**Item 6**

**16th January 2024**

**Glasgow City Council**

**Net Zero and Climate Progress Monitoring City Policy Committee**

**Report by George Gillespie, Executive Director of Neighbourhoods, Regeneration & Sustainability**

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# Air Quality Action Plan Update

**Purpose of Report:** To provide Committee with the draft Glasgow Air Quality Action Plan and information on the next steps, including statutory consultation on the draft Plan.

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that Committee;

1) Notes the contents of this report
2) Notes the contents of the draft Air Quality Action Plan update
3) Notes the next steps in the process, including statutory consultation on the draft Plan
4) Requests the final AQAP be brought to committee before being taken to City Administration Committee for approval.

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| Ward No(s): | Citywide: ✓ |
| Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☐ | consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐ |

## 1 Background

1.1 The statutory Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) process requires local authorities to regularly review and assess air quality in their areas, and to determine whether the air quality objectives are likely to be achieved. Where an exceedance is considered likely, the local authority must declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and prepare an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) setting out the measures it intends to put in place in pursuit of the objectives.

1.2 Glasgow City Council has prepared two previous AQAPs. The first, in respect of the City Centre AQMA, was produced in 2004. The second, in respect of declarations of the Byres Rd / Dumbarton Rd and Parkhead Cross AQMAs, was produced in 2009. Since then, updates on the actions within these plans have been included in the Air Quality Annual Progress Reports (APRs). Actions within the Plans are adapted over time and therefore the APRs have increasingly included progress updates on actions not considered within the original AQAPs.

1.3 Air pollution levels have improved in recent years, such that the Parkhead Cross AQMA has been revoked and the Byres Rd / Dumbarton Rd AQMA will be revoked in 2024. However, levels of nitrogen dioxide ($NO_2$) remain of concern and the City Centre AQMA is still in effect.

1.4 In November 2021, Environmental Standards Scotland (ESS)[1] announced that its first investigation would consider air quality, specifically focusing on compliance with the $NO_2$ limit value set in Directive 2008/50/EC on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe, which forms part of retained law following the UK's exit from the European Union.

1.5 After taking evidence from the Scottish Government, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and local authorities, ESS published its conclusions and recommendations in the form of an improvement report in September 2022. The recommendations of relevance to the publication of this AQAP update are:

- Introduce the requirement for local authorities to review and, where necessary, update AQAPs. The targets for any such review and update must be consistent with the principle of as short a time as possible.
- Introduce the requirement for local authorities to achieve AQMA and AQAP objectives within a specified target date, which must be within as short a time as possible.

1.6 These recommendations were accepted by the Scottish Government and updated Policy Guidance was produced in March 2023, which set out what a local authority must include in an AQAP. This includes:

[1] ESS is an independent body set up to ensure the effectiveness of environmental law and prevent enforcement gaps arising from the UK leaving the European Union. It monitors the effectiveness of environmental law in Scotland, and public authorities' compliance with it.

- implementation timescales for measures,
- quantification of expected impacts of measures, and
- assessment of whether measures will be sufficient to meet objectives as well as the statutory consultation requirements.

The policy guidance was also strengthened to require:

- Specified target dates for completing each action plan measure;
- Well defined milestones towards completion; and
- A clearer requirement for assessing (where feasible, given that some measures will be qualitative by nature) the estimated reduction in pollutant concentrations contributed by each AQAP measure.

1.7 The revised LAQM policy guidance specifies that current AQAPs should be reviewed and, where necessary, updated within one year of the revised guidance being published, and every five years subsequently. Whilst work on updating the Glasgow AQAP began in 2021, development was paused to focus on delivery of Scotland's first Low Emission Zone and the early draft AQAP has now been adapted to follow and include the requirements of the revised guidance.

## 2 AQAP Update - Aims

2.1 The draft Glasgow AQAP update outlines the actions that Glasgow City Council will deliver between 2024 – 2029 to reduce concentrations of air pollutants and exposure to air pollution; thereby positively impacting on the health and quality of life of residents and visitors to the Glasgow area.

2.2 Whilst the focus remains upon the City Centre AQMA, which is currently the last AQMA not scheduled for revocation and where exceedances of the air quality objectives continue to be observed, this AQAP adopts a holistic and city-wide approach to reducing emissions and improving air quality across the Glasgow City Council area.

