

**Delegated Decision by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care
3 February 2025**

**Approval of Changes to Oxfordshire County Council Air Quality
Report by the Director of Public Health and Communities**

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to:**
 - a) **agree the updated actions for 2025 in the Air Quality Route Map developed under the Oxfordshire County Council Air Quality Strategy 2023-2027; and**
 - b) **agree that annual updates to the actions in the Route Map is delegated to the Director of Public Health and Communities in consultation with the Director of Environment and Highways in the future.**

Executive Summary

2. This report provides an overview of [the update to Oxfordshire County Council's Air Quality Strategy 2023–27](#). It summarises the changes between version 1 (previously published and approved Air Quality Route Map in June 2023) and version 2 (the updated version of the Air Quality Route Map in June 2024).
3. It is proposed that the proposed updated Air Quality Route Map is agreed by the relevant cabinet members for publication on the OCC website and that future updates to the Route Map are agreed by the relevant SLT members.
4. The Air Quality Strategy and Route Map, adopted by the council in June 2023, outline the long-term vision to improve air quality in Oxfordshire. The Air Quality Strategy was a first step towards improving county council work on air quality and raising awareness of air quality. The strategy is supported by an action plan, the Air Quality Route Map, which sets out what work is being done and the actions to be taken in the short term to improve air quality.
5. To demonstrate the county council's progress with delivering actions, the Air Quality Route Map required updating. Completed actions were removed from the Air Quality Route Map, and new actions were added. Moreover, previous actions were updated and amended to better align with areas of concern in the county with regards to air quality.
6. The aim is to ensure the Air Quality Route Map is a live document, thus requiring updates on an annual basis. Following review of the document it is proposed that a number of minor changes are made this year to reflect developments since adoption. The proposed changes are identified in the following section.

7. As the Air Quality Strategy and Route Map was approved by Full Cabinet it is recommended that the updates to the Route Map be approved by cabinet members Delegated Decision process and that future annual updates are delegated to officers as this will provide a more proportionate and appropriate approach. However, the public will be kept informed of progress through publication of the updated Route Map online at Oxonair (<https://www.oxonair.uk>.)

Key Issues

8. The actions within the Route Map support the Council's vision and the following priorities
 - Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents.
 - Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire.
9. Many of the actions to improve air quality have positive impacts on the following priorities
 - Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network.
 - Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work.

Progress to Date

10. Between June 2023 and June 2024 the Oxfordshire County Council, in partnership with other Oxfordshire local authorities have made progress on its air quality Route Map actions, focusing on staff engagement, monitoring, behaviour campaigns, modelling impacts on air quality and communication.
11. To secure wider officer engagement, a variety of OCC officers attended the Oxfordshire Air Quality Officers Meeting by Winter 2023. This engagement is crucial for the development, updating, and implementation of air quality action plans
12. In terms of monitoring, the council supported launched the Oxonair website and collaborated with the University of Birmingham to provide a comprehensive map of all institutionally owned air quality monitors. This initiative aims to develop an integrated approach to local air quality monitoring.
13. Trading Standards completed a review into Ready to Burn compliance of businesses, and the Public Health directorate submitted a response to Oxford City Council's Smoke Control Area expansion. Additionally, indoor air quality monitors were purchased to loan to interested residents, with outcomes to be reviewed in the new year.
14. To model the impact of improvements in air quality on health, the council developed and tested a tool from the University of Birmingham, completing phase one and commissioned additional air quality modelling. Furthermore, an

air quality communication plan was created and shared with district and city councils, with ongoing updates from their communication teams to ensure the plan remains current.

