

BARNSLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL (BMBC)

REPORT OF: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CORE SERVICES

TITLE: SCRUTINY TASK AND FINISH GROUP (TFG) REPORT ON AIR QUALITY AND CARBON REDUCTION IN BARNSLEY

REPORT TO:	CABINET
Date of Meeting	6th April 2022
Cabinet Member Portfolio	N/A
Key Decision	No
Public or Private	Public

Purpose of Report

To report to Cabinet the findings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC) from the investigation undertaken on its behalf by the Air Quality & Carbon Reduction Task & Finish Group (TFG).

Council Plan Priority

- Healthy Barnsley
- Growing Barnsley
- Sustainable Barnsley
- Enabling Barnsley

Recommendations

- 1. Introduce widespread monitoring of fine particulate matter (PM2.5).**
- 2. Work towards achieving World Health Organization's (WHO's) guideline values for ambient air for PM2.5, PM10 (coarse particulate matter) and nitrogen dioxide across the borough and amend/introduce policies to reflect the aspiration.**
- 3. Introduce consistent monitoring of air quality across the borough and increase the robustness of information gathering through the use of mobile measuring equipment and working with elected members and residents to reduce the use of modelling.**
- 4. Effectively use data to inform management decisions and communicate the information to residents in a clear and concise way so that they are aware of the quality of the air they breathe in the locations they frequent.**
- 5. To protect the health of children and young people, promote more schemes to reduce air pollution around schools and facilities frequented by children and young people.**

- 6. Utilise new powers within the Environment Act 2021 to strengthen enforcement to restrict the amount of smoke emissions from domestic burning.**
- 7. Work with front line health professionals to raise their awareness of the links between respiratory ill-health and the patients' environment.**
- 8. Adopt the electrification of fleets for vehicles within the organisations control and work towards providing on-street electric vehicle charging points for those without private driveways.**
- 9. Review the active travel policies to ensure they realistically facilitate and encourage a move to sustainable transport, including the provision of cleaner, convenient, reliable and affordable public transport.**
- 10. Increase the scrutiny and monitoring of sustainable travel plans and consider introducing penalties for non-compliance.**
- 11. Investigate the viability of a Park & Ride scheme for the hospital staff and visitors.**
- 12. Adopt a more appropriate review cycle to ensure planning documents such as the Local Plan and SPD's reflect current guidance, knowledge, technologies and priorities to ensure they are fit for purpose to meet the Zero40 and Zero45 ambitions and air quality aspirations.**
- 13. Introduce a higher carbon reduction requirement in all new properties before the Future Homes Standard is introduced and adopt the Future Homes Standard at the earliest opportunity.**
- 14. Replicate the principles of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Plan across all council owned assets.**
- 15. Provide segregated litter bins to allow the recycling of litter in the town centre and surrounding areas.**
- 16. Work around the Zero40/45 ambitions and air quality aspirations should be added to future work programmes, as a significant content of the existing work streams of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.**
- 17. Publish quarterly information and data as to how the Council is achieving its SEAP targets and seek to find increasingly effective ways to engage with all residents on the Zero40 and Zero45 agendas.**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The impact of climate change is already causing serious damage around the world and the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report published in October 2018 warned of the rapid and far-reaching consequences of the earth's warming. It concluded that, to limit global warming and the most extreme impacts of climate change, would require a similarly rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented change in all aspects of society.

- 1.2 In response, BMBC's Cabinet set out in its climate emergency declaration in September 2019, an 'ambitious and realistic' vision for the borough to become net zero carbon by 2045 and as an organisation to lead by example to become net zero carbon by 2040.
- 1.3 In December 2020, as part of its work programme, the OSC scrutinised BMBC's Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) 2020-2025, which sets out how the council will deliver on the commitment made by Cabinet in September 2019, and it was as a result of this session that the OSC agreed to continue the work and undertake a task and finish group investigation into a related topic.
- 1.4 Over the course of four months, the group met with BMBC officers from across the organisation; a sustainability research expert from Sheffield University; and spoke to young people who represent their peers through their involvement with Barnsley Youth Council.
- 1.5 As a result of their investigations, the group have highlighted a number of recommendations in support of further improvement.
- 1.6 The members of the TFG who undertook this investigation are as follows:-

Councillors Peter Fielding (TFG Lead Member), Jeff Ennis, Hannah Kitching, Kevin Osborne, Clive Pickering and Sarah Tattersall.

