

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 21 July 2021	Meeting Name: Health and Wellbeing Board
Report title:		Air Quality Annual Status Report 2020	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Head of Regulatory Services	

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That the Health and Wellbeing Board note the contents of the Southwark Annual Status Report 2020 (ASR 2020), presented as Appendix 1.
2. That the Health and Wellbeing Board supports the review & development of a cross-cutting Air Quality Strategy and Action Plan, informed by a reviewed Air Quality Joint Strategic Needs Assessment as outlined in paragraph 41.
3. That the Health and Wellbeing Board has oversight of the proposed Air Quality Strategy and Action Plan, as outlined in paragraph 42, through the Director of Public Health chairing an officers Air Quality Steering Group. This will enable policies and plans that impact on air quality, to be considered by the Board's membership, which will ensure a comprehensive strategic approach to air quality in Southwark.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4. The Environment Act 1995 required the UK Government to produce a national air quality strategy containing standards and objectives for improving air quality. The first national strategy was published in 1997.
5. The government last revised the national air quality strategy in January 2019. This revised the framework for achieving improvement in ambient air quality in the UK. It set UK air quality standards for 8 atmospheric pollutants with short and medium term objective levels. The national strategy identified actions at local, national and international level to improve air quality; this includes actions for local government.
6. The Environment Act 1995 introduced local authority duties for Local Air Quality Management (LAQM). Southwark completed the initial review and assessment and concluded the air quality objectives for Particulates (PM₁₀), Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), and Benzene would not be met in the borough by the respective compliance dates of 2004 and 2010 without the creation of an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). An AQMA was formally declared in Southwark in January 2003 for Particulates (PM₁₀), and Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), however a further assessment showed that Southwark was compliant for Benzene by this time.
7. Having declared an AQMA, Southwark is legally required to produce an Air Quality Strategy (AQS) and a five-yearly Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP). The latest version of the AQAP was approved in July 2017, and is soon due for review. That plan committed the Council to 113 initial actions to improve local air quality and work towards meeting all the national air quality objectives in Southwark.

8. Southwark currently meets the national air quality objectives for all pollutants listed by the government with the exception of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂)
9. Southwark has declared an AQMA for breaching the NO₂ objective limit and thus is required to have an AQS & AQAP. We are also required to produce an Annual Status Review (ASR) each year. This report includes the air quality monitoring data for the previous year and details of our progress against the AQAP commitments. Air quality improvement policy ideas and technological advances evolving rapidly. The ASR is an opportunity to add new actions to the AQAP and include actions that have been developed and/or delivered over the last year that were not listed in the original AQAP.
10. Following the ASR for 2019 further actions, modified actions and revised targets were suggested as additions to the AQAP. The proposed actions and targets were then consulted with the service areas responsible for their delivery, finalised and attached to the AQAP. Further additions and modifications are suggested for addition to the 2020 ASR. Following consultation with the delivery services, agreed actions and targets will also be added to the AQAP.
11. The ASR 2020 was submitted to the Greater London Authority (GLA) and the Department for the Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) for their information and comment. Southwark is currently awaiting the GLA's appraisal of the 2020 ASR submitted report.
12. Southwark's AQS & AQAP contribute to the Council's objectives of making Southwark safer, cleaner and greener and to improving the health of the borough.
13. The Council's Public Health Team has published a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment on Air Quality (JSNA-AQ), the recommendations of which have been included/are being considered for inclusion in the AQAP.
14. Officers recently convened an Air Quality Action Plan Steering Group to co-ordinate development of the Air Quality Action Plan 2022 – 2027, to oversee delivery of the actions at officer level across the various council departments, and to create a structure to regularly report and receive recommendations from Health and Well Being Board. It is proposed that initially the officers Steering Group will be chaired by Director of Public Health or their delegate.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

15. The levels of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) are gradually falling across the borough as shown in the results for the automatic monitoring stations and at the diffusion tube locations. This trend is mirrored by a slow downwards trend in measurements from across London. Exceedance of the national air quality objective for NO₂ is still commonly found on busy road corridors in Southwark.
16. The levels of Particulate (PM₁₀) are gradually falling across the borough as shown in the results for the automatic monitoring stations. This trend is mirrored by a slow downwards trend in measurements from across London. In Southwark, the levels of PM₁₀ are well below the national air quality objective.
17. Southwark commenced monitoring PM_{2.5} for the first time in 2020. This is a small

fraction of particle known to impact on health. The current UK Air Objective for PM_{2.5} is a target of 15% reduction in concentrations at urban background to be achieved between 2010 and 2020 and to be maintained thereafter, and a future Southwark Air Quality Strategy will propose that Southwark monitors compliance with the World Health Organisation recommended guideline of an annual limit of 10µg.m⁻³.

