



**ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE - 6 JUNE 2019**

CLEAN AIR STRATEGY 2019

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

Purpose of Report

1. To provide an overview of the Government's Clean Air Strategy 2019, with an emphasis on those aspects relevant to the Environment and Transport Department namely in relation to transport, highways and the environment. In addition, the report also highlights the public health aspects of the Strategy, the cross-sectoral response to the Strategy and the possible implications for Leicestershire County Council.
2. The Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

3. The UK Government and the devolved administrations have policy responsibility for air quality in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland respectively.
4. Local authorities in Great Britain also have powers to tackle local air pollution via the Clean Air Act 1993, the Road Traffic (Vehicle Emissions) (Fixed Penalty) (England) Regulations 2002 and equivalent legislation in Scotland and Wales. The latter includes enforcement powers for stationary idling offences.
5. Local authorities are required to review and assess local air quality, in accordance with the statutory Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) guidance. Where a local authority identifies areas exceeding statutory limits and there is relevant public exposure, it is required to declare the geographic extent of exceedance as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). It must then draw up an action plan detailing remedial measures to address the problem.
6. In two-tier authority areas, the duties placed on local government associated with air quality management are the responsibility of district authorities. This includes identification of AQMAs, monitoring and reporting on air quality, producing and delivering action plans, and assessing the impact of development on air quality through the planning process.
7. However, there are obligations on both the county and district councils within Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 in relation to air quality. The Secretary of State expects lower and upper-tier councils to work together to develop their

approach and, with respect to action plans, ensure that all necessary measures to address air pollution in their local area are included.

8. Should a district provide evidence which attributes air pollution within an AQMA to the local road network, the County Council as the Local Highway Authority (LHA) has a role to play in working with them to identify and to seek funding sources for mitigation measures on the local road network (see paragraphs 44 to 47 for further information).
9. The Director of Public Health has a statutory duty to ensure that plans are in place to protect the health of the local population.
10. The Council's Environment Strategy 2018-2030, which was approved by Cabinet on 6 July 2018, includes aims to reduce pollution and the environmental impacts of travel and transport. There is also an aim to protect people from harm caused by the deteriorating condition of the environment.
11. The Council's Network Management Plan 2014-2026, which was approved by Cabinet on 1st April 2014, sets out a number of options available to tackle air quality, including; maintaining and managing the road network so that it operates as efficiently and effectively as possible, reducing the need to travel by car, encouraging the use of sustainable transport, influencing how people travel, and introducing improvements to tackle congestion.
12. This is aligned with a stated aim of the Council's *Local Transport Plan 3*, (approved by full Council on 23rd March 2011) "to continue to reduce the impact of traffic on individuals, communities and settlements".

Clean Air Strategy 2019

13. The Clean Air Strategy constitutes the Government's main plan to curb emissions of nitrogen oxides (NO_x), sulphur dioxide, volatile oxide compounds, ammonia and particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) emissions as required by the National Emissions Ceilings Directive and the Gothenburg Protocol underpinning it. The aim of the Strategy is to drive down the national emissions of pollutants, reduce background pollution, and minimise human exposure to harmful concentrations of pollution.
14. The Strategy does not sit in isolation and has strong links with the Industrial Strategy, the Clean Growth Strategy, the Road to Zero Strategy and the 25 Year Environment Plan.
15. The Government says it will introduce a new strengthened legislative framework for tackling air pollution during 2019. This framework will be tied into the new environmental principles and governance framework that will be outlined in the Environment Bill which is being developed as part of the EU withdrawal process.
16. The Strategy is structured into the following key sections and this report highlights the main points from each, particularly those that are more relevant to the Council:-

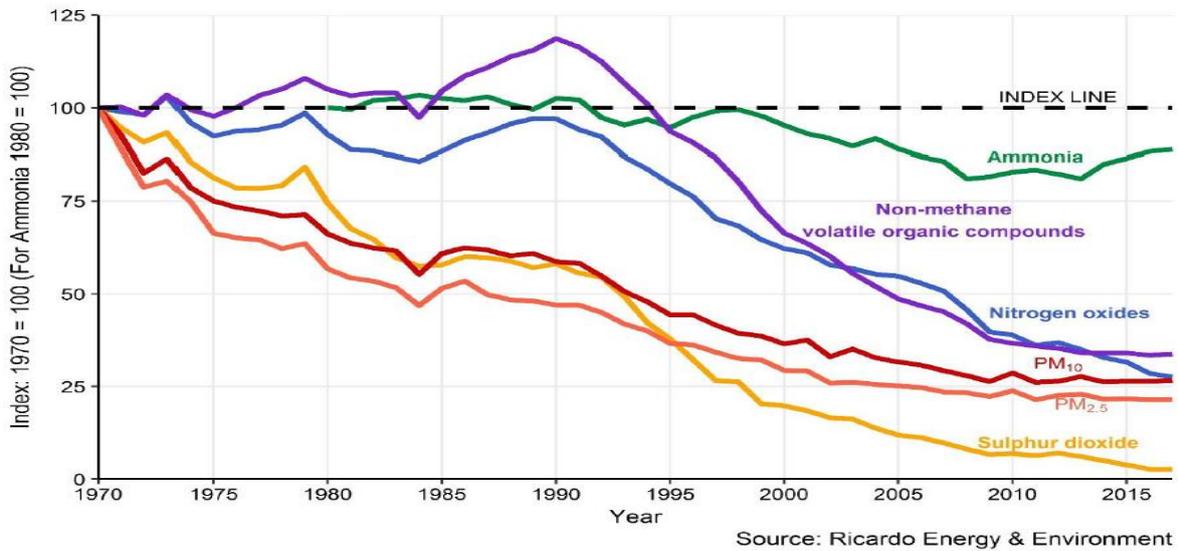
- Understanding the problem;
- Protecting the nation's health;
- Protecting the environment;
- Securing clean growth and driving innovation;
- Action to reduce emissions from transport;
- Action to reduce emissions at home;
- Action to reduce emissions from farming;
- Action to reduce emissions from industry; and,
- Leadership at all levels.