2. SCOPE OF THE INVESTIGATION & SUBSEQUENT FINDINGS

What the Task & Finish Group Looked At

- 2.1 Initially, the TFG met to consider the scope of the investigation. Members of the group are keen to protect the borough for future generations, and a key part of this is reducing carbon emissions to help limit the effects of climate change. After the initial meeting with the Executive Director Place, and subsequent discussions, it became clear to the group that carbon reduction and air quality have links and are both of great importance, and they agreed to pursue both topics for the duration of the investigation.
- 2.2 From the outset, the group were keen to find out more about what is being done across the borough to achieve the targets as set out in the Zero 40 programme and the ambitions for Zero 45. They wanted to seek assurance that work is progressing at an appropriate pace and can be accomplished within the given timescales; to hear from young people about what they have been doing to combat climate change; to find out how the organisation plans to engage residents; and to consider what recommendations could be made for improvements.
- 2.3 The TFG undertook a number of 'check and challenge' sessions with officers regarding the work being carried out, future plans and key challenges. This involved asking questions of them regarding their work, their involvement and the impact of this on the borough and its residents. This included meeting with:-
 - BMBC's Executive Director Place, and the Service Director Environment & Transport, who provided an overview of the approach to, governance of, and progress against Zero 40 and 45 targets and the five thematic projects of Energy Efficiency; Sustainable Transport; Decarbonisation of Heat; Resource Efficiency; and Renewable Energy
 - officers from BMBC's Regulatory Services, Public Health, on two occasions to look at air quality monitoring; management; targeted support; and the Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP)

- BMBC's Head of Planning, Policy & Building Control to look at the ways in which planning can play a key role in influencing the reduction of the carbon footprint across the borough and contribute to improving air quality
 - BMBC's Head of Strategic Housing, Sustainability and Climate Change and the Strategy Manager to understand how the Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) is monitored, the links with housing, and how the service plans to engage residents
 - BMBC's Head of Transport to understand the work being done to bring about a modal shift to active travel and the barriers to change
 - representatives from the Youth Council to ask them what they think the council should be doing to tackle carbon reduction and air quality
 - a Sustainability Project Officer from Sheffield University to hear about the research they have carried out to identify and support opportunities for carbon reduction across the region
- 2.4 Members also attended carbon literacy training sessions, webinars and activities organised by the sustainability team; and conducted their own research and information gathering, including documents produced by the Carbon Trust, the Report to Prevent Future Deaths, submitted to the Government by the Coroner investigating the death of Ella Adoo-Kissi-Debrah, and the recently introduced Environment Act 2021.

What the Task & Finish Group Found

- 2.5 At the first session the group heard that the climate change agenda has been building momentum over the last couple of years and there is now a greater commitment, including strategic planning, formulation of the detail, and government support. The targets set are pragmatic and stretching, but achievable. However, there are still conflicts with this agenda and, although some schemes may negatively impact upon the environment, they still need to progress to create a safe and just society and move forward in a positive way for the benefit of the borough and its residents. It is important therefore that, when considering such schemes, the council always look to offset these to achieve a balanced carbon footprint. There has been good progress since 2005, however there has been a slowing of progress and from 2017 annual reductions have reduced significantly and activities need to accelerate to drive the agenda forward.
- 2.6 Members were interested to hear that although the organisation is only responsible for a small percentage of the total carbon emitted across the borough, it has influence over a much larger percentage via planning, council policies and encouraging a change in the behaviour of employees and residents through the promotion of public transport and active travel, eg. walking and cycling. Members were pleased to hear that the council has been switching to greener alternatives for some time, as and when the opportunity arises, and several zero carbon schemes were due to go through Cabinet during the lifetime of the group's investigation. To determine the way forward for future sessions the group raised questions relating to renewable energy; the Future Homes Standard; implications for local businesses and residents, particularly those on low income; and the options for air quality monitoring.
- 2.7 At the group's following session, a comprehensive presentation was given on local air quality management. Officers explained that there is a statutory requirement in place for all local authorities to measure and report annually to DEFRA on outside/ambient air and the air quality in Barnsley is broadly typical of an urban area of this size. There are currently six Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) across the borough – these are declared when the Council's own assessment of air quality in a locality concludes that one of the Government's air quality objectives is at risk of being breached. In line with legislation, an Air Quality Action

