

**Health and Wellbeing Board**

**23 July 2018**

**Supporting improvements to air quality through the ‘Shaping a Sustainable Healthy Environment Programme.’**

**1. Purpose**

A report came to the Health and Wellbeing Board on 10<sup>th</sup> April providing a brief update on air quality issues at a national and local level.

An outcome of this meeting was that members were keen to look at ways to address this and it was suggested that as the Board was committed to improving the lives of residents, it should do this by starting on its collective workforce. It was resolved that Board members take the issues raised to their organisations for discussion and subsequently report back to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The purpose of this report is to inform members of the Health and Wellbeing Board of how Walsall Council, with its partners, is further Supporting improvements to air quality through the ‘Shaping a Sustainable Healthy Environment Programme.’

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the Health and Wellbeing Board acknowledges and supports the current work underway by the ‘Shaping a Sustainable Healthy Environment Programme’ to improve air quality in Walsall.
- 2.2 That Health and Wellbeing Board Members consider what they can do to support this agenda.

**3. Report detail**

- 3.1 Air Quality is a priority area for Walsall and a report taken to the Health and Wellbeing Board on 10<sup>th</sup> April, in Appendix I, provided an update on current national and local issues
- 3.2 Walsall Council Transformation project “Shaping a Sustainable Healthy Environment” focuses on improving residents health through their environment and has 4 key themes:
  - Where we live
  - Where we play

- Where we eat
- Where we travel

Membership of this Board includes officers from Public Health, Transport, Planning, Environmental Health, Resources, Clean Green, Housing and Procurement.

A Transport and Health Sub Group focussing on “where we travel” includes officers from Transport, West Midlands Combined Authority, Transport, West Midlands, Licensing and Public Health and aims to pool expertise and develop programmes of work to ensure better use of Walsall’s transport network, particularly in the promotion of healthy living.

There is a detailed action plan and indicators. Those that contribute to air quality are:

- Increase the number of electric vehicle charging points within the authority by March 2019.

Currently we are identifying suitable buildings and establishing an operational model for Walsall Council.

- Actions to increase modal share of active and sustainable travel acknowledging the Cycle Charter Target of an increase in cycle mode share to 5% of all trips by 2023 and 10% of all trips by 2033 with key actions

While there are a range of actions being delivered in Walsall in relation to this, one example of some recent activity to promote cycling in Walsall and to highlight the benefits that cycling brings to the environment as well as to health and the local economy was a recent campaign of activity as part of national Bike Week 2018 (9-17 June 2018). The campaign was promoted through a dedicated cycle to Work Day on 15th June. This involved employees across Walsall Council and partners (e.g. Police and Fire Service?) cycling from various places across the West Midlands into Walsall. There were over 35 cyclists from Walsall Council and partner organisations. The opportunity was used to gather insights on local cycle routes and whether cyclists would consider cycling to work again. 28 employees including half who were not regular cyclists reported that they would.

As part of a comprehensive approach to the ongoing promotion of cycling in Walsall we will be:

- Promoting and getting involved in the official Cycle to Work Day 15<sup>th</sup> August and asking partners to do the same
- Planning a Walsall Green Spaces Event in 2019 to be held in conjunction with the launch of the Bikeshare Scheme
- Promoting existing Walsall Council Services to support cycling:

- Pool Bike Scheme – Bikes available for staff to travel to and from meetings.
- Cycle to Work Initiative - enables Walsall Council to lease bikes and associated safety equipment to their employees through what's called salary sacrifice.
- Cycle mileage – option to for cycle mileage to be claimed by staff

3.3 The impact of air pollutants (PM2.5) on acute care admissions for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) has been investigated. From April 2016-December 2017, monthly PM2.5 levels ranged from 6.99-18.36 g/m<sup>3</sup>, and positively correlated with COPD admissions. Peak pollutant levels, observed in January 2017, precipitated an excess of 53 admissions compared to the baseline, representing an 11.3% increase. The estimated cost to the local NHS economy of these excess admissions during this single month was £123,483, non-inclusive of the wider social and economic costs.

Some of the highest levels of pollutants were observed in areas of high deprivation, which also accounted disproportionately for COPD admissions. The link between clean air and better emotional and mental well-being is well-evidenced. Therefore, reducing air pollution is imperative to achieving a healthier and fairer society.

Current work involves expanding the data collection system and including other emission indicators to allow for enhanced modelling.

#### **4. Implications for Joint Working arrangements:**

Joint working is at the heart of this work and the successful delivery of identified actions will require an ongoing joint working/partnership approach.

#### **5. Health and Wellbeing Priorities:**

With an aim to promote cycling across Walsall, this will contribute to the below Health and Wellbeing priorities:

- Maximising people's health, wellbeing and safety
- Creating healthy and sustainable places and communities
- Improve air quality
- Promote environmental sustainability

#### **Background papers**

Appendix I - Air quality update for Walsall Health and Wellbeing Board April 2018  
<https://cmispublic.walsall.gov.uk/cmis/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/2539/Committee/365/Default.aspx>

Appendix 2 – Bike Week 2018

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