15. The key proposed changes to the Air Quality Route Map are listed below.

Action from Air Quality Route Map Version	Revised wording for Route Map Action 2024-2025
Secure wider Oxfordshire County Council staff engagement with the Air Quality partnership group by Winter 2023 to actively support the development, updating and implementation of the district and city councils' air quality action plans and other appropriate projects (as per our legal responsibilities set out under the Environment Act 2021).	Continue to support air quality research projects with academic partners and seek to secure funding for future projects, particularly in rural areas.
Support joint behaviour campaigns about domestic wood burning with the district and city councils and other air quality partners.	Test the use of real time data to promote behaviour change with a specific focus on use of wood burners, in homes.
Develop and test the use of a local air quality impact assessment tool as part of health impact assessments.	Deploy the use of a local air quality impact assessment tool as part of health impact assessments.
Create an air quality communication plan, linking it with the work of the district and city councils and other air quality partners.	Maintain and support delivery of a joint air quality communication plan.
Work with our Air Quality Partners to understand current monitoring in Oxfordshire and develop a joined up, integrated approach to local air quality monitoring.	Work with air quality partners to carry out population exposure modelling and develop local population exposure targets for PM2.5 and NOx.
Engage with the local NHS system to assess the feasibility of conducting joint work about impacts, costs, health burden and solutions related to poor air quality.	Support the local NHS system to raise awareness of ambient and indoor air quality and its link to health to patients and staff.
Engage with the CAG network and raise awareness of air quality.	Support citizen science and public engagement to raise awareness of air quality and its links to climate change, through working in partnership.
Expand the use of zero tailpipe emission and hybrid vehicles within the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service fleet and continue to deliver fire prevention and protection work.	Expand the use of zero tailpipe emission and hybrid vehicles for services provided by the County Council, such as commissioned transport services and County Council

	owned fleet, such as the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service fleet.
Test the use of real time data to promote behaviour change with a specific focus on school gates.	Test the use of real time data to promote behaviour change with a specific focus on the use of wood burners, in homes.
Work with bus operators to introduce measures to reduce exposure to dangerous air pollution concentrations in bus stations.	Work with bus operators to determine people's exposure to air pollution at bus stations and introduce measures to reduce exposure.
Deliver projects to encourage the uptake of zero tailpipe emission vehicles and work in association with our district and city councils to deliver the OEVIS.	Continue to deliver projects to encourage the uptake of zero tailpipe emission vehicles and work in association with our district and city councils to deliver the OEVIS."
Undertake Network management as part of an integrated approach to promote traffic flow and reduce idling traffic particularly in locations where there are groups vulnerable to poor air quality.	Scope the options for Network management as part of an integrated approach to promote traffic flow and reduce idling traffic particularly in locations where there are groups vulnerable to poor air quality.
Develop and test the use of a local air quality impact assessment tool as part of health impact assessments.	Deploy the use of a local air quality impact assessment tool as part of health impact assessments.
Use health and social care data to identify vulnerable communities that need to be prioritised.	Carry out a Health Needs Assessment on air quality..
Continue to make the link between the benefits of carbon reduction and air pollution and raise awareness of carbon reduction interventions which may worsen air quality, including during development and delivery of PaZCO action plans.	"Promote the use of the Climate Action Impact Assessment tool, providing supporting evidence of links to benefits to air quality.
Secure funding to allow the continuation of existing air quality monitoring projects.	Maintain and develop relationships to secure funding for new air quality improvement projects, which include measurement.
Deliver parking controls, traffic reduction schemes and congestion management measures to reduce private car use and improve local air quality.	Removed as embedded in other actions.
Utilise evidence to investigate the relationships between congestion, air quality and noise to identify what measures and innovative transport solutions could be introduced to minimise the impact of congestion on the environment and quality of life.	Removed after prioritisation exercise which assessed that it was not critical to delivering air quality improvements at this time.

Consider and where possible enhance references to air quality in the new Minerals and Waste Local Plan.	Removed after prioritisation exercise which assessed that it was not critical to delivering air quality improvements at this time.
Work to reduce air pollution from waste disposal including development of the circular economy strategy.	Removed as complete
Support joint behaviour campaigns about domestic wood burning with the district and city councils and other air quality partners.	Removed as embedded in other actions.
Work in partnership and use an intelligence led approach to enforcement in relation to improving air quality.	Removed after prioritisation exercise which assessed that it was not critical to delivering air quality improvements at this time.
Support projects that seek to drive the mass adoption of heat pumps.	Removed after prioritisation exercise which assessed that it was not critical to delivering air quality improvements at this time.
Work with local partners to deliver the Oxfordshire Energy Strategy and supporting projects.	Removed as complete
Work with a range of data sources to understand the air quality impacts of LTNs and take action to mitigate any negative impacts identified.	Removed as LTN report completed in October 2023.
Ensure air quality impacts are included as a consideration in county council planning consultation responses including in Health Impact Assessments of strategic developments and major infrastructure schemes, particularly where this is related to county council functions such as transport.	Removed as complete
Ensure air quality is included as a potential health impact when conducting HIAs on major transport schemes or plans and any adverse impacts on local air quality are effectively mitigated.	Removed as complete
Secure funding for new air quality monitoring projects and the utilisation of data and insights from existing research	Removed after prioritisation exercise which assessed that it was not critical to delivering air quality improvements at this time.
Work with our Air Quality Partners to understand current monitoring in Oxfordshire and develop a joined up, integrated approach to local air quality monitoring.	Removed as complete