Plan (AQAP) has been produced outlining the measures identified to reduce pollution across the borough. Members were pleased to hear that the AQAP is due to be refreshed and that the recommendations from this group will be incorporated into the revised plan. The group were told that, in order to deliver the actions set out in the plan, it is critical to work with internal and external partners, neighbouring authorities and there is an emerging role for the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA). Officers went on to explain that over the years the type of pollutants have changed and domestic emissions; the burning of waste and commercial bonfires; and transport are the main contributors to air pollution in Barnsley. The impact upon health shows that 4.8% of mortality in Barnsley (Public Health England estimates 2019) is attributable to poor air quality, and there is increasing evidence that the long-term impact of air pollution on our health can link to low birth weights, poor educational attainment, cancer, heart disease, respiratory diseases and dementia. Whilst changes to vehicle technology will have a positive impact upon air quality, it will be a slow process and officers are working with Public Health colleagues to look at other schemes, such as anti-idling and clean air campaigns, because exposure to elevated levels is of particular threat to the most vulnerable. Discussions have also been held with Barnsley NHS Foundation Trust to look at what can be done to improve air quality. Members were keen to learn more about the different types of pollutants, particularly those from vehicles, and were interested in the location of the air quality monitoring stations; which particulate matter is monitored and how; and the complexities of modelling based on sample data. Because the discussions at this meeting became quite technical, the group agreed to hold an additional session with officers to undertake more detailed check-and-challenge.

- 2.8 At the second session with officers from Regulatory Services, Public Health, members were able to provide greater challenge around the availability of easy-to-understand data; clean air zones; the ECO Stars Fleet Recognition Scheme; enforcement for domestic emissions; the rationale behind what is monitored; and interrogated the data within the Air Quality Status Report. Members discovered that coarse particulate matter (PM10) is monitored but fine particulate matter (PM2.5) is not and different things are measured at three monitoring stations across the borough. They heard that there are no current plans to change any of the existing Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) zones as assessment has shown that objectives are being met. After raising a question about the availability of air quality data, members were told that residents can check the quality of the air they breathe by visiting the council's website which shows data based on DEFRA's Daily Air Quality Index (DAQI). However, officers did acknowledge the difficulties in making data sufficiently understandable for local stakeholders. The group were impressed with the depth of knowledge of the officers, however members were concerned that not all particulate matter is currently monitored; that using modelled data is not necessarily the best way forward for some areas; and felt that more could be done to provide more localised, accurate and robust data.
- 2.9 In the next session, the group focussed on how planning and associated policy is playing a key role in reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality across the borough. Members were given an overview of the Local Plan policy relating to reducing the causes of, and adapting to, the future impacts of climate change, as well as the policy on sustainable design and construction and they heard that, in addition to these policies, supplementary planning documents (SPDs) provide more prescriptive guidance in relation to the expectations placed upon developers. Members challenged how well these documents have kept up with legislation, research and good practice; whether they are ambitious enough in terms of requirements; and what the implications are if they are not robust. They were also concerned that if documents were not up to date, then developers would be able to build in line with old requirements. They were advised that plans had been tested and found to be compliant; and that Barnsley is in step with other local authorities. They were also told that a higher than required expectation is set for some areas such as biodiversity net gain, but it

is difficult to set aspirational targets for other areas as they have to strike an appropriate balance between the needs of the borough and ambitions in relation to climate change. Members were pleased to hear that the construction sector has bounced back quickly since the Covid lockdowns, and that the council is well positioned to tackle climate change. After discussing the upcoming Future Homes Standard, which will be introduced by the government to ensure all new homes produce less carbon from 2025, members heard about the challenges associated with embodied carbon (emissions from producing materials used in construction projects etc) and whole life carbon (emissions resulting from the construction and the use of a building over its entire life, including demolition and disposal). Members welcomed the knowledge that a steering group will be established in 2022 to look at a partial review of plans and that by revisiting overall aims, it will strengthen the objectives around climate change and sustainable construction, which could potentially include guidance on embodied and whole life carbon. However, members did feel that more could be done to ensure that planning policy and supplementary planning documents are more prescriptive, ambitious and current. Members were also pleased to hear that the service is looking at a local nature recovery strategy and is currently taking part in a 'natural capital' mapping exercise across South Yorkshire. Following on from a previous session, members asked questions around the availability of data relating to air quality and were encouraged to hear that there are options available to promote the information, including the potential to develop existing geographic information system (GIS) mapping tools to inform future planning decisions.