17. The Strategy contains a mixture of existing and new actions and commitments. Appendix A provides a summary of the commitments made in the Clean Air Strategy 2019.

Understanding the problem

18. In terms of the problem, it is important to understand that many substances can pollute the air. Some are very harmful, and their sale and use is strictly regulated. Others are not immediately harmful but are released in thousands or millions of tonnes per year nationally as by-products of transport (road, rail, sea and air), energy production, chemicals manufacture, domestic combustion and farming. When released into the air these substances have gradual but significant impacts on health and the environment.
19. Once released, air pollution is dispersed by the weather and can travel significant distances within and between countries. Pollutants mix and interact in the atmosphere, forming new compounds, and can be deposited on land and water.
20. The impact of pollution depends on how much is emitted, how harmful it is and how it interacts with other substances in the air. It also depends on where it is emitted, its residence time in the atmosphere, and ultimately where it ends up and how sensitive the exposed population or environment is.
21. Vulnerable individuals and sensitive habitats are at particular risk. Emissions contribute to local concentrations of pollutants, which occur where pollutants build up in significant quantities in particular locations, for example near busy roads, industrial installations or large intensive farming operations.
22. It is exposure to high concentrations of pollutants that is most likely to directly result in adverse impacts. These impacts are cumulative, so we need to think about reducing exposure at all stages of life, at home, when travelling, at school and at work.
23. While there has been a significant reduction in the level of most emissions since the 1970's, some are still above recognised safe levels or targets set by the UK government. Figure 1 shows the trend in annual emissions for the main pollutants covered by the Strategy from 1970 to 2017.

Figure 1: Trends in annual emissions of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, non-methane volatile organic compounds, ammonia and particulate matter (PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}) in the UK: 1970 – 2017.



24. The main sources of air pollution are road transport, non-road mobile machinery, industry, domestic, agriculture, shipping and other transport such as rail and aviation. The different sources produce different levels and types of pollutants and have different effects on humans and habitats. Figures 2 – 4 provide a graphic summary of the sources and impacts of three of the main pollutants namely, PM_{2.5}, nitrogen oxides and ammonia.

