



<b>Report to:</b>	Climate, Energy and Environment Committee
<b>Date:</b>	24 October 2023
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Air Quality</b>
<b>Director:</b>	Melanie Corcoran, Director of Transport Policy and Delivery
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Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	
Are there implications for equality and diversity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

## 1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide the Committee Members with an update on the air quality activity and policy work being undertaken by the Combined Authority.

## 2. Information

- 2.1 Poor air quality is a significant challenge in the region. There are currently 36 Air Quality Management Areas in West Yorkshire and Bradford's Class C+ Clean Air Zone went live in September 2022 to bring levels of nitrogen dioxide within legal limits. Although air quality is a statutory responsibility of the West Yorkshire Local Authorities, the Combined Authority continues to support the work they do to improve air quality for everyone who lives and works in West Yorkshire.
- 2.2 The Public Health Outcomes Indicator for air pollution points to the equivalent of one in twenty deaths in West Yorkshire each year being attributable to poor air quality, and poor air quality has been estimated to cost £16 billion to the UK economy. Areas experiencing high levels of deprivation are often affected disproportionately by poor air quality and 20% of neighbourhoods in West Yorkshire are categorised in the 10% most deprived in England, equivalent to more than half a million people.

### West Yorkshire Air Quality Strategy

- 2.3 The West Yorkshire Low Emission Strategy (WYLES) was developed through a collaboration between the West Yorkshire district partners, West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Public Health England. The strategy was adopted in 2016 by all district partners and by the Combined Authority in 2017. The purpose of the strategy was to provide a regional framework to support policy and action for air quality improvements, improve cross-boundary cooperation at a local level, and enable the compliance of air quality legal targets at the shortest time possible.
- 2.4 WYLES focused specifically on emissions from transport as a primary source of poor air quality in the region. The 36 Air Quality Management Areas in West Yorkshire and Clean Air Zone in Bradford are all areas in which nitrogen dioxide emissions exceed the annual/hourly statutory limits as direct result of road traffic pollution.
- 2.5 Since the adoption of WYLES, there have been a number of developments in air quality policy and legislation. This includes the Environment Act 2021, which provides the Government with powers to set new binding targets, including for air quality, water, biodiversity, and waste reduction. This includes new targets for more stringent air quality targets on fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>). It also sets an expectation for greater regional working on air quality.
- 2.6 Work is now underway through the WYLES Delivery Group to develop a new air quality strategy for the region, which is intended to be incorporated in West Yorkshire's ongoing climate and environment work and inform the emerging Local Transport Plan. The new strategy, planned for 2024, will look to build on the foundations of the WYLES, updating our policies to reflect the introduction of the Clean Air Zone in Bradford and the increased emphasis on particulate matter alongside nitrogen dioxide as a result of the Environment Act 2021.

### **Improving our understanding of particulate matter (PM)**

- 2.7 Existing local authority air quality monitoring networks are mostly aimed towards monitoring emissions from traffic sources and work to improve understanding particulate matter emission sources is required. Recent Government data found that road transport sources contributed only 13% of PM<sub>2.5</sub> emission, which suggests a rebalancing of future air quality improvement policy and initiatives is likely to be needed.
- 2.8 There are a number of regional projects ongoing on particulate matter to enable our local understanding. One such project is the West Yorkshire Particulate Information Improvement Project (PIIP), funded by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) through their air quality grant scheme to run until March 2025. The project was developed in partnership with the WYLES Delivery Group, is also supported by partnerships with Leeds Beckett University and the University of Leeds.

- 2.9 It has been designed to significantly improve knowledge and understanding of particulate matter locally, improving awareness and bridging the knowledge gap surrounding regional particulate matter data. This will provide a better understanding of which sources are having greatest impacts on our communities, enable interventions to be targeted most effectively.
- 2.10 The project comprises four work packages which include enhancing the West Yorkshire particulate matter monitoring network, a particulate dashboard and regional air quality public information page, and research projects by university partners. Work is underway to develop the specification for the Particulate Matter Information Dashboard as well as identify research areas for our Leeds Beckett University and University of Leeds research partners.
- 2.11 In addition to this, WYLES Delivery Group have commissioned consultants to undertake a study to identify, locate and quantify key sources of particulate matter outside of transport across West Yorkshire. This work will be complimented with additional research into transport PM sources upon completion of the new West Yorkshire transport model currently in development. Collectively, these workstreams will be combined with our existing evidence on nitrogen dioxide emissions to support the development of a new air quality strategy for West Yorkshire. This will support our wider climate and environment work, and help identify more effective policy solutions and interventions to tackle air quality challenges within the region.

### **3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications**

- 3.1 The air quality strategy work will help realise the Mayoral pledge to 'Tackle the climate emergency and protect the environment'. The PM work will significantly improve knowledge and understanding of air quality challenges and potential impacts on communities and the environment and enable us to target future intervention measures more appropriately.

### **4. Inclusive Growth Implications**

- 4.1 Air quality policy and schemes indirectly supports inclusive growth: areas experiencing high levels of deprivation in West Yorkshire are often disproportionately affected by poor air quality and this work will support better decision-making on air quality interventions. Our ambition is to improve health outcomes in West Yorkshire and support environmental improvements to make better places, which in turn will help to foster inclusive growth.

### **5. Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 5.1 An aim of this work is to ensure that policies and interventions are targeted at the most vulnerable communities experiencing the highest exposures. Areas experiencing high levels of deprivation in West Yorkshire are often disproportionately affected by poor air

quality. Poor air quality often disproportionately impact groups with protected characteristics, include race, age, disability and pregnancy and maternity. The work will help to focus interventions on the most vulnerable communities experiencing the highest exposures.

## **6. Financial Implications**

6.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

## **7. Legal Implications**

7.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

## **8. Staffing Implications**

8.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

## **9. External Consultees**

9.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

## **10. Recommendations**

10.1 That Climate, Energy and Environment Committee note the regional air quality strategy work being undertaken by the Combined Authority and district partners.

## **11. Background Documents**

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

## **12. Appendices**

None.