2.3 AQMAs are required to focus primarily on achieving compliance with the statutory air quality objectives, including setting a timescale for the achievement of these and revocation of the AQMA. However, whilst not forming part of the current legislative and policy framework, World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines are a set of evidence-based recommendations of limit values for specific air pollutants, developed to help countries achieve air quality that protects public health. In respect of levels of nitrogen dioxide and particulates, these guidelines set lower limits on pollution levels than the current statutory objectives or limit values. Glasgow City Council shares the ambition of the Scottish Government to achieve the best air quality possible and the AQAP therefore takes cognisance of these guidelines.

2.4 Based on latest monitoring information available within the 2023 APR, monitoring of $NO_2$ showed exceedances of the 40 ug/$m^3$ objective at four

locations, with a maximum annual mean measurement of 50ug/$m^3$ at one of these locations in 2022.

2.5 Background levels of $NO_2$ within the city centre, taken from national datasets, are significantly above the WHO guideline levels. This demonstrates that long term compliance with WHO guidelines cannot be achieved by localised actions alone. Current actions set out in the Glasgow Climate Plan for decarbonisation of heat, transport and power will contribute towards achieving this goal.

2.6 Despite Glasgow performing relatively well in respect of particulates[2], with all applicable objectives being met, this AQAP explores actions which are expected to have co-benefits for particulate emissions as well as the primary focus on reducing levels of $NO_2$.

2.7 The actions within this AQAP, most notably the full implementation of the LEZ, should lead to the revocation of the City Centre AQMA, targeted to be no later than 2029. it should be noted that revocation of an AQMA generally requires a minimum of three years of monitored compliance with the objectives.

2.8 Progress has been made on improving the air pollution levels recorded within Glasgow in recent years. However, monitoring will continue in accordance with LAQM requirements, to provide verification of any improvements and inform longer term air quality ambitions. These considerations will guide the comprehensive review of monitoring detailed in the AQAP.

## 3 AQMA Update - Actions

3.1 The full draft AQAP can be found at https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=61284&p=0 and includes actions that can be considered under seven broad topics:

- Alternatives to private vehicle use
- Promoting low emission transport
- Promoting travel alternatives
- Public information
- Transport planning and infrastructure
- Traffic management
- Vehicle fleet efficiency

[2] Particulates comprise the $PM_{10}$ and $PM_{2.5}$ fractions with statutory objectives for each.

3.2 The priorities set out in the plan are to minimise emissions from road traffic, the main emission source leading to current exceedances of the objectives, through the reduction of direct emissions from transport. Reducing short journeys and increasing and promoting low emission public transport and active travel alternatives also play an important role in the AQAP. Reducing air pollution from heating sources is of considerable importance, particularly in relation to longer-term achievement of the WHO guidelines. Therefore, the following actions have been identified as priority areas:

- Priority 1 – Continue to enforce the Low Emission Zone and Mitigation Measures. The LEZ has been enforced since June 2023.The additional year grace period available to residents of the zone and sector specific time-limited exemptions will expire in June 2024. Therefore, continuous improvements in the annual mean $NO_2$ levels, due to increased scope of vehicles subject to the LEZ, is expected through to 2025.

- Priority 2 - Support the development and implementation of the Glasgow Transport Strategy (GTS) and associated City Centre Transport Plan (CCTP). These will introduce a range of transport initiatives with the potential to benefit air quality, particularly in relation to the target reduction in peak-hour private car traffic in Glasgow City Centre by 2030.

- Priority 3 – Support the development of an appropriate model to successfully deliver the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES). This is principally relevant to the ambition to accelerate the deployment of heat networks in the city, reducing the contribution to background pollution levels from fossil fuelled heating systems.

- Priority 4 – Improve the emissions of GCC vehicles by implementing the Council's Fleet Strategy. As a major employer with approximately 1200 vehicles servicing the city, reducing emissions from this fleet serves as an example of best practice and can contribute significantly to improving air quality.

