

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee: Holding the Executive to Account

Scrutiny Monitoring – 2 February 2023

Date	Portfolio	Title	Action proposed	Action Taken	Progress Status
15/12/22	Housing & Green Environment	Air Quality Action Plan	<p>1) That, with particular reference to the Millbrook Road monitoring site, a summary is provided to the Committee outlining how the annualised pollution figures are amended to reflect background factors.</p>	<p>Under Part V of the Environment Act 1995 local authorities have a duty to monitor air quality where levels are likely to be high. This process is part of the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) regime which requires local authorities to adhere to prescriptive technical guidance documents, the current version being TG22 (UK Regions (exc. London) Technical Guidance LAQM (defra.gov.uk)).</p> <p>Reported data must be presented in an Annual Status Report (ASR) which is scrutinised by Defra and only approved once they confirm the guidance has been adhered to. To date, all ASR's bar the 2022 ASR have been approved by Defra with the 2022 ASR currently pending review.</p> <p>The Council's monitoring network primarily consists of two types of monitors, 4 high cost automatic monitoring stations and over 90 very low cost diffusion tubes.</p> <p>As diffusion tubes are very low cost, they can provide good spatial distribution and 'plug the gaps' between automatic stations. They are focussed in areas where air quality is of greatest concern, namely the city's 10 Air Quality Management Areas which are all located on main roads and/or near busy junctions. Other diffusion tubes are used for project specific purposes eg. diffusion tubes in bus on roads to monitor improvements in bus emissions.</p> <p>However, diffusion tubes are less precise than automatic stations and require a series of steps to ratify the results to a reference standard. These steps are set</p>	Completed

Date	Portfolio	Title	Action proposed	Action Taken	Progress Status
				<p>out in the Defra TG22 document under the LAQM regime, as referenced above.</p> <p>Three key ratification processes are used.</p> <p>The first is bias adjustment. Bias adjustment is accounts for diffusion tubes' tendency to overestimate concentrations of NO₂. This is coordinated every year by Defra who assess nationwide data from diffusion tubes which are co-located with far more reliable automatic monitoring stations. The national bias adjustment factors published by Defra for 2021 is 0.84. Using the 2021 bias adjustment factor reduces the raw data by 16%. This correction is not to "reflect background factors". All data reflects concentrations at the monitoring location including background sources and those more associated with a specific location e.g., road transport at a roadside location. The 16% is instead a result of the bias adjustment of raw diffusion tube data on the basis that tubes have a tendency to monitor higher concentrations than the far more reliable automatic stations.</p> <p>The second process is annualization. This involves filling in gaps in data where several months are monitored. Again, more detail is available in the TG22 document.</p> <p>The last process is distance correction. This is used where the "relevant receptor" ie. a house is located far back from the curb where pollution is monitored. In these cases, exposure at the receptor can be estimated using a formula provided by Defra. This formula includes the levels monitored at the curb, distance to the house and "background concentration". In this context, background concentration refers to annual average concentrations in a location off the main road. In the case of Southampton this is diffusion tube N100</p>	

Date	Portfolio	Title	Action proposed	Action Taken	Progress Status
				<p>in Sandringham Road, a residential estate which monitored a bias adjusted annual average of 16.8. This figure isn't subtracted from the concentration at the curb, it is instead used as part of the formula in Defra's diffusion tube processing tool.</p> <p>Essentially, background concentrations are not deducted from any NO2 concentrations reported in ASRs. These ratification processes are instead designed to mitigate the fundamental positive bias of diffusion tubes and, where relevant, annual concentrations at receptors where yearly data is incomplete, and the diffusion tube is far away from a receptor. This is ultimately because exceedances of the national air quality objective for NO2 is based on annual, bias adjusted means at locations of relevant receptors, and not raw data.</p> <p>Furthermore, Defra acknowledge the inherent uncertainty of using diffusion tube data, as they are less accurate than automatic data. They advise that Local Authorities do not revoke Air Quality Management Areas based on diffusion tube data alone, unless annual means are consistently below 36 ug/m3 for 3 consecutive years. The actual Standard is 40, so a conservative 10% margin of error is built into decision making.</p>	
			<p>2) That, to help inform actions and decisions, the Executive consider opportunities to develop understanding of the impact that home working and hybrid working is having on pollution levels in the city.</p>	<p>Hybrid working is thought to reduce trips in the city and consequently reduce peak congestions and associated road traffic emissions. During the 2020 lockdown the city experienced a significant reduction in road traffic and saw an associated improvement in air quality. This was documented here. This study also demonstrated the difficulty in attributing pollution levels to changes in travel behaviour due to weather conditions masking or exaggerating differences.</p>	Completed