18. Southwark does not monitor for Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂) but modelling and measured levels from elsewhere in the capital indicate that levels in Southwark are well below the national air quality objectives.
19. The majority of actions due in 2020 were delivered on target. Key actions met in 2020 include:
 - The renewal and expansion of the Authority's Air Quality Monitoring stations started, and four monitoring stations were fully upgraded or newly installed. A further two were delayed due to the Covid-19 outbreak.
 - Working with the Director of Climate Change to link the local air quality with the Borough's Climate Change Strategy.
 - Working with the Authority's Highways Service to monitor air quality in the Low Traffic Neighbourhoods that were introduced during the Covid-19 lockdown to facilitate walking and cycling.
 - Reviewing the airText alert application by launching a discovery project to increase the uptake of the airText app amongst vulnerable persons and those from black and minority ethnic communities.
 - Southwark joined with Pedal-Me to deliver goods to residents from local businesses.
 - A substantial increase in Electric Vehicle Charging Points in the Borough.
 - Introduced 25 school streets in Southwark, and contracted WSP to carry out school air quality audits at, potentially, 72 Southwark schools.
 - Installation of 1800 ultra-low NO₂ boilers in public housing and the commencement of several ground source heating projects.
20. Outside of Regulatory Services there has been good liaison with other service areas with the responsibility for delivery of AQAP actions. In particular, Public Health, Parking, Highways and Transport Planning have all increased their active involvement in delivery of the AQAP actions.
21. Some actions are not yet achieved. They include:
 - The 2020 air quality communications programme was not approved due to the Covid-19 pandemic dominating the communications team work schedule.
 - Work in schools to promote the TfL's STARS programme and the Southwark Travel Plan were put on hold during the Covid-19 pandemic.
 - Introduction of Smarter Fleet Drivers training was put on hold due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
 - The review of the charging review of Housing Estate Parking Permits was deferred until June 2022.
 - The Air Quality JSNA review was deferred until 2021 to synchronise it with the review of Southwark's Air Quality Action Plan
 - The 2020 mandatory review of Southwark's Air Quality Management

Area was agreed to be delayed by the GLA and Defra until 2021.

22. A new AQAP for 2022 – 2027 is currently out to initial public consultation. The consultation questions were under development at the time this report was prepared, and will be presented to this meeting. The aim of this initial consultation is to generate public suggestions for new actions to add to the draft AQAP which will then go through a full process of public and statutory consultation before being finalized.
23. In 2019 the UK met the limit value for the hourly mean Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) in all but one zone. Ten zones were compliant with the limit value for annual mean NO₂. The remaining 33, including London, exceeded this limit value. London is expected to be the last region to meet the current air quality objectives. All the actions in the AQAP, and more, will need to be achieved as we work towards meeting the annual air quality objective for NO₂ in Southwark.
24. The air quality objectives for Particulates, Carbon Monoxide, Sulphur Dioxide, 1,3-Butadiene, Benzene and Lead continue to be met in Southwark, but, there are still many roadside locations where NO₂ levels exceed the annual mean objective limit.
25. Overall there has been a measurable improvement in air quality in Southwark and across London in 2020, however it is accepted that, due to pandemic lockdowns, 2020 will be considered an anomalous year for air quality.
26. Progress on delivery of the current AQAP is good. Many actions are being delivered on target, with only a few complex actions delayed in their delivery e.g. those involving planning policy and district heating. The intention to deliver these actions in the future remains.

Policy implications

27. The AQAP was devised to be a living document, updated each year by the outcomes of the annual ASRs. This ensures the AQAP remains relevant and up to date over its 5 year lifespan by ensuring:
 - All actions of significance are captured, including actions undertaken that were not originally in the action plan.
 - As actions become achieved or out-dated their targets can be revised.
 - If Southwark becomes aware of new ideas, knowledge or initiatives they can be considered for incorporation.

