consultation.
4. That the Executive Member for Early Intervention be given delegated responsibility for approving the final proposal following the period of formal consultation, subject to there being no significant changes to those proposed within this report.

### **Executive summary of report**

5. Chorley Council declared a climate emergency on the 19th November 2019 with the overarching goal of “rendering the borough carbon neutral by the year 2030”, 20 years ahead of the UK target of 2050. This goal means the borough shall produce no net carbon emissions by this date, taking account of actions that have the effect of removing carbon from the environment.
6. To enable this target to be met, the Council need to consider the changes which can be made now to reduce our carbon emissions and to look at improving our business practices and consider the range of help and support we can provide to local business and communities wishing to become greener. The council also need to consider how they can lead by example and what changes can be made quickly to assist in delivering this target.

7. An area we can make change now which will assist in delivering a move towards carbon neutrality is through improving the quality of air across the borough and to help make this happen, a Clean Air Strategy for Chorley has been drafted.
8. The council currently monitor air quality across several different sites in Chorley. The 'Air Quality Status Report (ASR)', is produced annually, this is a requirement of the existing legislative framework set out in the Environment Act 1995.
9. The principle pollutants of concern within Chorley are those mainly associated with traffic, these being Nitrogen Dioxide, and Particulate Matter. The Council monitors Nitrogen Dioxide emissions via a network of passive diffusion tubes against National Air Quality Objectives. Currently there are no Air Quality Management Areas declared within the borough as the Air Quality Objectives are being met.
10. The current national targets are set out below. These are subject to change, and the implementation of the Environment Bill is expected to place more stringent requirements on air quality monitoring, including a need to start monitoring PM 2.5 at significantly lower levels than at present in line with the requirements proposed by the WHO.
  - **PM2.5** 20ug/m<sup>3</sup> ambient air concentration (annual) by 2020 – this has been achieved – commitments to reduce this further by 2020 and 2030
  - **Ammonia** – reduce emissions (from 2005 baseline) by 8 % by 2020 and 16% by 2030
  - **NOx** – aim to reduce NOx (from 2005 baseline) by 55% by 2020 and 73% by 2030. Currently the UK is not meeting the NO<sub>2</sub> objective
  - **Sulphur Dioxide** – Currently UK meet the legal daily & hourly SO<sub>2</sub> in ambient air. Aim to reduce emissions (from 2005 baseline) by 59% by 2020 and 88% by 2030
  - **Non-methane volatile organic compounds (NMVOCs)**- We must reduce emissions of NMVOCs (from 2005 baseline) by 32% by 2020 and 39% by 2030.
11. To look at the issue of air quality in more detail and demonstrate a commitment to improving air quality, the Council should adopt an Air Quality Strategy, to tie in with work at the national level. The aim of this document is to identify where the key areas for intervention are which could help to improve air quality locally and raise awareness to residents and business of their role in improving air quality.
12. The Chorley Clean Air Strategy sets out a clear picture of the current state of air quality and monitoring practices in Chorley, our legal obligations as a council in monitoring air quality and the legislation which governs this. It also highlights what actions we are currently taking to improve air quality and what changes in monitoring practice could be introduced to provide greater understanding of the pollutants influencing our air quality to enable the Council and partners to take effective action to improve the situation.
13. The strategy is to be delivered through a series of proposed actions. The actions identified in the draft strategy are split into 4 broad areas and will require cross service support. The actions are also broken down into short, medium and long-term delivery, with a directorate lead identified for each action identified to ensure they are taken forward and delivered. The focus areas are:

- i. Chorley Council internal actions – these cover a range of changes which could be implemented across the directorates.
- ii. Revision of policy and guidance documents – this cover a range of areas where improvements could be achieved
- iii. Communication, education and engagement – this section covers a wide range of work that the council can look to implement, key to this will be the development of a communication and engagement strategy which will be the mechanism for delivering change; and finally
- iv. Research projects – this section lists the work the council can look to fund to gain a better understanding of the impacts of air quality and what needs to be done to deliver change

<b>Confidential report</b> Please bold as appropriate	Yes	<b>No</b>
--	-----	-----------

<b>Key Decision?</b> Please bold as appropriate	<b>Yes</b>	No
--	------------	----

<b>Reason</b> Please bold as appropriate	1, a change in service provision that impacts upon the service revenue budget by £100,000 or more	2, a contract worth £100,000 or more
	3, a new or unprogrammed capital scheme of £100,000 or more	<b>4, Significant impact in environmental, social or physical terms in two or more wards</b>

**Reasons for recommendation(s)**  
**(If the recommendations are accepted)**

14. As part of the Council’s commitment to achieving carbon neutral status by 2030 the Council needs to consider how to achieve this goal. The adoption of the proposed Clean Air Strategy, which seeks to improve air quality across the borough, would be essential in achieving carbon neutrality, as well as improving health outcomes for the residents of Chorley

**Alternative options considered and rejected**

15. There are no alternatives to the proposal as this would not address the Council’s commitment to look at the issue of air quality in more detail and demonstrate a commitment to improving air quality locally, the respiratory health of the residents of Chorley. In addition, the Council needs to adopt an Air Quality Strategy, to tie in with work at the national level.

