

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)	Date of Meeting:	12 January 2021
Subject:	Public Health Annual Report on Air Quality		
Report of:	Director of Public Health	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:	Health and Wellbeing		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Public Health Annual Report 2018/19, which explored the issue of Air Quality in Sefton¹²³. The PHAR is the independent annual report of the Director of Public Health and is a statutory duty. The latest report for 2019/20 focuses on Health Inequality and the successful Well Sefton Programme.¹

Recommendation(s):

(1) Note and comment upon the update on the 2018/19 Public Health Annual Report on Air Quality

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

The PHAR is the independent report of the Director of Public Health. Improving air quality is priority for Sefton Council and Sefton residents alike.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

Not applicable. The PHAR is a legal requirement. Communicating clearly about air quality and the steps being taken to reduce air pollution in Sefton is an important aspect of our work on this issue.

¹ Video links on Sefton Council Website: <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/PHAR>

² Fact-file: <https://indd.adobe.com/view/2038c29f-1cd5-4dd2-ae66-6f7e4915a88b>

³ Video-link on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mo78NNplvs8&feature=youtu.be>

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

There are no additional revenue costs identified within this report.

(B) Capital Costs

There are no additional capital costs identified within this report.

Implications of the Proposals:

<p>Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):</p> <p>This report was financed from within existing resource. This report has no direct implications for resourcing.</p>
<p>Legal Implications:</p> <p>The Public Health Annual Report is a statutory duty upon Directors of Public Health</p>
<p>Equality Implications:</p> <p>There are no direct equality implications. The report was published in an animated format to maximise accessibility. This report explains the impact of air pollution on social inequalities in health.</p>

Contribution to the Council’s Core Purpose:

<p>Protect the most vulnerable:</p> <p>The information in this report is still relevant and current to this aim, The report uses evidence-based information to explain how air pollution can cause health problems, who is most at risk (older people, those with chronic health conditions, babies and children) and actions which improve air quality and reduce exposure.</p>
<p>Facilitate confident and resilient communities:</p> <p>It is anticipated that this report has continuing value to support and enable community engagement and action on air quality, including behaviour change, and community-led initiatives.</p>
<p>Commission, broker and provide core services:</p> <p>Not applicable</p>
<p>Place – leadership and influencer:</p>

The report sets out clear priorities that the Council will continue to pursue, and also revisits a set of supportive 'calls to action' for key stakeholders including schools, the NHS, other organisations and businesses and the Voluntary and Community Sector.
Drivers of change and reform: Not applicable
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: Not applicable
Greater income for social investment: Not applicable
Cleaner Greener: This report gives a clear endorsement of the value Sefton Council places on protecting and enhancing the quality of the environment. Insights from Sefton's experience of the Coronavirus pandemic and its impact on air quality and health inequality underline the direct link between healthy places and healthy people.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD 6250/21) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD 4451/21) have been consulted and comments are incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

To note, this report is presented for information. Decision process is not applicable.

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Appendices:

There are no appendices to this report.

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction/Background

1.1 Overview

The 2018/19 Public Health Annual Report took an in-depth look at the largest environmental risk to population health in the UK, air pollution. The animated film and more detailed fact-file included a range of information, including:

- Data on the pattern of health conditions where air pollution is a known cause, or can make a health problem worse;
- Facts about what air pollution is, where it comes from, and where we encounter it in day to day life
- Information about how air quality in Sefton compares to other parts of the UK, and how levels of air pollution vary across the borough and from place to place
- Practical advice about reducing the contributions we each make to the problem of air pollution and tips for limiting exposure to air pollution
- An update on Sefton Council's Air Quality Goals, and
- Calls to Action aimed at other organisations and the wider community, accompanied by evidence-based guidance and information resources

1.2 Air quality and health in Sefton

Health statistics, which describe the contribution air pollution makes to death and disease from significantly preventable causes, e.g. heart and lung disease and cancer, has been updated since the annual report was published⁴. Air pollution was the 12th highest modifiable risk to health in 2017 and has maintained this ranking in 2019. Compared to high impact 'behavioural' risks the contribution to poor health from air pollution is around one fifth of that from obesity and one tenth the harm due to smoking.

Overall, 4.3% of known, modifiable risk for mortality is attributed to air pollution in Sefton.⁵ This does not mean that 1 in 25 deaths is due to air pollution. In the North West, the latest figures for 2018 show that attributable mortality has increased slightly, ranging from 5.1% in Liverpool to 3.2% in Cumbria. This a reminder that as the health gains from the continuing decline in smoking stack up, the issue of air quality, which affects everyone to some extent must remain a priority.

1.3 Air quality and COVID-19

⁴ <https://vizhub.healthdata.org/gbd-compare/>

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https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/search/air%20pollution#page/3/gid/1/pat/6/par/E12000002/ati/302/are/E08000014/iid/30101/age/230/sex/4/cid/4/page-options/ovw-do-0_car-do-0

The global and local impact of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic has drawn public and scientific interest back to the contribution patterns of air pollution make to health inequality. In particular,

- We already know that chronic exposure to fine particulate matter is one of several causes of long-term conditions, that are leading causes of death and premature mortality, including blood vessel disease, affecting the lungs, heart and brain, and lung cancer.
- Early⁶ and subsequent^{7,8} research into risk factors for severe COVID-19 disease and death has highlighted increased risk with older age, noticeable from age 50, and added risk from having one or more of these chronic conditions. The social gradient in COVID-19 mortality (lowest in populations with the most economic, social and environmental protections, highest in populations with the least) is slightly steeper than for other causes of death.
- A short-lived drop in nitrogen dioxide emissions from transport during the first lockdown, saw people investing time and money in walking and cycling
- But this was accompanied by advice to avoid public transport where possible. The rise in home-working could not prevent a rebound in private vehicle use, whilst the increase in online shopping is adding to local delivery traffic on our streets
- Dramatic images of clearing skies in the most heavily polluted cities in the world were accompanied by satellite images capturing the international flow of air pollution, a reminder that not all air pollution is caused by local activity⁹

2. Progress

In the 2018/19 PHAR on Air Quality we set out some goals to capture different aspects of Sefton Council's ongoing work to support emissions reduction and better air quality in Sefton.