2.10 The sustainability team provided key information relating to the monitoring of the Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP), the links with housing, and the plans for engaging residents and the wider community. Members heard what work is being done to ensure the quality of baseline data to allow the service to effectively monitor the reduction of carbon emissions. They were told that all targets within the SEAP are based on scope 1 (activities within the organisation or geography principally from the direct burning of fossil fuels) and scope 2 emissions (indirect burning of fossil fuels, eg. to generate electricity) and the reduction in emissions is being measured from a baseline of 2019 for Zero 40 ambitions and 2017 for Zero 45. Scope 3 emissions (generated by outsourcing activities to another organisation) are not included at present. The focus of activity is on the decarbonisation of buildings, making them more effective along the way and officers explained that the easy actions have been completed, the challenge now is to address the more complicated issues in order to achieve the targets identified and this will require a significant amount of work and investment to achieve them. Similarly, work needs to be done with key players across the borough, to support them to reduce emissions, and this group is already engaged and working in partnership with the organisation through the Positive Climate Partnership. Data is reported via an online tool called 'Scatter' and although there is a slight lag in the availability of data, it is as up-to-date as it can be. The services are building up a knowledge base of their assets, all buildings have been surveyed for energy efficiency, and funding has been secured to support landlords to put energy efficiency measures in their properties such as underfloor, wall and loft insulation, working on the premise of 'fabric first'. Members raised the issue of fuel poverty for those who may be 'asset rich, but cash poor'. The service are aware that there are unexpected pockets of the community that are living in cold homes and these are a hard to reach group, however addressing fuel poverty remains a key priority and the service provides training to help front-line workers to identify those in need. In addition, grants are available to support people who may be experiencing energy debt.

2.11 The team went on to explain the work being done to engage with communities across the borough. Consultation work ended early February and the officer agreed to share the findings from this exercise with the group. As well as online events and activities, in-person events were organised in some areas of the borough, however take-up was low and so the

time was used to carry out door-to-door canvassing, with over 50 residents consulted over a period of a few days. Engagement work is also being done internally with BMBC employees with over 60 members taking part in a sustainability forum and a workshop was held with the Centre for Sustainability which was attended by some members of the TFG. 'Hard to reach' areas were identified and targeted using previous engagement exercises, demographics and geographics. Members expressed that, given the challenges that some people face, climate change may not be high on their agenda and that there may be some 'mythbusting' that needs to be done to help people make those changes. They were told that in terms of take-up and awareness, it was very much a 'mixed-bag' based upon the sample size that they have. The service accepted that there was a piece of work to be done around awareness and were keen to do this by sending a positive message, particularly around fuel poverty, cleaner air for children and flood prevention so that they could demonstrate how the measures can positively impact upon those that may be vulnerable. There are also aspirations to work with young people and use their voice to drive the agenda forward.

