

Report of the Corporate Director – Economy and Place

## **National Clean Air Day**

### **Summary**

1. The first UK National Clean Air Day will take place on 15 June 2017. The purpose of the day is to inspire people across the UK to reduce their emissions and exposure to air pollution. City of York Council (CYC) has been invited to be an official supporter of the event. This report outlines the background to the National Clean Air Day and asks the Executive Member to endorse the event on behalf of CYC.

### **Background**

2. Many of the UK's cities currently exceed the safe and legal limits for air pollution, mainly due to emissions arising from road transport. York's air quality has generally been improving in recent years, however the City currently has three Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) where the Government's health based objectives for nitrogen dioxide are not met.
3. The UK government is under immense pressure to improve air quality. It is facing infraction proceedings by the EU for breach of the EU air quality standards, and the government's national air quality action plan has been deemed inadequate by the high court following a legal challenge by Client Earth.
4. Public information on air quality and health is currently released in an ad-hoc manner from a variety of health, research and charitable organisations. Information is often in a format which is inaccessible or confusing to the general public and is used by the media to create headlines, rather than providing a clear picture of the scale of the problem, the level of risk and the potential solutions.
5. There has never been a high profile national campaign around air quality and health, similar to those already undertaken for other high

profile health issues such as alcohol consumption, wearing of seatbelts, smoking etc. Consequently a large proportion of the general public are ill informed about the health impacts of air pollutants, how to reduce their exposure and how to reduce their own emission contribution.

### **National Clean Air Day**

6. The aim of the first National Clean Air Day is to raise the profile of air pollution as a serious health issue by providing some simple high level messages to inspire people across the UK to reduce their emissions and exposure to air pollution.
7. The day is supported by a £500,000 DEFRA air quality grant bid and co-ordinated by environmental change charity, Global Action Plan. <https://www.globalactionplan.org.uk/ncad2017> . Many high profile organisations such as Public Health England (PHE), the British Lung Foundation (BLF) and King's College London have already agreed to be official supporters of the event.
8. Fully funded and resourced events are already being planned in local schools, hospitals and communities across Birmingham, Derby, Leeds, Manchester, Nottingham and Southampton. With the exception of Manchester, these are the cities already mandated to have compulsory Clean Air Zones (CAZs) by 2020 due to identified exceedances of the EU air quality standards by the national air pollution model.
9. There is no financial contribution needed to become an official supporter. Supporters are required to provide their organisations logo for use on the website (and associated materials) and to commit to a minimum level of action on the day. This can be as simple as sending out tweets about the event and engaging with the media at a local level. If you are interested in becoming a supporter of the event, please contact the officers via [public.protection@york.gov.uk](mailto:public.protection@york.gov.uk) or telephone 01904 551525.

### **Implications for CYC of supporting the event**

10. CYC would not benefit from the staffing resources being provided to the larger CAZ cities to help run events, but will have access to free guides and toolkits being made available online to support action at a local level in all local authorities.
11. There is some DEFRA air quality grant funding existing within CYC which could be used to support the production of materials for the day.

Whilst there would be no additional direct costs to CYC, it is anticipated that the event will be supported corporately by the council.

12. It is recommended that Public Protection Air Quality Staff lead on the 'National Clean Air Day'. Potential supporters such as other Council services, partner organisations, interested Members and local volunteers will be identified and an initial meeting set up to gauge levels of interest / commitment from them.
13. It is anticipated that a minimum of three meetings of 2 hour duration would be needed to introduce the subject, review the national materials and agree a course of action for York. As delivery materials, event ideas and publications will be provided via the national campaign website it is anticipated that minimum planning time will be needed to deliver small scale 'off the shelf' events. Any administrative tasks can be co-ordinated by Public Protection Air Quality staff.
14. The scope and number of events on the day will be dictated by the number of partners and volunteers coming forward to assist and their personal areas of interest / expertise. With respect to York's current Air Quality Action Plan, a focus on anti-idling outside key locations could be a focus of activity.
15. Involvement in National Clean Air Day will support a number of measures in the current York Air Quality Action Plan, the I-Travel York campaign and public health outcomes.