16. The following actions were added to the air quality route map version 2.

Action Number Air Quality Route Map V2 (Update)	Action
11	Promote the uptake of the County Councils staff Salary Sacrifice Scheme to purchase electric vehicles and Cycle to Work scheme.
24	Deploy the use of a local air quality impact assessment tool as part of health impact assessments.
30	Further strengthen the links between tree canopy cover (increase species good for air quality) and improved air quality, under the Councils Tree Policy and community work.

Financial implications

17. The amendments to the Air Quality Route Map do not have any direct budgetary implications and the new actions do not require budget to deliver. Public Health and Environment and Highways have already contributed budget towards the delivery of the Route Map and most actions will be delivered through business-as-usual work or existing funding.
18. The Air Quality Route Map update has been produced by staff from across the Environment and Highways and Public Health directorates, and hence covered by the staffing budget in these areas and will not require any additional resources.

Comments checked by:

Emma Percival, 16.01.2025, Ass Finance Business Partner,
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Equalities implications

19. The Air Quality Route Map update introduces new and amended actions however these are in line with the overall approach set out in the Air Quality Strategy and there are no amendments to the overall strategy. The actions do not have any potential impacts on equalities and have been reviewed against the Air Quality Strategy Equalities Impact Assessment.

20. For information about possible impacts of the Air Quality Strategy and Route Map on equality and inclusion, please see the Air Quality Strategy Equalities Impact Assessment.

Legal implications

21. The report does not raise specific legal implications. The report sets out a wide ranging approach that utilises the general power of competence in Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 in relation to the Environment Act 1995 (as amended) which sets provisions for protecting air quality in the UK and for local air quality management. As and when the council proceeds with the actions set out in paragraph 10 above, the council will utilise the relevant statutory powers and responsibilities including those under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, Traffic Management Act 2004, the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and the Environment Act 2021.
22. Where the actions require the exercise of a statutory power, that will be carried out in compliance with the relevant law including related regulations. This may require further reports to cabinet, cabinet members or be carried out in accordance with the scheme of delegations.

Comments checked by:

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Sustainability implications

23. The Air Quality Route Map update introduces new and amended actions however these are in line with the overall approach set out in the Air Quality Strategy and there are no amendments to the overall strategy.
24. The Air Quality Route map has links to the County Council's Climate Action Framework as air pollutants and greenhouse gases are closely linked due to the relationship between fossil fuels and air pollution. For further information about possible impacts of the Air Quality Strategy on sustainability please see the Air Quality Strategy Climate Impact Assessment.

Risk Management

25. A risk register has been kept as part of the Air Quality Strategy programme. Key risks associated with the update of the Air Quality Route Map moving forward have been summarised below.
26. *Risk:* Ensuring stakeholders are aware of updates
- Mitigation:* Briefing portfolio holders and updating districts via the air quality officer group meeting.

27. *Risk:* Public may enquire about changes to air quality measures

Mitigation: An email will be drafted to explain changes to the measures, and documentation is kept on why measures have changed.

Communications

28. The OCC Air Quality Strategy and Route Map were developed with input and feedback from OCC teams and key external stakeholders. They were developed in a two-stage process with stakeholder engagement at both stages to help inform and refine the strategy's content.

29. The update to the Air Quality Route Map has not been subject to public consultation and consultation is not required. The proposed changes are minor factual corrections to ensure the Route Map remains up to date and do not alter the content of the Air Quality Strategy.

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