

Committee:	Date:
Port Health and Environmental Services Committee	11 March 2014
Subject: Report on Air Pollution to the Health and Wellbeing Board	Public
Report of: Director of Markets and Consumer Protection	For Information

Summary

Air quality in the City does not meet health based targets. On 20th February 2014 the European Commission launched legal proceedings against the UK government for its failure to ensure that levels of nitrogen dioxide meet legal limit values.

The City Corporation has a statutory obligation to assist the government to meet the limit values and has been implementing a range of measures to improve local air quality for a number of years. This is overseen by the Port Health and Environmental Services Committee.

The City Corporation also has a responsibility for public health and has prepared a Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The strategy includes air quality as a key public health priority. The City Corporation obligations for public health are overseen by its Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB).

Independent consultants were appointed to identify the role that the City HWB can play to support a reduction in local levels of pollution, and a reduction in public exposure. The report was presented to the HWB in January 2014.

The assessment suggested that the HWB could act to reduce air pollution by appraising the air pollution benefits of City policies, helping identify important areas for action, embedding knowledge, providing guidance and encouraging the commissioning of information and other services.

The report, together with a copy of the presentation that was given to the HWB, is appended to this report for information.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note this report

Main Report

Background

1. Levels of air pollution in the City do not meet health based targets for nitrogen dioxide and fine particles (PM₁₀). These two pollutants can have both short term and long term effects on health, with children and the elderly being most vulnerable. Air pollution in London is associated with cardiovascular and cardiopulmonary disease, lung cancer and respiratory disease.
2. Air quality targets are defined in European legislation as limit values. The UK Government has a duty to ensure that air quality in the UK meets the limit values.
3. The limit value for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) is not being met across London. Within the City of London, concentrations are over three times the NO₂ limit value adjacent to busy roads.
4. The European limit value for NO₂ should have been met in 2010. However an extension to 2015 was allowed if a suitable plan was submitted to the European Commission stating what action would be taken to meet the limit value. The UK government declared that the limit value was unlikely to be met in London until 2025, so the European Commission launched legal proceedings against the UK on 20th February 2014 for its failure to develop a credible plan to reduce pollution levels. This is the first case against a member state for breach of the limit values.
5. The City Corporation has a statutory obligation to assist the government to meet the limit values. This is detailed in the Environment Act 1995. The City Corporation published an Air Quality Strategy in 2011 which outlines action being taken to meet this obligation. The strategy was approved, and is monitored, by the Port Health and Environmental Services committee.
6. In addition to helping the government meet limit values, the City Corporation must now look at ways to reduce concentrations of very fine particles (PM_{2.5}) as a way of improving public health.
7. The City Corporation obligations for public health are overseen by the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) which, in accordance with new legislation, was established from 1 April 2013.
8. The City of London Health and Wellbeing Strategy includes 'improving air quality' as a key priority to improve the health and wellbeing of City residents and workers.

Current Position

9. Many City Corporation policies support action to reduce air pollution. The Sustainable Community Strategy and the Corporate Plan, between them, include both an overall goal to improve air pollution and 11 more specific goals that support improving air pollution. These include promoting the City's

competitiveness with cleaner cities like New York, encouraging excellence in building innovation and design, and improving public health.

10. The City Corporation has an Air Quality Strategy, which was published in 2011. The strategy outlines specific action that is being taken to improve air quality. The City Corporation has a statutory obligation to produce this strategy.
11. As air quality is a key priority in the City Health and Wellbeing Strategy, a report has been produced which considers what additional action the HWB can take to assist in improving air quality and the subsequent health of residents and workers in the City. The report, which has been produced by independent consultants, is attached as Appendix A. The assessment was funded by a Department of the Environment Food and Rural Affairs air quality grant and the Mayor of London's Air Quality Fund.

Proposals

12. The report recommended that the HWB considered the following action:
 - a) Ensure that the City's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) reflects the severity of poor air quality as a public health issue.
 - b) Consider how the City of London Corporation can influence neighbouring authorities and the Greater London Authority (in particular Transport for London) so that more action is taken to reduce the public health effects of air pollution.
 - c) Consider how the HWB can help to reinforce, and enforce, Development Control policies on air pollution, and where necessary comment on new developments.
 - d) Consider how the HWB can advise on, and review, Development Control policies, as and when new evidence around the best practice for mitigating against the health effects of poor air quality develops.
 - e) Advocate that changes in the urban realm which could affect people's exposure to poor air quality, such as the introduction of new public spaces and on street seating, are assessed for changes in the levels of exposure.
 - f) Consider recommending that air pollution concentrations and effects become a performance indicator in the next review of the Local Implementation Plan.
 - g) Conduct a rapid Health Impact Assessment on the Local Implementation Plan of the Mayor's Transport Strategy, similar to the one carried out on the Local Plan.
 - h) Assess the air quality implications of the proposals contained within the Area Enhancement Strategies and identify which urban enhancement interventions are the most beneficial from a public health perspective.
13. In order to meet the requirements of the above, it was decided that:

- The next review of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment would reflect the recent evidence about the severity of poor air quality as a public health issue.
- Planning, Transportation and Public Realm officers would receive training on how future plans and programmes could be shaped to help to improve local air quality and reduce people's exposure to air pollution. This will be funded by the Mayor's Air Quality Fund.
- A rapid health impact assessment would be undertaken of the City Local Implementation Plan (Transport Policy). This will also be funded by the Mayor's Air Quality Fund.
- The HWB would be consulted on the revision of the Air Quality Strategy, due for summer 2014.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

14. Improving air quality supports Corporate Plan policy KPP3:

- Engaging with London and national government on key issues of concern to our communities: Mayor of London – environment, air quality.

It also supports the following aims of the City Together Strategy:

- 'to support our communities', specifically to 'encourage healthy lifestyles and protect and improve City communities' health and wellbeing'
- 'protect, promote and enhance our environment', specifically to 'identify local air pollution hot spots'.

Financial Implications

15. The action that follows from the report will be funded by the Mayor's Air Quality Fund.

Conclusion

16. Air pollution in London is at a level that causes harm to human health and air quality has been highlighted as a priority in the City Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
17. The City Corporation has a number of policies that support action to improve air quality in the Square Mile. There are a number of additional actions that the Health and Wellbeing Board can take to help to both improve air quality, and reduce the exposure to high levels of pollution of City residents and workers, leading to an improvement in public health. Specifically:

- a) The next review of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment will reflect the recent evidence about the severity of poor air quality as a public health issue.
- b) Planning, Transportation and Public Realm officers will receive training on how future plans and programmes could be shaped to help to improve local air quality and reduce people's exposure to air pollution.
- c) A rapid health impact assessment will be undertaken of the City Local Implementation Plan.
- d) The HWB will be consulted on the revision of the Air Quality Strategy, due for 2014.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Report to the City of London Health and Wellbeing Board on Air Pollution
- Appendix 2 – Copy of the presentation given to the Health and Wellbeing Board

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