



<b>Subject:</b>	Committee Update on Local Air Quality Management Matters
<b>Date:</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> October 2021.
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Siobhan Toland Director of City Services, City and Neighbourhood Services Department
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<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sometime in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	The Committee will be aware that a number of ambient air quality projects are presently being progressed by officers from the City and Neighbourhood Services Department, including development of new 5-year Air Quality Action Plan for the city and completion of a detailed assessment for nitrogen dioxide (NO <sub>2</sub> ) and fine particulate matter (PM <sub>2.5</sub> ).
1.2	This report serves to provide a further update to the Committee on progress with these two projects.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is requested to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Note the contents of this update report.</li></ul>

3.0	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<p><b>Key Issues.</b></p> <p><b>Air Quality Action Plan.</b></p> <p>Members will be aware that the Committee has already received a number of update reports during 2021, concerning progress with development of a new 5-year Air Quality Action Plan for Belfast 2021-2026, including at the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9<sup>th</sup> February 2021 Committee meeting, wherein the Committee considered the various actions proposed by the council and our Air Quality Action Plan Steering Group and Competent Authority partners for inclusion within the new Action Plan, to address the remaining nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) hotspots within our four Air Quality Management Areas and to improve ambient air quality generally for the city. The Committee will be aware that our Air Quality Management Areas have been declared for a combination of exceedances of annual mean and hourly objectives for nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), associated principally with road transport emissions.</li> <li>• 13<sup>th</sup> April 2021 Committee meeting, wherein Members considered proposals for public consultation and engagement on the new Air Quality Action Plan.</li> </ul>
3.2	<p>The Committee is advised that as part of the now completed consultation and engagement process, the council undertook a 12-week public consultation exercise into a draft version of the new Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 from the 12<sup>th</sup> May to 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2021 inclusive. The consultation process comprised a detailed online questionnaire, delivered via the council's 'Your say Belfast' consultation hub, and the provision of four online information events to equality groups that had been identified by the council. As a consequence of the continuing Covid 19 pandemic, no face-to-face consultation events were held. The online questionnaire was augmented by a non-technical summary of the Action Plan and an Equality Screening and a Rural Needs Assessment. The consultation exercise was publicised via the council's various social media channels, through email and via the Summer 2021 edition of the Belfast City Council 'City Matters' residents' magazine, which is provided to every Belfast household. Consultation emails were also sent to those interest groups specifically identified for engagement by the council's People and Communities Committee, including, adjoining councils; the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust; the British Heart and Lung Foundation; Belfast Healthy Cities; Belfast Chamber of Commerce; Friends of the Earth; Belfast Taxis and Trade Unions, etc. The consultation process was designed to achieve the statutory consultation requirements detailed within, 'Schedule 2 Air Quality: Supplemental Provisions. Consultation Requirements' of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002.</p>

3.3	<p>The Committee will be aware that the Air Quality Action Plan proposes various measures to further address ambient concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), grouped under the broad themes of public transport, active travel, sustainable energy and fuels, and monitoring and reporting of ambient air quality. Consultees were therefore invited to give their views on the importance of taking forward the various Air Quality Action Plan measures proposed under these themes. We then invited consultees to provide comments on the proposed measures, to provide recommendations for additional measures or actions to be included within the final Action Plan, to provide views on the current state of ambient air quality within Belfast, to comment on any lifestyle changes that consultees would themselves be prepared to make in order to further improve ambient air quality, to indicate their support for the actions contained within the Action Plan and to provide any additional comments. We received 65 responses from individuals and specific interest groups at the conclusion of the consultation process.</p>
3.4	<p>For the purpose of communicating the outcome of the consultation process to our Air Quality Action Plan Steering Group and Competent Authority partners, we have circulated a summary of the consultation responses and recommendations received and we will also be providing a detailed statistical analysis of the consultation process as a separate report. In addition, we have invited Steering Group members and Competent Authorities to consider the outcome of the consultation process and to indicate whether they wish to amend or augment the Action Plan measures that they have proposed, in light of the consultation process. Their responses and any amendments will be captured in an Appendix to the Air Quality Action Plan. It is the council's intention that subject to fulfilling all general data protection requirements, a formal consultation report will be published as an addendum to the final Air Quality Action Plan.</p>
3.5	<p>The Committee is advised concerning some of the headline statistics from the consultation process, e.g. around 75% of the respondents live, work or study in Belfast; around 85% of respondents strongly agree and a further 10% agree with the aims of the Action Plan; after reading the draft Air Quality Action Plan, around 65% of respondents indicated that they are more concerned about ambient air quality within Belfast and; around 38% of respondents strongly agree and a further 51% agree that the actions proposed within the Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 will improve ambient air quality within Belfast City.</p>
3.6	<p>Members will be aware that the Air Quality Action Plan is subject to technical appraisal by DAERA's independent assessors. The council's air quality officers would therefore propose, that subject to final comments, concerning the consultation process, being received from the Air Quality Action Plan Steering Group members and Competent Authorities, and any</p>