Figure 2: Overview of the sources and impacts of PM_{2.5}

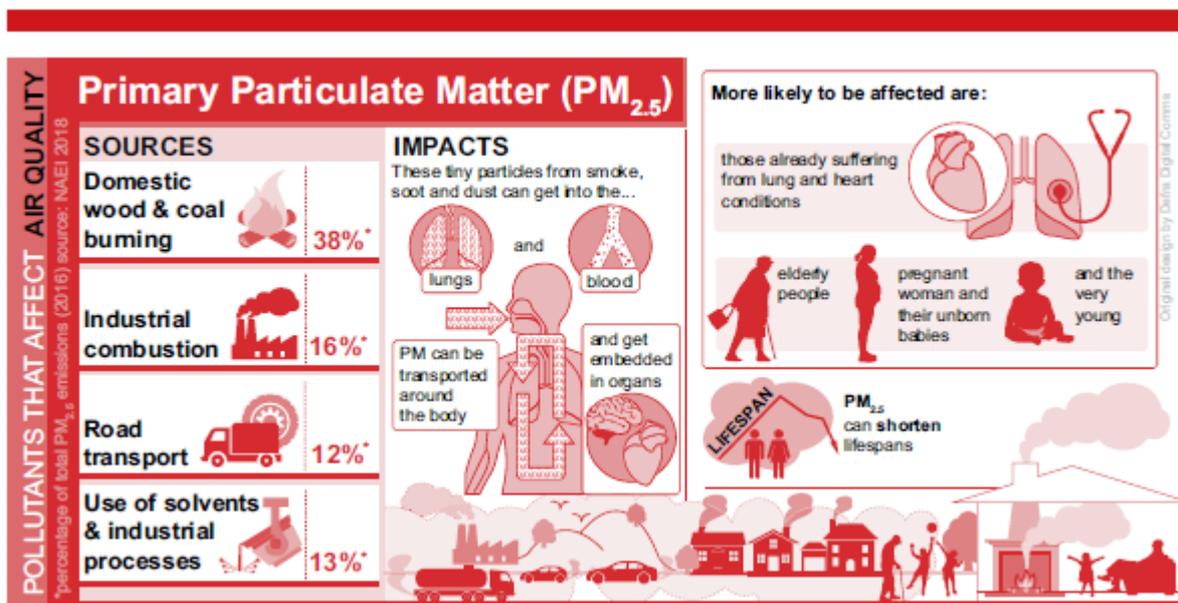


Figure 3: Overview and impacts of Nitrogen oxides

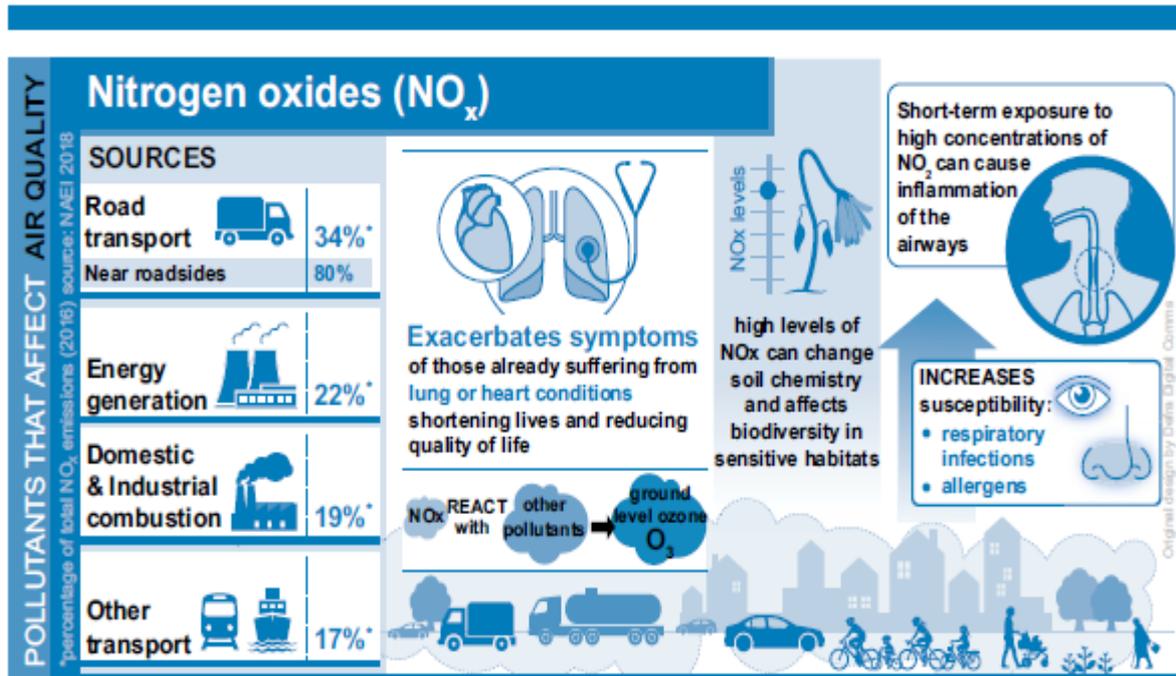
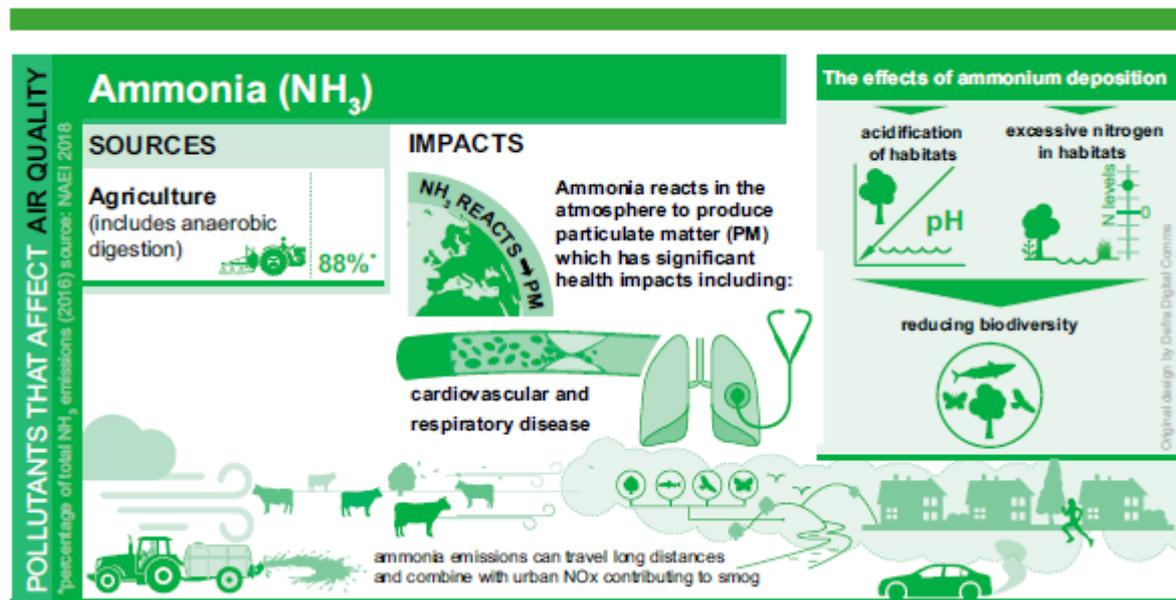
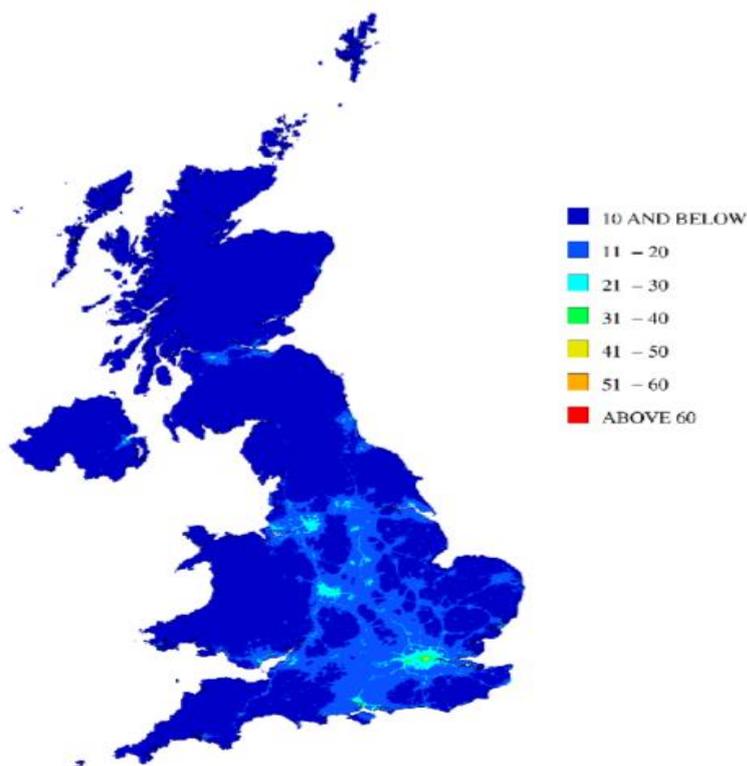