- 2.12 At the session on Active Travel the group learned that the team are involved in the assessment of planning applications from a highways perspective and assessing the impact of development, and the ambition is to build all the routes and publicise them (particularly locally via schools and employers), to enable people to travel around the borough without the need for a car. This includes ensuring that the layout is conducive to travel by walking/cycling; identifying public transport requirements; installing sufficient EV charging points; and that Section 106 contributions are maximised to secure services where they may not otherwise be economically viable. By taking these steps, the organisation can not only reduce the carbon emissions across the borough, but also improve the air quality for its residents. Local businesses are currently being supported to develop sustainable travel plans and the team also help to link funding to support the plans in the form of bus stops; ticketing schemes, cycle stands etc. Members pointed out that public transport across the borough usually operates from a central hub to outlying villages and questioned whether there were plans to connect the outlying areas to each other. They were pleased to hear that this is something to aspire to. They also challenged the enforcement of sustainable travel plans and whether they are actually achievable, and officers explained the challenges and opportunities currently associated with enforcement and what could be done to strengthen it.
- 2.13 Members queried the viability of park and ride schemes to address modal shift; the use of recycled construction materials for roads and pathways; options for electric vehicle (EV) charging points for residents without private driveways; and the issues associated with cycling on roads. Members were disappointed to hear that park-&-ride schemes are notoriously difficult to make work because the offer has to be quicker and cheaper than existing routes used by commuters, because they felt that this could provide a resolution to the long-standing challenges presented by the number of vehicles parked on streets surrounding the hospital. They were satisfied that provision for cyclists is currently being looked at by the Cycle Forum to identify and address the constraints cyclists currently face in Barnsley and that work is well underway. With regard to EV charging points for those without private driveways, the group were advised that options for on-street charging have yet to be identified that are not contrary to the Highways Act and cause a safety issue for members of the public, but it is currently being investigated and more does need to be done to maximise the opportunities for residents in relation to electric vehicles. The local authority excavates and reuses over 25,000 tonnes of material each year and utilises technology to reuse road surface materials. Following the meeting, members were to be provided with intelligence to demonstrate how recycled materials have already been used in construction, such as the road re-tread programme and the use of recycled rubber on the Trans-Pennine

Trail. Officers explained that the use of alternative construction materials will be considered moving forward but each project would need to be individually assessed on its merits to ensure that the materials are fit for purpose, easy to maintain, cost effective and do not indirectly cause other issues such as flooding.

- 2.14 At the next session, members met with representatives from the Youth Council to ask them what they think the council should be doing more of. The group were very impressed with the passion and commitment the young people showed and the work they have been doing to tackle climate change. From the discussions it was clear that young people still don't think enough is being done to tackle recycling, not just in the town centre but in the outlying villages. They would also like to see better access to cleaner, more efficient and affordable public transport. Personal experience showed that travelling to their place of study involved catching two buses, incurring two fares, as well as the return journey, and they felt that the costs involved means that there is no real incentive to use public transport. Community engagement could be improved upon, taking people on a journey and showing them how little changes can have a positive impact upon their lives and the environment, and consideration needs to be given to how that message is delivered to different sections of the community. They also felt that during the Covid lockdowns there was a noticeable difference in air quality due to the reduced number of vehicles on the road but once the lockdowns ended and traffic returned to near normal levels, it had a detrimental impact upon their physical health. When asked what they thought of active travel, the young people said that more needs to be done to highlight and promote the less obvious active travel routes in specific areas which would be of particular benefit to people who are new, or thinking of moving, to the area. Following discussions both members and the young people were keen to strengthen links and it was suggested that all elected members should make contact with the Youth Council members operating in their wards so that they can work together on local issues.
- 2.15 The final session of the group concentrated on how research and evidence can support the organisation to drive forward their ambitions for Zero40 and Zero45. They heard from the Sustainability Project Officer at Sheffield University about the work being done to bring together activity across the region, including working with the Combined Mayoral Authority, local authorities, the commercial and voluntary sector; how evidence-based research, data and monitoring will allow regional partners to make more informed decisions; and how their support of collaborative working will allow for innovations and joined-up working to achieve net zero ambitions. Members were very interested to hear that work has been done with another local authority to determine the best use of plots of land and were keen to replicate any successful projects. Members were also pleased to hear that Barnsley is represented at the low carbon officers' group and that links between the two organisations are strong.
- 2.16 The TFG would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who provided information, attended meetings and assisted with the TFG's investigation; it is much appreciated. They would particularly like to thank the inspirational young people that they met during the course of their investigation.

3. IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Financial & Risk

There are no specific financial implications or risks associated with the report, although in responding to the recommendations in the report, the financial and risk implications of these would need to be fully assessed by the appropriate services responding.

3.2 Legal

There are no specific legal implications, although in responding to the recommendations in the report, the legal implications of these would need to be fully assessed by the appropriate services responding.