necessary revisions to the Action Plan being completed, the completed Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 for Belfast will be presented to the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021 hybrid meeting of the People and Communities Committee, with a view to the Committee accepting the Action Plan and recommending that it be forwarded to the independent assessors for appraisal, and for subsequent implementation by the Air Quality Action Plan Steering Group.

**Detailed assessment for nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>).**

3.7 At the 11<sup>th</sup> May 2021 remote meeting of the Committee, Members received an update concerning progress with the 'Detailed assessment for nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>)', together with a presentation from AECOM consultants and council officers regarding the proposed installation of additional Zephyr ambient monitoring equipment. AECOM have since completed installation of these additional Zephyr monitors and are now collating particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>) and nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) monitoring data. At this time, the monitoring data remains provisional in nature and subject to various quality assurance and quality control procedures before it can be considered ratified and reportable. Intercomparison work is also to be undertaken by AECOM to compare the Zephyr monitoring data with data from the council's automatic reference method analysers, installed at our roadside and urban background monitoring sites, in order to derive appropriate scaling factors. The ratified monitoring data will then be used to augment existing ambient air quality monitoring undertaken by the council across the city and in calibrating the atmospheric dispersion modelling, to be undertaken by AECOM as a component of the detailed assessment project. Members will be aware that current targets for fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) are expressed as annual mean values and so air quality monitoring data must be collected over an appropriate time period to allow comparison with these annual targets. In addition, our new Action Plan is tasked with delivering the annual mean objective for nitrogen dioxide.

3.8 AECOM are currently in the process of sourcing activity and emissions data to be used in the development of an emissions inventory for Belfast and as an input to the atmospheric dispersion modelling software. As the principal focus of our Air Quality Management Areas and our new Air Quality Action Plan is on achieving the nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) objectives, associated principally with road transport emissions, AECOM have therefore been in recent contact with DfI Roads concerning obtaining detailed traffic census and traffic modelling data for the Belfast area.

3.9 In addition, AECOM will shortly be undertaking a series of automatic number plate recognition surveys (ANPR) for a number of arterial transport routes and residential locations across the city. These ANPR surveys will identify the registration numbers of motor vehicles

	<p>passing the various survey locations, which can then be compared with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA) registration database to obtain the vehicle type, fuel type and year of first registration, etc. This vehicle specific data can then be used to derive a more accurate local road fleet composition and more representative road transport emissions data for the Belfast area, to augment and refine existing information published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Devolved Administrations via the Emissions Factor Toolkit (currently version - v10.1, August 2020). The more accurate road transport fleet composition and emissions data will be used to refine inputs to the atmospheric dispersion modelling software and to help inform any subsequent source apportionment studies, undertaken for identified areas of objective exceedance.</p> <p>3.10 The Committee is reminded that the detailed assessment for nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) is scheduled to conclude and report in early 2023. Further periodic reports will however be provided to Committee during the intervening time to advise of progress with major project components.</p> <p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications.</u></p> <p>3.11 The Committee is further reminded that funding to support delivery of the detailed assessment project has been secured from the DAERA Local Air Quality Management grant scheme for the 2021-2022 grant period.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessments</u></p> <p>3.12 An Equality Screening and a Rural Needs Assessment have been completed for the draft Air Quality Action Plan for Belfast 2021-2026. These documents currently remain available to review on the council's Your Say consultation platform, via the following web link:  <a href="https://yoursay.belfastcity.gov.uk/air-quality">https://yoursay.belfastcity.gov.uk/air-quality</a></p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	None.