Community impact statement

28. All sectors of the community are affected by local air quality. A report by the Environment Agency found that areas of poor air quality significantly correlate with areas of deprivation. There are a number of deprived wards within Southwark that are areas of deprivation, as defined by the Government. (Source - Official National Statistics).
29. Mortality linked to particulate air pollution is higher in Southwark than in London or

England, accounting for 6.6% of all deaths in 2019¹. The London Value is 6.4% and England the value is 5.1%

30. In 2018 – 2019 14,300 Southwark patients have an asthma diagnosis and 4,400 patients have a diagnosis of chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder. There is evidence that exposure to air pollution exacerbates long term health conditions among health vulnerable people.
31. The impact of poor air quality on health has been of particular note during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Consultation

32. Southwark's Air Quality Strategy and Action Plan 2017-22 was consulted extensively before being approved for adoption by the Council in July 2017.
33. The 2020 Annual Summary Report (ASR) was compiled with information from all departments and service areas responsible for the delivery of actions, and from Southwark's air quality monitoring data, with further supporting data from the London Air Quality Network.
34. Comments were sought from the Director of Public Health, and these have been included in this report.

COMMENTS FROM THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

35. Air pollution poses a significant environmental risk to public health, with long-term exposure contributing to ill health and premature death.
36. Air pollution contributes to health inequalities as exposure to poor air quality has a greater impact on certain groups. Residents with respiratory conditions have a higher risk of ill health as air pollution can exacerbate their symptoms. For those with heart conditions, air pollution raises the risk of cardiovascular events. Children and older people are both more vulnerable to the health effects of air pollution due to vulnerabilities associated with their age ^[1]. Communities living in areas with poorer air quality and low income groups are also disproportionately impacted^[2]
37. To tackle air pollution and protect our most vulnerable residents, we need to take a public health approach to creating healthier environments with an overt focus on areas with the poorest air quality and working with residents that we know are more likely to be impacted.
38. We are taking a partnership approach in Southwark, working across service areas and organisations on a number of projects and programmes to improve the healthiness of local neighbourhoods and residents.

¹ Public Health England website:

<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/search/air#page/4/gid/1/pat/6/par/E12000007/ati/102/are/E09000028/iid/30101/age/230/sex/4>

^[1] Air Quality in Southwark. Southwark's JSNA. Southwark Council: London. 2017.

^[2] [PHE. 2018. Health matters: air pollution.](#)

39. Within the Local Authority colleagues across highways, transport policy, public health, environmental protection and community engagement, have been collaborating on a range of highways projects that aim to reduce the levels of traffic travelling through local neighbourhoods, creating more low emission routes for residents in some of our most disadvantaged areas such as Walworth, North Peckham and Camberwell.
40. Colleagues in public health and environmental protection are now working with DXW and Rooted by Design to understand a user-centered discovery phase where we will collaborate with local residents who are vulnerable to the health effects of air pollution with the aim of better understanding their needs and behaviours when it comes to reducing their exposure to air pollution. This research project seeks to uncover the realities of air quality for priority communities and find ways to improve health equity through prioritising working with residents of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnicities and from more deprived areas. Ultimately, the insights gained through this work will identify whether the airTEXT service is fit for purpose and will provide opportunities to improve our approach to supporting residents to reduce their exposure to air pollution.
41. Over the next year, the public health focus will be to refresh the Air Quality Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, providing an up to date assessment of local need and developing recommendations for partnership working to inform the new Air Quality Strategy and Action Plan in 2022.
42. The well-established effects of air pollution in exacerbating health inequalities mean that the Health and Wellbeing Board is ideally placed to oversee and support actions to reduce air pollution through its constituent partners.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

43. This report is for noting, and no advice has been sought from other officers.

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Air Quality Annual Status Report 2020
Appendix 2	GLA comments on ASR 2020

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Head of Regulatory Services	
Report Author	Paul Newman, Environmental Protection Team Leader	
Version	1 final	
Dated	07 July 2021	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Public Health	Yes	Yes
Director of Law and Democracy	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	No	No

Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team / Community Council / Scrutiny Team		