Figure 4: Overview and impacts of Ammonia



25. In addition, the distribution and concentration of the various air pollutants varies across the country. Figure 5 below shows the annual mean background concentration of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) in 2016. The map clearly shows how it is concentrated in the main urban areas and along major national road routes. This includes Leicester City and the M1 in Leicestershire.

Figure 5: Annual Mean Background NO₂ Concentration, 2016 (µg m⁻³)



Protecting the nation's health

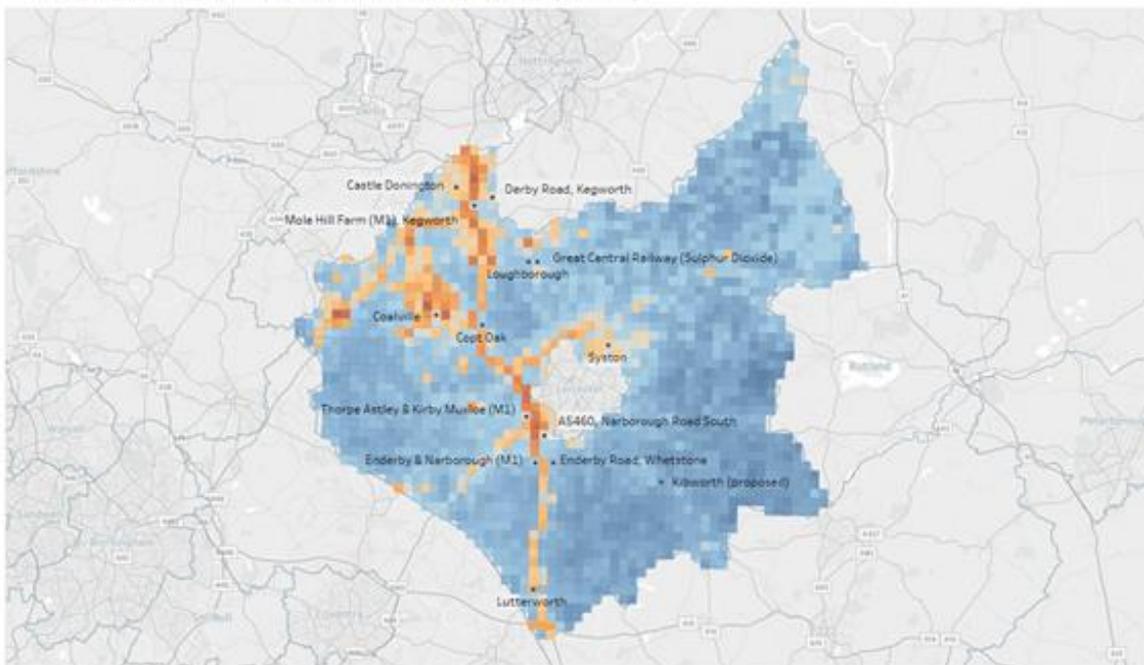
26. Air pollution is a major public health risk ranking alongside cancer, heart disease and obesity. Recent research has estimated that man-made air pollution in the UK has an annual impact on shortening lifespans, equivalent to 28,000 to 36,000 deaths.
27. Public Health England (PHE), in the 2014 publication 'Estimating Local Mortality Burdens Associated with Particulate Air pollution' assess that over 300 deaths in Leicestershire can be attributed to PM_{2.5} pollution. Combined with pollution from Nitrous Oxides, this figure could be higher. This compares to alcohol related mortality (291 deaths in 2015), and excess winter deaths (approximately 330 per year).
28. Conditions caused by air pollution not only cause deaths but also significantly reduce quality of life. They also mean that people are less able to work and need more medical care, resulting in higher social costs and burdens to the National Health Service. Those most affected are the young and old. Public Health England has identified air pollution as a top priority for action.
29. Deprived communities are more likely to experience adverse health effects from poor air quality because they are more exposed to air pollution, for example, by being close to major roads.
30. Recent research commissioned by Public Health England has found that the health and social care costs of air pollution (PM_{2.5} and NO₂) in England could

