

EASTLEIGH LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 14 March 2023

AIR QUALITY UPDATE

Report of the Senior Pollution Control Officer

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Eastleigh Local Area Committee note:

- (1) the update to the air quality measurements for Eastleigh in 2022; and**
 - (2) progress made against the Air Quality Action Plan.**
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Summary

This report provides an update to the Eastleigh Local Area Committee (ELAC) on the state of air quality and progress in implementing the Eastleigh Borough Council Air Quality Action Plan. It covers the period to the end of 2022 and includes recent data from monitoring stations in the Eastleigh Local Area and an update on the Eastleigh Air Quality Management Area Action Plan.

Statutory Powers

Environment Act 1995 Part IV Section 83(2)

The Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010

Environment Act 2021

Strategic Implications

1. The causes and consequences of poor air quality, and the action needed to tackle it, relate to many of the Council's corporate objectives: Health and Wellbeing, Environment, Economy & Housing. While this issue cuts across portfolios, the lead is taken by the Cabinet Member for Transport as part of the Council's 'Tackling Congestion' objective. This recognises that many interventions relate to Transport, and interventions designed to reduce congestion will often also improve air quality.
2. National statutory air quality duties derive from negative impacts on health and wellbeing, especially for the very young and old and people with existing

health conditions, even at pollution levels lower than statutory exceedance levels.

Introduction

3. Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) must be declared where pollutant concentrations are found to be at risk of exceeding national objective levels, which are shown in Appendix 2. Once declared, AQMAs must have an associated Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) which contains measures aiming to bring levels of air pollution under the objective values.
4. The four AQMAs in Eastleigh Borough are covered by the Borough-wide AQAP 2020 – 2025 which was adopted in February 2020. Two of these are located in the Eastleigh Local Area, Eastleigh AQMA No. 1 (A335) in the centre and Eastleigh AQMA No. 2 (M3) passing through the south-west and bordering the western boundary (see Appendix 1 for map). They were both declared due to a risk of exceedance of the annual objective for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂).

Air Quality Monitoring Results

5. Monitoring across the Eastleigh Local Area is carried out by two principle methods:
 - Diffusion tubes measure NO₂ and provide monthly values.
 - Three continuous monitoring stations measure NO₂ with higher accuracy and time resolution, allowing them to show changes as they happen during the course of the day. Particulate matter (PM) of two sizes is also measured at one of these stations.
6. Air quality monitoring data is presented in Appendix 2 and covers from 01 January 2022 up to 31 December 2022. Where gaps in the data are seen a short explanation of the reason is provided. Results are verified through independent data ratification by Imperial College London which has not yet been completed for 2022 therefore this is only an estimate for the current year. It shows that the annual objective levels have not been exceeded at the continuous monitoring sites in 2022. Finalised results for 2022 which can be put into context with long term trends will be provided in the next report. A comparison of the 2022 data collected for 3 diffusion tube locations, Southampton Road, Leigh Road / Pluto Road and Leigh Road J13 is included. This shows that in the majority of months, and for the year to date overall, concentrations are lower in 2022 than the average for 2018 – 2020 suggesting that an overall decreasing trend will be continued. Despite this, concentrations recorded so far show there is still a risk of exceeding the annual objective level at Southampton Road 1 and Leigh Road Junction 13.
7. The previous issue with the monitoring cabinet at Southampton Road has been resolved. However, the instrument at Steele Close is now faulty, and due to its age we have not been able to source replacement parts. A replacement

instrument is on order and we currently expect this be installed by the beginning of April 2023.

8. As a result we have had a loss of data at Steele Close over 2022 at this location. As stated in previous reports, the loss of data is unwelcome, however we are still able to rely on our diffusion tube data for our reporting.

Air Quality Action Plan

9. Progress against each of the ELAC relevant actions in the Borough-wide AQAP is shown in Appendix 3, with some of these discussed in more detail below.
10. The Low Emission Taxi Scheme, funded by a bid to the DEFRA Air Quality Grant Programme, was extended in August 2021 to bring the requirements in line with those in Southampton, and so as to include grants for EURO VI diesel vehicles, for 5-8 passengers or are wheelchair accessible. A change to the licencing conditions from January 2022 means new diesel vehicles will no longer be licenced unless they are of EURO VI standard.
11. As the scheme was administered by SCC and funding for that area has been fully allocated, SCC have agreed with Defra that the focus will now be on *“supporting cleaner taxi fleets with an ERD Funded electric vehicle ‘try before you buy’ scheme which has been made available to EBC businesses. SCC is currently exploring opportunities to extend this scheme into 2023/24 using further Clean Air Funding and where possible we will continue to support EBC in the spirit of the original Defra joint bid, via this scheme and using any new funding we secure”*.
12. The DEFRA funded project aimed at reducing emissions, in particular of particulate matter, from domestic burning has continued over 2022 and into 2023. This is run by The Environment Centre and includes awareness raising by; messaging, leaflets, posters and social media along with press articles and direct engagement such as attending events and visiting community groups. In Eastleigh these visits have included breathe easy groups, gardening and allotment groups, and retailers that sell firewood. The campaign is adapted for winter to include a focus on cleaner alternatives to solid fuels. Currently the project team are working on common messaging for the partner authorities to use when engaging with complaints of smoke from wood burning.
13. In March 2022 we were successful in obtaining further DEFRA funding of £132,932 from the Air Quality Grant Programme. The project is for a combination of communications campaigns and schools projects, supported by provision of active travel infrastructure. The work in schools is to be delivered by Sustrans, with EBC officers in the pollution and communications team co-ordinating associated campaigns.
14. Sustrans have advertised for the schools project officer post and will be interviewing shortly. Eastleigh have agreed funding with Toynbee School for support providing a cycle storage facility.