3.3 Equality

The TFG is keen to ensure that all Council services and activities impact equally on all its communities. Throughout the TFG's involvement in this work it has become apparent that the work around air quality and carbon reduction will go some way to reducing health inequalities and they were pleased to see that one particular area of focus will have a positive impact upon fuel poverty. However, whilst promoting a green agenda, the council must maintain the principles of a 'just transition' and ensure that expectations and actions do not disproportionately affect those on low income or exacerbate inequalities. Given that the impact of climate change will affect future generations, members felt it was important to hear directly from young people.

3.4 Sustainability

As this report does not require a decision, the sustainability decision-making wheel has not been included. However, ensuring that the borough and the organisation is sustainable in the future has formed a large part of the investigations and is the sole focus of the work of some of the officers involved and will therefore need to be considered when responding to the recommendations in the report.

3.5 Employee

There are no specific employee implications, although in responding to the recommendations in the report, the employee implications of these would need to be fully assessed by the appropriate services responding.

3.6 Communications

Although there are no direct implications as a result of this report it is evident from the investigation that, to drive the agenda forward, stronger engagement and communication needs to be developed. Information should be shared in a variety of ways in clear and accessible formats so that stakeholders can make informed decisions and residents can be made aware of the benefits of improved air quality and carbon reduction. Communications on climate change in particular must be a two-way process so that the Council continues to understand the barriers to change felt by our communities in order to address them. Members would expect to see regular communication with the Youth Council; awareness raising of financial incentives to make positive changes such as improving home insulation and purchase of electric vehicles; and myth-busting around key issues. Communities can be reached by using Ward Alliances, community groups and other innovative means.

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 Consultations have taken place with: the Air Quality and Carbon Reduction TFG Members; OSC Members; the Council's Cabinet Members; Council Officers from the Public Health and Place Directorates; and the Council's Senior Management Team.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 No alternative options have been considered in the writing of this report.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The TFG were reassured by the amount of work being done to reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality and are pleased that the organisation is being aspirational in its target setting for Zero40 and Zero45.

6.2 The TFG recognises the importance of improving air quality and the negative impacts that poor air quality can have on individuals. With that in mind, the investigation undertaken by the TFG, as well as the recommendations made, are in support of improving health outcomes for people in Barnsley and protecting the borough for future generations.

6.3 Whilst recognising that there is evidence of good practice, the TFG have made the recommendations in order to support the continual improvement of services and to drive the agenda forward at pace. Although there are more recommendations than normal within this report, this reflects the wide-ranging subjects covered by the group during their investigations, namely air quality, active travel, planning policy and housing/sustainability.

6.4 **Recommendation 1 - Introduce widespread monitoring of fine particulate matter (PM2.5).** It would seem from the investigations that PM2.5 is incredibly harmful to people's health and to give them the chance to live longer and healthier lives and reduce the impact upon services, it is important the council understands the levels of PM2.5 so that it can put mitigations in place to improve air quality and therefore the health of residents.

6.5 **Recommendation 2 - Work towards achieving World Health Organization's (WHO's) guideline values for ambient air for PM2.5, PM10 (coarse particulate matter) and nitrogen dioxide across the borough and amend/introduce policies to reflect the aspiration.** Although much lower than the expected national values set by the government (DEFRA), the group would like to see a commitment to working towards achieving the WHO values, as evidence has shown that health can be impacted before the national values are reached. Members would like to see key performance indicators developed and planning policy AQ1 amended to reflect the aspiration. Members would also like to see the development of new SPDs to give clarity and certainty on attaining AQ1 and support the recommendation.

6.6 **Recommendation 3 – Introduce consistent monitoring of air quality across the borough and increase the robustness of information gathering through the use of mobile measuring equipment and working with elected members and residents to reduce the use of modelling.** Members feel that a consistent approach to monitoring is needed and each monitoring station should be capturing the same thing. They are also of the opinion that modelled data does not fully demonstrate the extent to which specific localised areas are affected by pollution at specific times of the day. Members would like to see the introduction of diffusion tubes that can be transferred from location to location. The scheme could be done in collaboration with local residents or community groups, and this information can then be used to provide reassurance in areas of concern, identify potential issues and inform future planning applications. Of particular concern are schools, parks, play areas and any other areas frequented by children and young people, and this should be the primary focus for taking the recommendation forward.