reach £5.3 billion by 2035. This is a cumulative cost for diseases which have a strong association with air pollution: coronary heart disease; stroke; lung cancer; and childhood asthma. When all diseases are included, air pollution is expected to cause 2.4 million new cases of disease in England between now and 2035.

31. Road vehicles are the main pollution source that people are exposed to in the most populated urban environments and the pollutants they cause and emit have the greatest health impacts. Combustion for heating, farming activities and certain industrial processes also contribute to air pollutant emissions, but these tend to be more diluted, contributing to background levels of air pollution. There are considerable differences in emissions between different vehicles and fuels. In general, diesel exhausts contain up to 30 times more PM than petrol or liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) / compressed natural gas (CNG), but all vehicles generate additional PM from friction of brakes and tyres and through re-suspension of dust from road surfaces.
32. There are currently 14 active AQMAs in Leicestershire (See Appendix B). These largely follow the map below in Figure 6 outlining PM_{2.5} levels across the county (cf. DPH Annual Report 2017).

Figure 6: Air quality in Leicestershire – PM_{2.5}

Air Quality in Leicestershire: Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5})



Source: DEFRA, 2013

Produced by the Strategic Business Intelligence Team, Leicestershire County Council, 2017.

33. The Council has or is already taking action to respond to air quality and related health issues. These include:-

- A commitment by the Health and Wellbeing Board to engage with local decision makers on air pollution, in particular to develop a strong strategic focus for tackling air pollution, championing action for all stakeholders, reviewing strategies and plans that may have an impact on air quality, recognising the air quality co-benefits and communicating with the public on air pollution;
- Through the Leicestershire & Rutland Sport Strategy 2017-2021 encouraging people to switch to active travel such as walking and cycling thus reducing the use of motor vehicles;
- Developing a chapter on Air Quality and Health as part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) which will provide a comprehensive assessment of the air quality and health related issues pertinent to Leicestershire and make recommendations on actions;
- Development of a Leicestershire Air Quality and Health Partnership Action Plan which will deliver on the recommendations of the JSNA report; and,
- Raise awareness of the Partnership Action Plan and active and sustainable travel campaign to coincide with World Environment Day on 5th June and Clean Air Day on 20th June 2019.

34. The commitments set out in the Strategy designed to protect the nation's health are as follows:-

- Aim to reduce the number of people living in locations above the $10 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ level by 50% by 2025;
- Publish evidence in 2019 to examine what action would be needed in order to meet the World Health Organisation (WHO) annual mean guideline of $10 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ of $\text{PM}_{2.5}$;
- Develop powers to enable targeted local action in areas with an air quality problem;
- Develop guidance material for doctors and other health care professionals and embed air quality into health professionals education and training;
- Help individuals and organisations understand how to reduce contributions to poor air quality;
- Work with the media to improve access to air quality forecast information;
- Provide personal air quality messaging system, particularly for those vulnerable to poor air quality; and,
- Update appraisal tools and guidance so health impacts of air quality are considered in every relevant policy decision.

Protecting the environment

35. The Clean Air Strategy is part of a wider government vision for creating and maintaining thriving places where people can live, work, bring up families and enjoy their free time.
36. The 25 Year Environment Plan sets out some of this wider vision in the form of the government's plans to secure clean air and water, protect our natural heritage, innovate to achieve clean growth and increase resource efficiency. This will provide benefits to both the environment and the economy.

37. The Strategy acknowledges that having clean, green and healthy environments in urban and rural areas are an essential component of progress, not a barrier to economic development.
38. Over time, emissions of air pollutants have had negative impacts on plant and animal communities in many habitats. Some examples highlighted include; the impact of excess atmospheric nitrogen from farming practices on plants and the knock on effects on wildlife such as bees, butterflies and other insects; how excess nitrogen also contributes to the release of harmful greenhouse gases contributing to climate change; the impact of ground level ozone in reducing plant growth, flowering and crop yields, affecting nature, agriculture and horticulture; and the impact of micro-plastics from tyres on marine wildlife and the food chain.
39. The commitments set out in the Strategy designed to protect the environment are as follows:-
- Set a target for the reduction of damaging nitrogen deposition by 17% over England's protected sensitive habitats by 2030 and review longer term targets;
 - Provide guidance to local authorities explaining how the cumulative impacts of nitrogen deposition on natural habitats should be mitigated and assessed through the planning system; and,
 - Monitor the impacts of air pollution on natural habitats and provide an annual report.