## Corporate priorities

16. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all		A strong local economy	
Clean, safe and healthy homes and communities	X	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	X

## Background

17. Air Quality has been identified as a Corporate Priority for the Council and in order to deliver change in this area, this has to be an area in which all directorates play a role by looking at the way they deliver their services or through the strategies/plans they are responsible for producing.
18. The Chorley Clean Air Strategy sets out a clear picture of the current state of air quality and monitoring practices in Chorley, our legal obligations as a council in monitoring air quality and the legislation which governs this. It also highlights what actions we are currently taking to improve air quality and what changes in monitoring practice could be introduced to provide greater understanding of the pollutants influencing our air quality to enable the Council and partners to take effective action to improve the situation.
19. The strategy is to be delivered through a series of proposed actions. The actions identified in the draft strategy are split into 4 broad areas and will require cross service support. The actions are also broken down into short, medium and long-term delivery, with a directorate lead identified for each action identified to ensure they are taken forward and delivered. The focus areas are:
- (i) Chorley Council internal actions – these cover a range of changes which could be implemented across the directorates.
  - (ii) Revision of policy and guidance documents – this covers a range of areas where improvements could be achieved
  - (iii) Communication, education and engagement – this section covers a wide range of work that the council can look to implement, key to this will be the development of a communication and engagement strategy which will be the mechanism for delivering change; and finally
  - (iv) Research projects – this section lists the work the council can look to fund to gain a better understanding of the impacts of air quality and what needs to be done to deliver change.
20. The first proposed action (i) identifies actions which the Council can take and deliver on through the introduction of the Chorley Clean Air Strategy. One of the key aspects of the actions identified here is through introducing a wider programme of monitoring, looking at a broader range of pollutants than currently monitored which in turn will give us better data on the state of air quality across the Borough and identify what actions need to be taken to improve air quality overall. The increased monitoring will enable a better understanding of the main pollutants affecting the area and allow the council to target action more appropriately to tackle the causes of air pollution locally.

21. Public Protection have already been considering changes that can be made in what pollutants the Council monitor (and where) and the type of equipment we use. A review into the range of options for monitoring AQ was undertaken during summer 2020, and this work will now be driven forward to put in place a new monitoring regime for Chorley.
22. The options for monitoring require the purchase of new equipment and training for staff in the use of it. Depending on the options taken forward, it will also require officers to undertake the monitoring themselves, as well as dealing with the subsequent technical analysis of the data, rather than just relying on the passive diffusion tubes currently used. The results of this work will help support further actions in the overall strategy including future monitoring options and to support the work of planning in developing new policy and in determining planning applications. The changes proposed are therefore expected to require a specific resource allocation for air quality to ensure this happens.
23. The Clean Air Strategy advocates that the Council leads by example and looks at implementing measures affecting the way we operate our business that can have a direct impact on air quality, such as moving council fleet vehicles to electric and promoting use of sustainable travel by employees as well as looking at how we can make our buildings more energy efficient.
24. The Strategy will also look at ways to promote more sustainable development and incorporate air quality requirements into policy development for the council through the new Local Plan, as well as working with partners to identify how to ensure infrastructure requirements promote sustainable travel.
25. The strategy has a number of actions (ii) looking at changes we can make through revision and/or development of new policy and guidance around air quality to ensure that teams are working to deliver national requirements and have systems which assist officers in undertaking their role and delivering service improvements which can directly impact on air quality. Actions proposed include guidance on code of practice for construction and demolition practices, where changes can have an impact of reducing particulates (dust) from this area of working for example.
26. Other actions look at role of officers in monitoring buildings for compliance with energy efficiency standards, as well as considering what measures we can take to encourage greener vehicles for private hire transport options.
27. The third area (iii) of focus is through the development of a communication and engagement strategy to help delivery changes in air quality. This document will require resources from across the council to deliver support to local business and communities, as well as engaging with our schools and reaching out to communities.
28. The purpose of the communication strategy is to identify how we can effectively engage with residents and businesses, raising awareness and better educating people how to reduce air pollution and in what way small actions can have a big impact. The level of detail to be included will depend on the amount of resource available from each directorate to implement it. Without support across all service areas, the strategy would not be able to deliver all its aspirations.

29. The last area (iv) of emphasis is on research, To understand how certain sectors work and what can be done to improve emissions, more needs to be understood about what the levels are, and what may be needed to improve the current situation. A key area of focus is farming and as an area which has significant investment in agriculture, this is an issue we need to understand better. Farming communities are willing to make changes to support the climate change agenda, but need support in doing so, be it through identifying grants to enable greener working practices, to linking them up with environmental groups to encourage biodiversity improvements on their land which in turn help promote cleaner air.
30. Research in this and other sectors will help us understand more the issues facing business and what the impact of these sectors are on the ability of Chorley in delivering on the target of carbon neutrality by 2030 and ensure improvement in air quality in rural as well as urban environments.
31. Updates on the delivery of the Clean Air Strategy will be reported regularly to the Climate Change Working Group.

### Implications of report

32. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

If the Council did not move forward and adopt a Clean Air Strategy the commitment made of achieving carbon neutral status by 2030 may not be met. These risks are addressed within the body of the report

Finance	X	Customer Services	
Human Resources	X	Equality and Diversity	
Legal		Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area		Policy and Communications	

### Risk

A risk register has been completed	Yes	<b>No</b>
------------------------------------	-----	-----------

### Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

33. The direct financial implications of any decisions impacted by this strategy will be detailed within the relevant reports as they come forward.

### Comments of the Monitoring Officer

34. No comments.

Jennifer Mullin  
Director of Communities

<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Ext</b>	<b>Date</b>
Stuart Oakley	5727	10/02/21