### **Options**

16. **Option 1** – for CYC to officially support and endorse National Clean Air Day 2017 with Public Protection Officers leading local events on the ground in partnership with local partners and volunteers. Choosing this option will formally commit CYC to delivering the minimum level of support to the day as set out in paragraph 9. Additional events will be provided at a level which reflects the level of resourcing made available for the day via CYC, partners and volunteer forces.
17. **Option 2** – publicise and endorse National Clean Air Day but take no further action
18. **Option 3** - for CYC not to support and endorse National Clean Air Day 2017 and to take no further part in the planned events.

## Recommendations

19. The Executive Member is recommended to choose option 1.

Reason: This will help to raise awareness of air quality and health issues in York and support development of a wider air quality marketing and communications strategy (as detailed in measure 10 of the current York Air Quality Action Plan).

20. Depending on the scope of the final activities it may also support the following AQAP3 measures:

- Measure 2: Development and implementation of anti-idling measures
- Measure 13: Modal shift and network improvement measures

21. Increasing awareness of air quality health issues and emission reduction strategies will also help to support the I-travel York campaign and Public Health Outcome indicator 3.01 (relating to the fraction of mortality attributable to particulate air pollution).

## Council Objectives

22. Supporting National Clean Air Day 2017 will support the council plan as follows:

- **A prosperous city for all** – Clean air is an essential ingredient for the provision of a safe city where both residents and visitors can enjoy everything the city has to offer without putting their health at risk.
- **A focus on frontline services** – Taking part in National Clean Air Day will help to encourage and support residents to lead healthy lives, protect them from harm and ensure children get the best start in life.
- **A council that listens to residents** - Taking part in National Clean Air Day will provide an opportunity to engage directly in conversations with residents about their views, concerns and needs in relation to air quality and health.

## **Implications**

23. The various implications of this report are summarised below:

### **(a) Financial**

This report has no direct financial implications. As detailed in the main report there is no charge for supporting the day and it is expected that other resourcing / materials costs can be met out of existing DEFRA air quality grant funding held by CYC. The main cost will be providing promotional material and printing which should amount to no more than £500.

### **(b) Equalities**

Older people, children, pregnant women and vulnerable people with respiratory and other illnesses are more likely to be adversely affected by poor air quality. Where possible the National Clean Air Day events held in York will be arranged in a manner which has maximum benefit to these groups. Work with schools and the hospital will be prioritised for the day.

### **(c) Legal**

CYC has a statutory duty to periodically review the air quality within its area both at the present time and as regards future air quality. There is a duty to designate an AQMA where air quality objectives are not being achieved or are not likely to be achieved. Once an area has been designated there is a duty to carry out an assessment and prepare an air quality action plan (AQAP) for the area. DEFRA have issued statutory guidance to which the council must have regard in exercising these functions. This includes annual reporting on progress with delivery of AQAPs via Annual Status Reports. Involvement in National Clean Air Day supports delivery of the current York AQAP.

## **Risk management**

24. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy, failing to meet the health based air quality targets, considering the likelihood and impact, the current net risk rating is 21 or High. The continued implementation of the York Low Emission Strategy (LES) and AQAP3 should reduce the risk

to Medium. Educating the public on the risks associated with exposure to air pollutants and how to prevent exposure to poor air quality supports the implementation of the LES and AQAP3.

### Contact Details

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<b>Specialist Implications Officer(s)</b>						
None						
<b>Wards Affected:</b>					<b>All</b>	✓
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### Abbreviations

AQAP3	Air Quality Action Plan
AQMA	Air Quality Management Area
BLF	British Lung Foundation
CAZ	Clean Air Zone
CYC	City of York Council
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EU	European Union
LES	Low Emission Strategy
PHE	Public Health England