Securing clean growth and driving innovation

40. Clean growth means growing the national income whilst tackling air pollution, protecting the natural environment, and cutting greenhouse gas emissions. It is about boosting productivity by improving air quality, using resources efficiently and making the shift to a low carbon economy. The Clean Growth Strategy sets out the government's plans to achieve this.
41. Cleaner air leads to increased productivity through improvements in public health, leading to reduced workplace absence, and through the creation of an environment that is appealing to businesses and the public alike.
42. There are significant opportunities for UK industries to become global leaders in clean, green technologies. The UK low carbon economy has the potential to deliver between £60 billion and £170 billion of export sales of goods and services by 2030. To help realise these opportunities, the Industrial Strategy announced a Clean Growth Grand Challenge, focused on maximising the advantages for UK industry from the global shift to clean growth.
43. The commitments set out in the Strategy designed to secure clean growth and drive innovation are as follows:-
- Consult on making the conversion of power stations from coal to biomass ineligible for future allocation rounds of the 'contracts for difference' scheme;

- Phase out coal fired power stations;
- Minimise the air quality impacts of the Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme and tackle non-compliance;
- Support the development, manufacture and use of technologies, systems and services that improve air quality; and,
- Provide a research programme to promote the development of cleaner technologies.

Action to reduce emissions from transport

44. The government has identified that the most immediate and urgent air quality challenge faced by local authorities is to tackle the problem of NO₂ concentrations around roads; road transport is responsible for approximately 80% of roadside NO_x concentrations. More than £3.5 billion has already been committed to tackle poor air quality through cleaner road transport. A number of commitments are set out in the Strategy designed to reduce emissions from all forms of transport:-

- Provision of extensive guidance (such as the *Clean Air Zone Framework for England* published in 2017) for local authorities directed to develop local air quality plans to address roadside NO_x concentrations, which exceed EU limits. This includes Leicester City Council, who are currently working with the government's *Joint Air Quality Unit (JAQU)*, to carry out feasibility work to establish the location of exceedances and identify a package of measures to bring forward compliance. The County Council are working closely with the City Council, providing modelling support and assisting with the development of measures. No district council in Leicestershire has been required to prepare a plan;
- Establishing a £1.7 billion Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) for new local transport infrastructure to boost productivity, reduce congestion and improve air quality by improving public and sustainable transport connectivity. The City Council has been shortlisted to receive a share of the TCF and the Council is currently working with the City Council to support the development of their TCF proposals;
- £1.2 billion of additional investment in cycling and walking between 2016-2021, as set out in the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy. To date the County Council for example, have been successful in securing £115k pa for countywide Bikeability cycle training and £3.2m with the City Council for walking and cycling measures in the Leicester urban area;
- Supporting a move to lower emission road vehicles and more active forms of travel;
- Ending the sale of all new conventional petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2040;
- Researching and developing new standards for tyres and brakes to address toxic non-exhaust particulate emissions;

- Reviewing current uses of red diesel and ensuring its lower cost is not discouraging a transition to cleaner alternatives;
 - Publication of the Aviation 2050 and Maritime 2050 strategies;
 - Requiring ports to produce air quality strategies by the end of 2019;
 - Passing new legislation to enable the Transport Secretary to compel manufactures to recall vehicles for failures in emissions control systems;
 - Provision of a ring-fenced Strategic Freight Network fund to improve the capacity and capability of the rail network for freight and encourage modal shift;
 - Phasing out of diesel-only trains by 2040; and,
 - Exploring permitting approaches to reduce emissions from non-road mobile machinery.
45. Many of these commitments fall outside of the direct responsibility of the County Council as LHA, either because they require national action by government, the funding streams are not appropriate to it, or because it does not have direct responsibilities for the particular mode of transport (e.g. rail).
46. Other commitments are within the LHA's remit, especially in respect of promoting more active forms of travel. Given the geography of the County of Leicestershire, i.e. an essentially rural area with the majority of main towns dispersed towards its boundary, 'car-borne' mobility will continue to remain an important form of transport for many residents (even if this becomes cleaner and more autonomous). Nevertheless, as set out in the report to the March meeting of this Committee on the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence Draft Quality Standards and how Leicestershire County Council might address them, the County Council's Environment and Transport and Public Health Departments are pursuing a considerable range of initiatives to promote active travel. Briefly summarised, these initiatives include:-
- seeking to ensure that new developments are designed to provide safe, high quality walking and cycling routes;
 - seeking to secure through the planning process developer contributions (Section 106 Agreements) towards cycling, walking and public transport improvements;
 - ensuring that cycling, walking and public transport is inherent within the design process of the County Council's own highway improvement schemes, and where possible also looking to take opportunities to improve existing infrastructure and cater for sustainable travel options as part of any road maintenance schemes it undertakes;
 - promoting and encouraging active, safe and sustainable travel in schools and businesses and through its flagship 'Choose How You Move' brand and website; and,

- delivery of specific projects, including working in partnership with Leicester City Council to deliver the £3 million (revenue) Department for Transport funded Access Fund project.