- 6.7 **Recommendation 4 – Effectively use data to inform management decisions and communicate the information to residents in a clear and concise way so that they are aware of the quality of the air they breathe in the locations they frequent.** It would appear that there is a vast amount of data available to the authority relating to air quality, but it is not currently collated and used effectively – if this were the case then it could provide a useful evidence base for informed decision making. The air quality monitoring data provided to the public needs to be presented in such a way that residents can easily find and understand the results for the locations they are interested in, whilst still fulfilling statutory requirements. Members felt that other local authorities present the information in a more user-friendly way and are of the opinion that it would benefit Barnsley residents if a similar or even better style was adopted.
- 6.8 **Recommendation 5 – To protect the health of children and young people, promote more schemes to reduce air pollution around schools and facilities frequented by children and young people.** Members cannot stress strongly enough how important it is to protect the health of children and young people and with that in mind, they would like to see traffic reduction schemes, anti-idling campaigns etc rolled out effectively across the borough without having a detrimental impact on the outlying residential areas. In addition, serious consideration should be given to the impact of air quality on any future developments aimed at children and young people.
- 6.9 **Recommendation 6 – Utilise new powers within the Environment Act 2021 to strengthen enforcement to restrict the amount of smoke emissions from domestic burning.**
As a result of the Environment Act 2021, councils and other relevant public bodies will be required to work together more closely to tackle local air quality issues, and it will be easier for local authorities to enforce restrictions on smoke emissions, particularly from domestic burning. Members would like enforcement to be strengthened to reduce the levels of PM2.5 across the borough.
- 6.10 **Recommendation 7 – Work with front line health professionals to raise their awareness of the links between respiratory ill-health and the patients’ environment.** Links with primary care providers should be developed to raise awareness of the impact of poor air quality to try and improve the health of the borough, reduce the impact upon services and improve the mortality rate attributable to poor air quality. Members would like to see work continue with the Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust to identify what can be done to improve air quality round their assets.
- 6.11 **Recommendation 8 – Adopt the electrification of fleets for vehicles within the organisations control and work towards providing on-street electric vehicle charging points for those without private driveways.** Whilst members recognise that the council has already adopted some electric vehicles and energy—efficient hybrids, they feel that more can be done, including the electrification of taxis across the borough. However, members are cognisant that this could put undue financial pressure on taxi operators and support would be required to transition to greener vehicles, potentially in the form of grants or the use of trial electric vehicles as in Sheffield. To reduce inequalities and ensure that everyone is able to move to electric vehicles if they wish to do so, options need to be identified to allow residents to charge their vehicles on the street that do not contravene the Highways Act.
- 6.12 **Recommendation 9 – Review the active travel policies to ensure they realistically facilitate and encourage a move to sustainable transport, including the provision of cleaner, convenient, reliable and affordable public transport.** After speaking to young

people, it is clear that there are challenges associated with using public transport and members would like to encourage the council to continue to influence decisions made at a regional level to ensure that public transport is fit for purpose and available to all. More work needs to be done around the promotion of safe cycle routes and it would be beneficial if all workplaces, schools and colleges were encouraged to provide premises-specific information on safe cycle routes and secure storage facilities for students at their place of study.

