

		<b>PSEG/02/19</b> <b>AGENDA ITEM 5</b>
<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	<b>17 January 2018</b>	
<b>Report title:</b>	<b>Air Quality Task &amp; Finish Report</b>	
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### **Background**

In December 2017 the following motion was adopted by Full Council:

*This Council notes that the Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny*

*Committee is undertaking a review of air quality issues and asks that Committee to*

*consider the following suggestions and make appropriate recommendations to the Cabinet Member, as part of the review:*

- 1. Adopt an overarching Council Air Quality Improvement Policy.*
- 2. Ensure that services provided or commissioned by the Council are conducted with proper regard to their effects on air quality, and that contractors abide by the provisions of the overarching policy.*
- 3. Phase out the payment of expenses to those driving the most polluting vehicles, and enhance cycle and car-sharing mileage provision*
- 4. Encourage Her Majesty's Government to institute a scrappage scheme for the most polluting private and commercial vehicles.*
- 5. Ensure that the Council's comments on any Local Plan require public transport infrastructure, modal shift, and electric vehicle facilities be a central part of that Plan.*
- 6. Enter dialogue with Her Majesty's Government and Local Planning Authorities to ensure that reduction of air pollution is properly considered in planning determination.*
- 7. Support inter-urban and rural cycling and walking (including PROW) so as to provide safer off-road routes.*

Following a briefing to the whole committee at the May Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee it was agreed that the committee would embark on a piece of task and finish work. This would be split into three distinct strands of investigation:

- Public Health and Technology
- Highways & Transportation
- Planning

Membership of the three Committees was agreed as below:

<b>Public Health and Technology</b>	<b>Highways and Transportation</b>	<b>Planning</b>
Cllr Ian Grundy (Chairman) Cllr Julie Young Cllr Wendy Schmitt Cllr Tony Ball Cllr Bob Massey	Cllr Chris Pond (Chairman) Cllr Stephen Kendall Cllr Ron Pratt Cllr Paul Honeywood	Cllr Stephen Hillier (Chairman) Cllr Barry Aspinell Cllr Terry Cutmore

Evidence gathering for all three subgroups took place between September and December 2018. This is detailed in the draft report (to be distributed following agenda publication).

### **Summary of Recommendations**

A summary of report recommendations can be found below:

#### **Planning:**

1. Essex Design Guide (EDG) – the ECC planning team should work with the EPOA to include a section on air quality and environmental factors as part of online ‘front page’. The EPOA should strongly encourage each district to adopt the EDG as supplementary planning guidance.
2. ECC should use its chairmanship of the EPOA to work more closely generally with district partners to ensure that air quality remains a constant priority
3. A further conversation around how we can use innovative design to encourage modal shifts towards sustainable transport (cycling/walking) is required - this should take place at a later Place Services & Economic Growth full committee meeting. This should also include conversations around congestion charges, local economic sustainability and workplace parking levies.
4. Essex County Council need to be considering the environmental impact of local plans before sign off, and should oppose aspects of plans which will worsen air quality.
5. Clear focus needs to be given to Garden Communities projects and how sustainable transport provision and green infrastructure are being incorporated into plans.

## **Highways/Transport:**

6. ECC should be working with Parking Partnerships to explore how surpluses can better be spent to encourage modal shifts towards sustainable transport. This could include on road & off-road enclosed cycle parking spaces, and an investigation into the potential to increase parking charges for more polluting vehicles.
7. ECC should commit to all new highway's infrastructure projects containing some form of green infrastructure to mitigate air pollution.
8. Cycle storage should be made an absolute priority with ECC adopting a case study approach - partnering with rail providers, district authorities and passenger transport providers to provide sheltered cycle storage at all major transport hubs.
9. ECC should explore the impact of reducing speed limits in residential areas. We need to better understand how much this will improve safety for cyclists/walkers and whether slower cars will have a net positive/negative impact on the levels of air pollution.
10. More dynamic and intelligent cycle signage needs to be put in place, ensuring that routes are clearly marked. There also needs to be a dedicated budget for cycle route and footpath maintenance as well as signage upkeep, particularly around schools.
11. Councillors provide vital local insight and need to be kept more informed around the work we are doing to improve provision for sustainable transport. Key officers should engage with local highways panels on a semi-regular basis. A member development session on modal shift policy and sustainable transport should be organised for the first half of 2019.
12. Further clarity needs to be provided on the role and remit of Local Highways Panels in regard to the formation of local modal shift policy.
13. Air quality should feature as a distinct element of both the future highways strategy and revisions of the local transport plan.
14. ECC should hold high level conversations with Highways England around pollution on the roads for which they are the highways authority.
15. An update should be provided to the committee regarding the potential for LED lampposts to include inductive electric car/bike charging through lamp posts as well as air quality monitoring equipment.
16. Where work has been started on the shutting down of rat runs this work should be continued and extended on a periodic basis with a view to determining the feasibility of county-wide realisation.

## **Public Health**

16. In the interests of greater partnership working with local organisations ECC should 'sponsor' a PhD student at Writtle College - we need to take advantage of the asset on our doorstep and employ a dedicated researcher to explore how we can do better as a county and as an authority.

17. ECC should take a look at best practice walking/cycling to school incentive schemes to reduce pollution and congestion during peak morning/evening hours. This would also feed into the anti-obesity campaign. Successful models should be shared with schools county-wide to encourage uptake, possibly through the Parking Partnerships. ECC should also explore potential volunteer programmes to reduce instances of idling.
18. Small interventions can make a huge difference in changing Essex's car reliant culture - ECC to explore 'tactical urbanism' as an option to change behaviours. This could include Street shut down days for community events, scheduled daily road closures between set times etc. We saw how this worked well in Walthamstow.
19. ECC should revamp the Essex Air website to make it clearer and more accessible, possibly allowing for reporting of examples of bad pollution from vehicles etc.
20. ECC should explore a text/email alert system to provide updates to Essex residents with pre-existing conditions about poor air quality in their area.
21. ECC needs to show leadership on the issue of air pollution, bringing people together and coordinating the response. ECC to organise an air quality summit/conference in late 2019. This will gather together key partners from the transport, public health, local government sectors to discuss plans moving forward and partnership working.

### **Recommended actions**

Members are asked to consider the draft report (to be distributed following agenda publication) and the proposed recommendations, providing feedback and potential alterations.

Members are then asked to sign off on the draft report, subject to changes being made.