47. The County Council's Network Management Plan sets out a number of options available to tackle air quality, including; maintaining and managing the road network so that it operates as efficiently and effectively as possible, reducing the need to travel by car, encouraging the use of sustainable transport, influencing how people travel, and introducing improvements to tackle congestion.

Action to reduce emissions at home

48. One of the aims of the Strategy is to raise awareness of the breadth of everyday activities that contribute to air pollution. Many of these activities take place in and around the home.

49. The principal forms of indoor air pollution are particulate matter (PM) and Non-Methane Volatile Organic Compounds (NMVOCs). PM is produced by many forms of cooking and home heating, most notably from combustion in open fires and stoves. NMVOCs are emitted by a wide variety of chemicals that are found in carpets, upholstery, paint, cleaning products, fragrance, and personal care products. Sulphur dioxide (SO₂) is emitted by coal burned in open fires.

50. Indoor air pollution increases people's exposure to emissions and the potential health implications. The Strategy seeks to raise awareness and to ensure people are armed with reliable information enabling them to make informed choices to protect themselves, their families and their neighbours.

51. The commitments set out in the Strategy designed to reduce emissions at home are as follows:-

- Legislate to prohibit the sale of the most polluting fuels;
- Ensure that only the cleanest stoves are available for sale by 2022;
- Develop a campaign to make users of domestic burners more aware of the environmental and public health impacts of their use;
- Improve public awareness of the build-up of non-methane volatile organic compounds (NMVOC) in the home and the importance of ventilation;
- Make it easier to enforce the existing smoke control legislation;
- Give new powers to local authorities to take action in areas of high pollution;
- Promote the development of lower VOC content products;
- Better inform consumers about the VOC content of everyday products, e.g. voluntary labelling scheme;
- Explore opportunities to align air quality work with clean growth and fuel poverty in future policy design; and,
- Consult on changes to the Building Regulations standards for ventilation in homes and other buildings to help reduce build-up of harmful indoor air pollutants.

Action to reduce emissions from farming

52. Farming has an important role to play in protecting the environment by keeping the air and rivers clean, improving soils, and providing habitats for wildlife. However, farming is also a major contributor of some forms of air pollution, in particular ammonia (88% of UK emissions), methane (51% of UK emissions) and NMVOC (14% of emissions).
53. The commitments set out in the Strategy designed to reduce emissions from farming are as follows:-
- Regulations to reduce ammonia emissions by requiring adoption of low emissions techniques;
 - Ensure ammonia inventory reflects farming practice;
 - Provide a national code of practice to reduce ammonia emissions;
 - A future environmental land management system will fund protection of habitats impacted by ammonia;
 - Regulations to minimise pollution from fertiliser use;
 - Support farmers to invest in farm infrastructure that will reduce emissions; and,
 - Extension of environmental permitting to the dairy and intensive beef sectors.

Action to reduce emissions from industry

54. Industrial processes, including energy generation to power businesses and homes, and the manufacture of goods and food can all create pollution. These processes are carefully managed to avoid potentially significant impacts on health and the environment and this has already resulted in reductions in air pollution.
55. However, emissions from industrial sources still contribute to background levels of pollution throughout the UK. Reducing these emissions further, alongside action on other sources, will have a direct impact on the concentration of air pollutants in those places where people live and work.
56. The commitments set out in the Strategy designed to reduce emissions from industry are as follows:-
- Maintain policy of continuous improvement in relation to industrial emissions;
 - ensure there is a clear process for determining future UK Best Available Techniques for industrial emissions;
 - consider closing regulatory gap between Eco-design and medium combustion plant regulations; and,
 - develop a series of ambitious sector roadmaps to make UK industry world leaders in clean technology.

Leadership at all levels

57. Air pollution does not stop at national or local borders and emissions produced in another part of the globe can impact on air quality in the UK and in Leicestershire. Because of this there is a need for leadership at all levels to tackle air pollution.
58. The government set legally binding national emissions reduction targets in February 2018 and published an initial National Air Pollution Control Programme in April 2019. A new Office for Environmental Protection will be established following the UK's exit from the EU to hold the government to account, including through legal proceedings if necessary on environmental legislation. A new legislative framework for tackling air pollution will be introduced and will include new local powers to take action in areas with an air pollution problem.
59. The Strategy acknowledges that the variability of local government structures, where responsibility for local air quality sits and the nature of the current legislative framework has not driven sufficient action at a local level. Furthermore, it says that the framework does not effectively encourage all local authorities to work collaboratively across departmental or structural boundaries or take a total emissions approach to tackling local air quality.
60. In light of this, the government are considering a number of options including:-
- Ensuring accountability sits at the right tier of the local government structure;
 - shifting the focus towards prevention, promoting greater action to avoid exceedances, rather than tackling air pollution only when limits are surpassed;
 - creating the concept of a 'lead authority' with requirements on neighbouring local authorities and other public bodies to work collectively to tackle air pollution;
 - requiring local authorities to create an action plan to reduce population exposure during Air Pollution Episodes to protect public health;
 - enabling greater local action on PM_{2.5} by updating the Smoke Control Area (SCA) framework;
 - enabling greater local action by improving guidance on the use of existing local powers, strengthening these powers where necessary and introducing new powers; and,
 - developing clear, effective guidance on how AQMAs, SCAs and Clean Air Zones (CAZs) interrelate and how they can be used by local government to tackle air pollution.
61. The commitments set out in the Strategy designed to ensure leadership at all levels are as follows:-
- Update the legislative framework for tackling air quality issues at a national and local level, tying this into the development of the Environment Bill;

- strengthen collaboration between DEFRA and BEIS in order to fairly and objectively articulate the trade-offs between energy and public health when developing strategies;
- establish an Office of Environmental Protection; and,
- work with local authorities and Directors of Public Health to equip and enable them to lead and inform local decision-making to improve air quality.

