

Air Quality Action Plan Revision

Consultation

Background

Air quality across Warrington generally is considered good and meets the national standards set for certain pollutants. There are though some areas close to major roads that exceed national standards for nitrogen dioxide. These areas have been designated as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). The Council produces annual status reports on air quality. The trend is that air quality is improving but there still remains areas of concern and further measures are required to improve air quality.

The Council published an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) in November 2018. The Plan set out 17 measures to try to improve air quality within current Air Quality Management Areas and across the wider borough. Whilst the AQAP is aimed at primarily reducing nitrogen dioxide, measures are also included to reduce PM2.5 concentrations. Although not a legal requirement, the Council also wishes to consider indoor air quality therefore has included this as a proposed new measure.

A number of those measures have now been completed.

The Council is now proposing to revise the AQAP to include additional measures to replace those completed.

This consultation is to seek views on the new actions proposed and for any additional measures that the Council could consider.

The current AQAP, the latest air quality ASRs and an interactive map showing the AQMAs can be viewed at www.warrington.gov.uk/airquality

1 Proposed measures to be included within the revised AQAP

The following 16 measures are proposed to be taken forward as actions within the revised AQAP.

Action Plan Measure

- | | |
|----|----------------------------------|
| 1 | Local Plan Review |
| 2 | Environmental Protection SPD |
| 3 | Electric Taxi Strategy |
| 4 | Last Mile Project |
| 5 | Public Advice on wood burning |
| 6 | Bus engine retrofit |
| 7 | On Street EV charging points |
| 8 | Chester Road cycle Promenade |
| 9 | Burtonwood/Omega shared use path |
| 10 | Council Pool cars improvement |
| 11 | Centre Park Link Road |
| 12 | Western Link Road |
| 13 | Schools group |
| 14 | Temporary Play Streets |
| 15 | PM2.5 monitoring |
| 16 | Indoor Air Quality |

2 Review of the completed measures

Eight of the seventeen measures in the current AQAP are now completed and are proposed to be removed. Some of the actions though, will remain ongoing.

1. Local Transport Plan (LTP4)

The LTP4 was adopted as Council Policy in December 2019 and included air quality across the chapters. For further information please see www.warrington.gov.uk/LTP4

2. Council Procurement Policies

The Council adopted a new Procurement Strategy in January 2019. This sets out a series of questions for contracts to consider how they will minimise air emissions

3. Smoke Control Area Review

The majority of Warrington is designated as Smoke Control Areas. This places certain restrictions and controls for burning to control smoke from domestic chimneys. The action was proposed to consider including the whole borough within the designation. Since the AQAP was published, central Government has proposed, within the Environment Bill, to introduce measures across England and Wales to the same standard as Smoke Control Areas. This action has therefore not be proceeded with as will be super-ceded by national legislation.

4. Highways England/Transport for the North Working Group

The Council now meets quarterly with Highways England where air quality is a standing agenda item. Highways England though have confirmed that Warrington is not a priority area to improve emissions from the motorway section.

The Council continues to engage with Transport for the North at a number of levels to improve transport connections to include improvements to air quality.

5. Warrington Intelligent Transport System

This project has been set up on the A49 Winwick Road to improve flows. This has seen a journey time saving of 30% in peak times, a 22% reduction in delays and a 13% increase in average speed.

6. Warrington West rail station

The new station opened in December 2019 and will encourage people to use public transport rather than private. The car park for the station is fitted with enclosed bike storage facilities and has 12 electric vehicle charging points.

7. Clean Air Zone Study

This was carried out as part of the Transformational Projects Study in 2019 and concluded that at this time a Clean Air Zone would not be suitable for Warrington and would not provide the air quality benefits required.

8. Air Quality Webpages

The webpage was revamped in 2019 with additional information on air quality issues. This has seen an increase of 200% in visitors to the webpage. The webpages will continue to be regularly reviewed and updated when necessary.

3 Review of current measures that are proposed to remain

These nine measures are yet to be completed therefore are proposed to remain in the AQAP.

1. Local Plan Review

A borough wide air quality assessment has been completed to assess air quality impacts for the lifetime of the plan. Air quality has been included where appropriate within the plan. The plan is due to be submitted for examination in 2021. Depending upon the outcome of the examination and the formal adoption of the plan, this measure will remain in the AQAP.

2. Environmental Protection SPD

The current SPD was published in 2015 and is due to be updated in line with the emerging Local Plan to align with those policies. This will contain updated information for developers on how to consider air quality impacts from their developments.

3. Chester Road cycle promenade

This will be a new upgraded shared use footway linking into the town centre to encourage cycling and walking. Works started in 2020 and are due to be completed in 2021.

4. Burtonwood/Omega shared use footpath

This will be a new shared footpath to a major employment area to encourage cycling and walking. Initial work has been started and is due to be completed in 2021.

5. Centre Park Link Road

A new bridge over the river Mersey and road is being built to help alleviate traffic congestion at the town centre Bridgefoot area. Work has begun and is expected to be completed in 2021.

6. Western Link Road

This is a significant new road designed to alleviate traffic congestion in the town centre. The road is expected to be completed by 2026. Additional air quality monitoring is being carried out to assess the impacts from the scheme.

7. Schools group

Air quality monitoring has been carried out at one school to assess impacts. Air Quality Teaching packs are on the Council website to use. Work during 2021 is to include anti-idling campaigns outside schools.

8. Temporary Play Streets

A successful resident led trial was held in 2019. This is proposed to be expanded to be available to apply for online and to consider to be used by schools.

9. Particulate PM2.5 monitoring

Particulates PM2.5 and PM10 are currently measured at one site within Warrington. This is now being expanded to two additional roadside sites in 2020/21 to gain more evidence of PM2.5 levels in Warrington.

4 Proposed new measures

The Council is proposing an additional 7 measures to be included.

1. Electric Taxi Strategy

A strategy shall be produce to set out policies to encourage the uptake of electric vehicles within the taxi sector including private hire and hackney licences. This is to include a review of current fleet, suitable electric vehicles and specific charging network requirement.

2. Bus engine retrofit

To consider retro-fitting abatement solutions to the current Warrington's Own Buses to reduce nitrogen dioxide emissions in current AQMAs. This would be the equivalent of reducing emissions from a Euro 3 engine standard to a new Euro 6.

3. On-street electric vehicle charging points

Linked to the Council's Low Emission Vehicle, the Council will consider appropriate on street locations for chargers for electric vehicles.

4. Public advice for wood burning

There has been a rapid growth in wood burning stoves being installed. Even when meeting smoke control legislation there is still some pollution and an odour problem can be caused. To reduce this, advice will be provided via the Council website for burning at domestic properties to reduce pollution as far as possible.

5. Council Electric Pool Cars

The Council currently operates a fleet of diesel powered pool vehicles for staff to use for work purposes. It will be considered how best to replace these with electric vehicles.

6. Town centre walking and cycling routes

The Last Mile project will look at creating cycle and walking routes into the town centre to encourage greater active travel

7. Indoor Air Quality

Whilst the focus for the AQAP is on improving outdoor air quality, there is growing concern over indoor air quality as acknowledged in the national Air Quality Strategy. The Council will create a webpage to provide public information on reducing indoor air pollution.

5 Consultation

The changes to the AQAP are open for public consultation until the 31 January 2021. If you wish to make any comments on the proposed new measures, or to make alternative suggestions, then this can be done either by email to

Environmental.health@warrington.gov.uk

or by post to: Air Quality Officer
Environmental Protection
Families and Wellbeing
Warrington Borough Council
East Annex
Town Hall
Warrington
WA1 1UH