- Priority 5 – Undertake a comprehensive review of air quality monitoring in Glasgow with a focus around schools, hospitals, and care homes. This action fulfils one of the additional recommendations from the ESS report. Whilst existing knowledge indicates that all sensitive receptors of this type currently meet the air quality objectives, the provision of this information will help quantify the progress required for longer term ambitions such as meeting the WHO guideline levels.

- Priority 6 – Support the expansion of Glasgow's active travel network and supporting infrastructure through the Active Travel Strategy.

- Priority 7 – Continue to undertake vehicle idling awareness campaigns and enforcement, particularly around sensitive locations, and explore options for improving effectiveness of enforcement.

3.3 A wider range of actions are included within the plan, falling within the broad topics in section 3.1 and complementing the priority actions in section 3.2. Full details of all action plan measures can be found in Table 2 of the AQAP.

3.4 Where possible, information relating to timescales, funding, and expected benefits have been detailed for each action. Progress on the delivery of the AQAP will be reported annually within the APR which will be submitted to Net Zero and Climate Progress Monitoring City Policy Committee and the Scottish Government. Additionally, the APR will also incorporate detailed reporting, as required by legislation and regulations, on the Glasgow LEZ. The AQAP will continue to be an adaptive document, with additional air quality actions identified and incorporated into the annual reporting as required.

## 4 Next Steps

4.1 The draft AQAP will be subject to statutory consultation, with finalisation of the plan taking account of consultees' comments on the draft. Statutory consultees include:

- Scottish Ministers
- SEPA
- All neighbouring local authorities
- Other public authorities as appropriate such as NHS Scotland and Health Boards
- Bodies representing local business interests and other organisations as appropriate.

4.2 The draft AQAP will also be open to public consultation promoted through social media and the Council website as well as through direct contact with relevant consultees. The consultation will last for a minimum of six weeks and be conducted through the consultation hub. Views will be sought on the AQAP as a whole and the specific actions within.

4.3 Responses to the consultation will be analysed and the summarised within the finalised AQAP.

4.4 Following finalisation of the AQAP, and submission to the City Administration Committee for approval, the AQAP will be formally submitted to the Scottish Government.

## 5 Policy and Resource Implications

**Resource Implications:**

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| *Financial:* | Grant funding for the AQAP and associated actions is provided annually by the Scottish Government. LEZ support funding is designed |

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| | by Transport Scotland and administered through the Energy Saving Trust. Other actions feature a range of funding sources. |
| *Legal:* | LAQM is determined by the Environment Act 1995. This report raises no new legal issues. |
| *Personnel:* | LAQM duties undertaken using existing GCC personnel. |
| *Procurement:* | No relevant procurement issues from AQAP at this stage. Individual actions may have procurement requirements. |

**Council Strategic Plan:** This work supports the key aims of Grand Challenge 3, Mission 2 of the Council Strategic Plan.

**Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:**

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| *Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify.* | Generally supportive of the stated outcomes. |
| *What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?* | No significant impact from this report.<br><br>Poor air quality differentially impacts on residents with prior health conditions and improvements in air quality should therefore provide benefits. |
| *Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.* | No significant impact from this report. |

**Climate Impacts:**

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| *Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:* | LAQM has many co-benefits and shared actions with the Climate Plan including actions:<br>22 – development of the LEZ<br>26 – alternative actions for bus delivery<br>33 – feasibility study of a Workplace Parking Levy |

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| | 42 – ban of gas heating in new developments<br>51 - delivery of a comprehensive active travel network<br>52 - enable a rapid and strategic shift to electric vehicles through increasing the current rate of deployment of EV charging infrastructure<br>53 – support transition to cleaner public transport<br>54 – transition GCC fleet to electric<br>55 – transition private hire fleet to zero emissions by2030<br>56 - reduce the need to own and use a car through measures in the City Development Plan 2, Glasgow Transport Strategy, and the Liveable Neighbourhoods |
| *What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?* | The AQAP updates action plan measures, many of which have slight beneficial climate impacts. |
| *Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?* | Measures proposed within the AQAP have slight beneficial climate impacts, especially in relation to transport, and therefore contribute to the net zero carbon target |
| **Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:** | This report has no immediate impacts upon privacy or data protection. |

## 6 Recommendations

6.1 It is recommended that Committee;

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