- 6.13 **Recommendation 10 – Increase the scrutiny and monitoring of sustainable travel plans and consider introducing penalties for non-compliance.** Sustainable travel plans need to be aspirational but achievable and officers should continue to work with businesses and organisations across the borough to achieve this. However, more needs to be done to ensure that those plans are being adhered to and options should be considered if targets are not met.
- 6.14 **Recommendation 11 - Investigate the viability of a Park & Ride scheme for hospital staff and visitors.** Despite being advised that Park & Ride schemes are notoriously difficult to make work, members still feel there would be benefits attached to such a scheme to serve the hospital and would like serious consideration to be given to this recommendation. This would alleviate pressures felt by local residents, considerably improve air quality around the hospital and reduce the impact upon emergency vehicles trying to access the hospital.
- 6.15 **Recommendation 12 – Adopt a more appropriate review cycle to ensure planning documents such as the Local Plan and SPD’s reflect current guidance, knowledge, technologies and priorities to ensure they are fit for purpose to meet the Zero40 and Zero45 ambitions and air quality aspirations.** Members do not feel that planning policies related to climate change have necessarily kept up with the pace of developments. They also feel that some of the policies could be stronger in terms of the wording. Therefore, they would like officers to ensure that planning policies CC1 and CC2 reflect new guidance from the Royal Town Planning Institute/Town & Country Planning Association and officers should consider removing the word ‘viable’ from CC2 to make the document more prescriptive. Members would also like officers to consider reviewing the local plan more frequently to keep pace with changes in knowledge, technologies and priorities.
- 6.16 **Recommendation 13 – Introduce a higher carbon reduction requirement in all new properties before the Future Homes Standard is introduced and adopt the Future Homes Standard at the earliest opportunity.** Members understand the challenges faced when trying to strike a balance when making demands upon developers, but they would like to see more aspirational targets set with regard to carbon reduction in new developments, particularly to avoid retrofitting these properties in the near future.
- 6.17 **Recommendation 14 – To replicate the principles of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Plan across all council owned assets.** Members are aware that phase 1 and phase 2 of the plan have been identified, but they would like to see this expanded to cover all assets across the borough to reduce the organisation’s carbon footprint as well as resulting in energy saving and a reduction in energy costs. Members would also like the council to influence partners to adopt the same principles wherever possible to support the ambitions for Zero45.
- 6.18 **Recommendation 15 - Provide segregated litter bins to allow the recycling of litter in the town centre and surrounding areas.** Young people specifically raised this issue as they still don’t feel that enough is being done to recycle materials in Barnsley and would like to see segregated litter bins not just in the town centre but in villages and schools.

- 6.19 **Recommendation 16 - Work around the Zero40/45 ambitions and air quality aspirations should be added to future work programmes, as a significant content of the existing work streams of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.** Members would like to see an annual monitoring report linked to Zero40/45 presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Sustainable Barnsley Workstream) and would also be interested in scrutinising any supplementary planning documents prior to adoption as members of the committee see fit, to ensure that they are fit for purpose. The Overview & Scrutiny Officer will liaise with the committee and officers to agree a way forward for this recommendation.
- 6.20 **Recommendation 17 - Publish quarterly information and data as to how the Council is achieving its SEAP targets and seek to find increasingly effective ways to engage with all residents on the Zero40 and Zero45 agendas.** Members felt that it was important that the progress towards Zero40 and Zero45 was published on a regular basis in terms of compliance with the latest SEAP. Allied to better engagement with residents on the matter as outlined in paragraph 3.6 of the report, this would provide the level of transparency needed to effectively take this vital agenda forward.

7. GLOSSARY

AQAP	Air Quality Action Plan
AQMA	Air Quality Management Areas
BMBC	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
DAQI	Daily Air Quality Index
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
EV	Electric Vehicle
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
OSC	Overview & Scrutiny Committee
SEAP	Sustainable Energy Action Plan
SPDs	Supplementary Planning Documents
SYMCA	South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority
TFG	Task & Finish Group

8. LIST OF APPENDICES

There are no appendices for this report.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

IPCC report on Global Warming 2018:-

<https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>

BMBC Zero 40 and 45 ambitions:-

<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/our-council/helping-our-environment/reducing-carbon-emissions/>

BMBC's Sustainable Energy Action Plan Report to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee December 2018: -

<https://barnsleymbcintranet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=224&MId=6409&Ver=4>

BMBC Air quality Action Plan:-

<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/media/18071/air-quality-action-plan.pdf>

Public Health England Public Health Profiles: Mortality Attributable to Air Quality:-
<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/search/air%20quality>

Assistant Coroner for the coroner area of Inner South London's Report to Prevent Further Deaths, April 2021:-
<https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Ella-Kissi-Debrah-2021-0113-1.pdf>

World Health Organization's Guideline Values for Ambient Air Quality:-
[https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ambient-\(outdoor\)-air-quality-and-health](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ambient-(outdoor)-air-quality-and-health)

Environment Act 2021:-
<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2593>

Report Author: Jane Murphy
Post: Scrutiny Officer
Date: 23 March 2022