62. Many of the actions set out in this section of the Strategy will require greater action at a local level but will also make local action easier and less burdensome. The Strategy says that 'where cost recovery is permitted and available, we will look to support local government to ensure it is able to fully cover their costs.'

Cross-sectoral responses to the Strategy

63. While there has been a general welcome of the Clean Air Strategy as a strengthened plan of how the UK proposes to cut pollution, many groups have criticised the lack of detail and funding provided in the Strategy.

64. There have been particular concerns about the effectiveness of the proposed actions to tackle air quality from transport and fears that the responsibility is being placed on local authorities with increasing resource pressures.

65. There has been welcome of the government's adoption of the PM2.5 standard and the pledge to halve non-compliance by 2025.

Conclusions

66. Despite the adoption of the Clean Air Strategy, the level of government funding available to tackle air quality issues is, in relative terms, small; the emphasis of the majority of available government funding is instead on economic growth and housing delivery. This reflects a general lack of concentrated and co-ordinated action by government to tackle air quality problems across the country, instead passing on responsibilities to individual authorities.

67. Notwithstanding the initiatives outlined in paragraphs 46 to 47 of this report, Leicestershire continues to have heavy levels of traffic in many areas, with additional traffic pressures likely to be brought about as a result of population and economic growth. It is recognised that district councils in Leicestershire face a major challenge meeting future housing and employment needs without increasing congestion and reducing air quality.

68. A planned approach to dealing with growth represents the best way to seek to address the challenge. The recently approved Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan to 2050 provides a strategic and coordinated approach to broad spatial plans and strategic infrastructure provision. This in turn will be supported by a Strategic Transport Plan which is currently in joint development with Leicester City Council. This will provide the strategic framework within which district councils develop their own Local Plans and the LHA will continue to provide input to their development.

69. In the planning process the LHA is a statutory consultee and provides highway advice to districts on the impact of new development on the local highway network. In its 'planning and development' role the LHA will continue to work with districts to seek to ensure that development is located where there is convenient access to local amenities, public transport and walking and cycling facilities with the intention of reducing car journeys and avoiding creating future air quality problems.
70. However, it is not within the remit of the LHA to comment on the air quality impact of development proposals. In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, the LHA has grounds to resist a planning application only where the highway impact of development is considered to be severe or where there is considered to be an unacceptable safety risk. Ultimately it is for the relevant Local Planning Authority, as the decision-making body, to determine the acceptability of development proposals.
71. Given the above, there has to be a degree of realism about what can be achieved by the LHA in the short to medium-term in addressing air quality issues.
72. Of increasing relevance is the Director of Public Health's statutory duty to protect the health of the local population, particularly as air pollution is increasingly being seen as a serious public health issue. The Clean Air Strategy will inform the work of a steering group established to develop the Leicestershire Air Quality and Health Partnership Action Plan with the aim of improving air quality across Leicestershire and reducing or mitigating against the harmful health impacts of air pollutants. This will build on the actions set out in paragraph 33 and seek to compliment and support actions being undertaken as part of the delivery of the Council's Environment Strategy.
73. While this report has focussed on those aspects relevant to the Environment and Transport Department and Public Health the Council is also undertaking activity that contributes to other aspects of the Strategy such as:-
- working with the LLEP in developing a Local Industrial Strategy that supports clean growth;
 - carrying out a Green Fleet Review to identify how the Council can reduce emissions from its operational and grey fleets;
 - ambition to create a low carbon sustainable development at the Lutterworth East scheme;
 - creating Fosse Energy with Leicester City Council which now provides affordable energy to residents from renewable sources;
 - developing a strategic approach to biodiversity for the Council
 - reducing the use of single use plastics; and,
 - an aspiration to examine how the environmental impact of the county farms portfolio might be reduced.

Circulation under Local Issues Alert Procedure

None.

Equal Opportunities and Human Rights Implications

None.

Appendices

Appendix A – Commitments in the Clean Air Strategy 2019

Appendix B – List of Active Air Quality Management Areas in Leicestershire

Background Papers

Leicestershire's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017 – 2022:

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2016/10/11/Leics%20JHWS%202017-22v2.pdf>

Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2017. Leicestershire's health – new insights into our population:

<http://www.lsr-online.org/uploads/dph-annual-report-2017.pdf>

7 March 2019 - Report to Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 'National Institute for Health and Care Excellence Draft Quality Standards and How Leicestershire County Council Might Address Them':

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1044&MId=5703&Ver=4>

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