The Coronavirus pandemic has meant that some areas have progressed less than others in 2020. But we know from public engagement before and during the development of the PHAR report that these are still important priorities and will continue to shape the work of Public and Environmental Health and Highways teams, and others brought together through the Cabinet Member Reference Group on Air Quality.

2.1 Our goals

⁶ [Deaths involving COVID-19 by local area and socioeconomic deprivation - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/statistics/themes/covid-19/deaths-involving-covid-19-by-local-area-and-socioeconomic-deprivation)

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/945839/S0948_CO-CIN_2nd_Wave.pdf

⁸ <https://www.health.org.uk/publications/build-back-fairer-the-covid-19-marmot-review>

⁹ View satellite imaging of changes in surface air pollution across Europe during early lockdown from March to mid-April here: <https://atmosphere.copernicus.eu/european-air-quality-information-support-covid-19-crisis>

- Use the latest information on sources of air pollution in hotspot areas, apply the latest guidance, and work with national agencies and local partners to define options for improving air quality more quickly in Sefton.
 - **Update:** Unlike in many areas, work has continued to develop the outline business case to establish options for a Clean Air Zone in Sefton
- Continue to involve communities and work on our communications, using your feedback to build a better website and look at different ways to keep you informed about air quality
 - **Updates:** Further work in this area¹⁰ is scheduled for the new year, and will draw upon content in the PHAR, which was developed based on questions raised by residents and their comments about the type and style of information they want to see.
 - Areas of cross-over advice from new research on indoor air pollution and the role of ventilation in limiting spread of Coronavirus will be discussed and developed at the Joint Communications Cell.
- Start work on a new project enabling residents to reduce their exposure to air pollution at home
 - **Updates:** comprehensive 18-month project on Domestic Solid Fuel Burning, including wood-burning stoves, funded from DEFRA's Air Quality Grant scheme is progressing well.
 - New webpages and leaflets provide clear information for public and professionals, covering health issues linked to particulate matter, the law on domestic burning, practical advice to lower health risks and emissions and help with fuel poverty. Work in the new year will concentrate on further engagement and promotion of these new resources.¹¹
- Build on our existing work with schools, starting with activities on Clean Air Day
 - **Update:** The Clean Air Crew online educational tool for primary age pupils has undergone further improvements and a DEFRA Air Quality Grant bid and has been submitted by the Environmental Health Pollution and Sustainability Teams. This aims to expand the reach and resources available for the Clean Air Crew teaching offer and establish a Schools Air Quality monitoring programme
- Support opportunities for citizen-led science and action to help tackle air pollution, such as community planting and air monitoring projects
 - **Updates:** There are tie-ins to this goal from the work in schools and the involvement of allotment holders in the Domestic Solid Fuel Project.

¹⁰ <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/environmental-protection/air-quality/>

¹¹ <https://smokecontrolsefton.co.uk/about/>

- Other opportunities may come from the recent re-establishment of collaborative research activity in this area under the Applied Research Collaborative - North West Coast

In recognition of the many sources of air pollution, and the opportunities other sectors and organisations have to bring about change, the report set out four calls to action:

2.2. Our Calls to Action

- We are calling on our NHS partners to
 - Use their Sustainable Development Management Plans to deliver on the air quality goals in the NHS Long Term Plan, and
 - Share how they are supporting patients and staff to reduce the health impacts of air pollution
- We're asking Schools across Sefton - our pupils and parents to tell us their ideas to promote cleaner air,
 - Will you adopt an air pollution monitor? Host an anti-idling campaign? Develop a fresh approach to the 'school run'? Or do a project on indoor air pollution? The Clean Air Crew website is full of inspiration
- Our challenge to industry, other businesses and organisations is to
 - Make one big change this year! Whether that's a brand new Clean Air Strategy, an attractive active travel policy or introducing a fleet recognition scheme for drivers
- And to our community, voluntary and faith sector, please help by bringing your creative energy and ideas to share the messages from this report far and wide:
 - Share the information and advice in the Let's Make Change Happen Section
 - Be the catalyst for a new Citizen Science idea or a novel approach to behaviour change
 - Or take a moment to report a smoky lorry or bus
<https://www.gov.uk/report-smoky-vehicle>

In these areas of collaborative, cross-sector working, key and upcoming developments include:

- **Updates:** Sefton CCGs' new 5-year plan for NHS services Sefton2gether 2020¹² which gives a strong commitment to 'make a full contribution to Sefton's Health & Wellbeing Strategy e.g. wider determinants like air pollution'
- Engagement with joint pilot schemes supported via the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

¹² <https://www.southseftonccg.nhs.uk/media/4179/sefton2gether-final-print-version-2020.pdf>

- Prominent examples of a range of good practice in the final LCR Air Quality Action Plan 2020¹³
- The final Port of Liverpool Air Quality Strategy will mark another positive development

¹³ <https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/LCRCA-AIR-QUALITY-ACTION-PLAN-2020.pdf>