Date	Portfolio	Title	Action proposed	Action Taken	Progress Status
				<p>The 2021 Census reports that 25.6% of working people in Southampton worked from home. In a 2021 city travel survey 24% of the 1,958 respondents said they would travel less and work from home more. Recent surveys have demonstrated an 8% increase in cycling in 2022 vs 2019. But the most recent traffic data suggests that overall traffic volumes in the city have returned to 98% of where they were pre-pandemic (Nov 22 vs Nov 19) on comparable roads.</p> <p>Further work is required to understand the extent and impact of hybrid working on travel behaviours, especially on the distribution of trips across the day. Further surveys and assessments are planned for 2023 including a review of potential impacts on modelled NO2 levels in 2024 as part of our ongoing evaluation activities.</p>	
			<p>3) That the requirement for ongoing stakeholder engagement is reflected in the new Air Quality Action Plan.</p>	<p>The Council recognises that it has a limited sphere of control and influence over activities in the city and that ongoing stakeholder engagement is vital to delivering air quality improvements.</p> <p>As such, stakeholder engagement features heavily in the Air Quality Action Plan, namely in the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with University Hospital Southampton to support their new 'Green Plan'. • Investigate implementing a freight quality partnership for key operators as part of a wider Green City programme. • Continue to support The Port of Southampton in delivering their Cleaner Air for Southampton strategy, including investigating more opportunities for shore-side power. • Continue to work with the city's universities to integrate expertise and new research into measures. 	<p>Completed</p>

Date	Portfolio	Title	Action proposed	Action Taken	Progress Status
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for more frequent train services through Southampton and work with National Rail to encourage more travel within the city. • Promote benefits of flexible and home working within SCC and partner organisations. • Encourage lift sharing schemes for workplaces. <p>This builds on top of existing work delivered through the Transport team, notably the Workplace Travel Planners network which actively engages the city's major employers and works with them to encourage modal shift in their commuting and operational journeys.</p> <p>On this basis, it is considered that the AQAP, as presented, adequately reflects our stakeholder engagement activities. It is accepted that over the 5 year life span of the this Plan, further opportunities are likely to emerge. For that reason, there is a recommendation that the Plan is adopted with delegated powers that will allow updates and amendments to be made, ensuring the Plan is able to reflect the latest opportunities available.</p>	
			<p>4) That details are provided to the Committee on the potential options that are being considered to improve the layout of Shirley High Street to reduce congestion and improve air quality (Action 50).</p>	<p>Details on the St Mark's ATZ project are on the Connecting Southampton website - https://transport.southampton.gov.uk/atf/st-marks-c-of-e-school/. St Mark's School is within a 20 min walk of over 13,000 homes and as it expands there is potential for more students to come to the school. Currently as a primary school 65% of pupils walk/cycle/scoot to school but as the expansion continues it will see more pupils attend. To mitigate this, and to discourage the high volume of cut-through driving, a package of measures has been developed with the local community to encourage more walking, scooting and cycling to school. This would improve safety and air quality by replacing or making sure future trips are walked or cycled rather than by car and through the School Travel</p>	Completed

Date	Portfolio	Title	Action proposed	Action Taken	Progress Status
				<p>Planning process that accompanies the ATZ further increase the proportion of pupils travelling actively. The Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) identifies the need for a multi-modal study and bus priority measures on Shirley Road in the medium term 2025-30 period. As this develops through Integrated Transport there will be further data collection, consultation and co-design with local communities, businesses and transport operators.</p>	
			<p>5) That an overview of the uptake and geographical distribution of the home energy efficiency scheme, managed by The Environment Centre, is circulated to the Committee (Action 10).</p>	<p>The Environment Centre have provided a report detailing their activities within the city for the period 1st April to 31st December 2022. This is provided separately as Appendix 2.</p>	<p>Completed</p>
15/12/22	Finance & Change	Scrutiny of the Council's Financial Position	<p>1) That the Executive commit to communicating proposals to councillors in advance of them appearing in the media.</p>	<p>The council's budget proposals are shared with the opposition prior to the media being briefed. Where appropriate, ward councillors will be made aware of any changes in their ward. (10/01/23)</p>	<p>Completed</p>
			<p>2) That the detail within the email sent by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Change to the Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance, relating to the £17.05m of draft savings proposals identified for 2023/24, are circulated to the Committee.</p>	<p>Circulated to the Committee on 04/01/23</p>	<p>Completed</p>
12/01/23	Safe City	Safe City Partnership Annual Review	<p>1) That, to improve confidence in safe city partners, the Safe City Partnership (SCP) reflects on the importance of communicating positive actions and outcomes to the public.</p>	<p>Response requested for 9 March OSMC meeting – Scrutiny Manager</p>	

Date	Portfolio	Title	Action proposed	Action Taken	Progress Status
			2) That Sector Sergeants within the Neighbourhood Policing Teams seek to develop effective relationships and lines of communication with Ward Councillors to ensure that the Constabulary are informed about issues and concerns impacting on the local community.	Response requested for 9 March OSMC meeting – Scrutiny Manager	
			3) That consideration is given to refreshing and rebranding the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in Southampton to reflect the technological opportunities that are now available.	Response requested for 9 March OSMC meeting – Scrutiny Manager	
			4) That, to raise its profile and public support, the connection between community groups, Councillors and Community Payback is enhanced.	Response requested for 9 March OSMC meeting – Scrutiny Manager	
			5) That, to build on the strengths of the SCP, the Partnership reviews good practice from high performing comparable partnerships across England and Wales.	Response requested for 9 March OSMC meeting – Scrutiny Manager	
			6) That, to provide a more accurate insight into the effectiveness of the SCP, the next iteration of the annual report to scrutiny is more strengths based, providing a balanced narrative outlining positive outcomes alongside the published crime data.	Response requested for 9 March OSMC meeting – Scrutiny Manager	