Environmental Improvement Plan 2023

15. Under the Environment Act 2021 the Government committed to introduce new targets for tackling air pollution. The Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 introduces the following targets: A legal target to require a maximum annual mean concentration of 10 micrograms of PM2.5 per cubic metre ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) by 2040, with a new interim target of $12 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ by the end of January 2028. By way of context the figure for 2022 at Southampton Road was $8\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (74% capture rate), and is $13\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ for 2023 year to date. We will need to see a full years' data collection to establish if we will be compliant or not with this target value.
16. Other commitments in the Plan include: reduction in population exposure to PM2.5 by 35% in 2040 compared to 2018 levels, with a new interim target to reduce exposure by 22% by the end of January 2028, and to reduce emissions of nitrogen oxides by 73% by 2030 when compared with 2005 levels.
17. As yet guidance on the approach that will be required to bring about these changes has not been disclosed, however initial indications from Defra are that it is anticipated that where measures are required that these will be included in the Air Quality Action Plan, AQAP. It is likely therefore that the, AQAP will need to be reviewed and updated later this year or early 2024.

Financial Implications

18. Funding sources for individual actions are shown in the table in Appendix 3 and include grant applications and Section 106 Agreements as well as existing budgets and available resource.
19. Any actions identified in the new AQAP that require additional funding for delivery will be taken to the relevant Local Area Committee (LAC) or Cabinet for approval. Where possible Eastleigh Borough Council will work in partnership to deliver these and will take every opportunity to secure additional funding that is made available through grant funds or securing developers contributions from Section 106 Agreements.

Risk Assessment

20. The AQAP will ensure that the Council takes a managed approach to air quality by identifying the most effective actions and targeting priority locations. Progress against the AQAP will be reported annually, and the actions reviewed and updated when necessary to ensure they remain relevant to Council priorities and activities.

Equality and Diversity Implications

21. The Equality Act is relevant to the decision in this report as it relates to addressing an issue that, although it has an impact on all residents, can disproportionately affect the most vulnerable in society such as children, people with health issues and areas of social deprivation. An Equality Impact

Assessment (EqIA) has been carried out and was submitted with the AQAP. In summary the EqIA shows that the Council has made efforts to engage those groups which are most affected by poor air quality and taken into account their concerns as part of the development of the plan. The aim of the AQAP is to improve air quality across the Borough, this will benefit everyone but particularly those groups which air pollution has the biggest impact upon. In this way, the AQAP is working to reduce inequality and adverse impacts on vulnerable groups.

Climate Change and Environmental Implications

22. The AQAP supports work in the Climate and Environmental Emergency Strategy and Action Plan and many actions are relevant to both areas of work.
23. The AQAP aims to improve air quality across the Borough, particularly in local areas where air quality does not meet national objective levels. Poor air quality has significant impact on the local environment and public health and in many cases air quality improvements are also positive for climate change. Conflicts can arise however, where action in one area has a detrimental effect on the other, therefore it's important to consider how to achieve the maximum benefit. In this way the AQAP will contribute towards the environmental targets set out in the Climate and Environmental Emergency Strategy.

Conclusion

24. This report provides an update on monitoring for the Eastleigh Area, however it should be noted that results have not yet been ratified therefore this is only an indication of the 2022.
25. Eastleigh Borough Council continues to work towards delivering improvements in air quality and the AQAP sets the Council's programme of work for this.

NEIL SCOTT
SENIOR POLLUTION CONTROL OFFICER

Date: 2 March 2023
Contact Officer: Neil Scott
Tel No: 023 8068 8304
e-mail: neil.scott@eastleigh.gov.uk
Appendices Attached:

- 1- AQMA & Sampling Point Map
- 2- 2021 Air quality data for ELAC
- 3- Progress against AQAP measures

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - SECTION 100D

The following is a list of documents which disclose facts or matters on which this report or an important part of it is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. This list does not include any published works or documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information.

* Background Papers: None.