

THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

Title of meeting: Cabinet Meeting

Subject: Air Quality Quarterly Report

Date of meeting: 28 June 2022

Report by: Tristan Samuels - Director of Regeneration

Wards affected: All wards

1. Requested by

- 1.1. Members have requested an update on the performance of the Portsmouth Clean Air Zone (CAZ) and the work being undertaken across the Council to improve air quality.
- 1.2. This report details the CAZ performance metrics between November 2021 and February 2022 and provides an up-to-date assessment of the cross-service works being undertaken to address poor air quality.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. Poor air quality is the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK. Every year, between 28,000-36,000 deaths in the UK are thought to be caused by air pollution. Studies have shown that long-term exposure reduces life expectancy and exacerbates pre-existing conditions such as respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. Short-term exposure to elevated levels of air pollution can also cause a range of effects including exacerbation of asthma, effects on lung function, increases in respiratory and cardiovascular hospital admissions and mortality.
- 2.2. Annual reporting of the five Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) locations has shown that in most locations there has been a slow downward trend in NO₂ since their designation, as a result of actions undertaken by PCC and a renewing of vehicles to cleaner models, alongside personal choices made by residents to travel in more sustainable ways. However, despite the decline, air quality is still poor in many parts of the city.
- 2.3. Due to the danger to human health that poor air quality poses, Portsmouth are legally obliged to bring levels of NO₂ down to within legal limits in the shortest

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possible time. This meant that PCC had to take stringent actions, such as introducing the Clean Air Zone and its complimentary measures.

- 2.4. The Portsmouth Clean Air Zone (CAZ) was launched on the 29th November 2021 in order to bring down levels of dangerous pollutants to within legal limits in the shortest possible time. As a Class B+ CAZ, it charges older, more polluting heavy goods vehicles, coaches, buses, taxis, and private hire vehicles.
- 2.5. The CAZ will need to be in place until compliance with legal limits have been met and have been proved to be permanent. Portsmouth will need to have been compliant with legal limits for at least two years and provide demonstratable evidence in the success of the measures to improve air quality, such that the removal of the Clean Air Zone will not lead to a reversal of these. Central Government are developing a framework for Clean Air Zone decommissioning that Portsmouth will work within.
- 2.6. Appendix A provides a summary of the work undertaken in the first quarter of CAZ operation (November 29th 2021 - February 28th 2022), highlighting the key schemes looking to benefit air quality in the city. It also reports on some of the key metrics relating to the launch of the CAZ, such as the compliancy rate and the number of *Penalty Charge Notices issued*.
- 2.7. It also reports on the success of the Council in engaging with businesses and successfully distributing the Clean Air Fund to upgrade or replace many of the most polluting vehicles. Since 2019, the Council have supported 69 Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV's), 162 buses and coaches, and 119 taxi and private hire vehicle upgrades. Extensive work has also been undertaken with the taxi and private hire community to support those upgrading their vehicles, especially in the case of Wheelchair Accessible Taxi's that provide essential services to residents.
- 2.8. In addition to the CAZ, other measures were introduced in the Local Air Quality Plan in order to bring Portsmouth into compliance with legal limits of harmful pollutants. These included changes to taxi licensing policy and traffic signal changes at Alfred Road.
- 2.9. To further reduce the impact of poor air quality on residents, a few other projects and schemes are taking place across the Council to reduce emissions. For example, the Refuse Collection Fleet has swapped its fuel types for one that produces up to 30% less nitrogen dioxide and up to 85% less particulate matter. There is also ongoing work to provide electric car charging points for both residents and taxis, enabling the switch the electric fuel types, alongside the securing of £6.5 million for Zero Emission Bus Regional Area grant (ZEBRA), in partnership with Hampshire County Council and First Solent.

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3. Information Requested

- 3.1. Please note, that for future reports, further monitoring data will be provided, and this will include patterns and changes to air quality in Portsmouth. Due to air quality being monitored annually, this interim report includes forecast data from the Air Quality modelling, and will be supplemented with the 2021 Air Quality Annual Status Report data in a future report. Changes to air quality are monitored annually and so the results for 2022 will not be released and reported until 2023.
- 3.2. Future iterations will also monitor traffic on routes external to the Clean Air Zone. This monitoring is already taking place, but the data needs to be thoroughly analysed to ensure its robustness on an annual basis before being released.

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Signed by (Director)

Appendices:

Appendix A - Portsmouth Air Quality Quarterly Review

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location