

 **UR AIR**
QUALITY  **TY AND**
TRANSPORT
ACTION PLAN
2021-2  **26**

Wigan Council's response to a changing climate

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Our Air Quality and
Transport Action Plan 2021-
2026

“PROTECTING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER”



FOREWORD

COUNCILLOR PAUL PRESCOTT

Portfolio Holder for Environment

“The action plan highlights existing measures as well as new initiatives, both which demonstrate the Council’s commitment to tackling poor air quality. We will work with external partners and stakeholders collaboratively to reduce pollution across the borough.”

Within Wigan, we are proud of our borough, its parks, woodlands, wetlands and green spaces. This means that two thirds of the borough is expansive countryside for us all to enjoy. We are one of the largest boroughs within Greater Manchester, with an increasing demand for housing and travel infrastructure to support the lives of our residents and communities.

The challenge we face is to meet this growth without increasing air pollution. We know that polluted air can affect our health, especially our children and older or vulnerable adults, but it can also have an adverse effect on our local economy. Key to addressing these impacts is implementing robust actions designed to prevent or reduce harmful emissions to air, such as providing increased access to sustainable transport for our residents.

As part of our conversations during the Big Listening Project we know that our residents and communities care about their local environment and, as part of The Deal 2030, we pledged to work to

improve air quality, reduce the impacts of climate change, increase the amount of people using greener travel and increase connectivity across the borough. We have already achieved so much, but we have a huge challenge ahead of us in order to positively impact air quality creating healthier environments for the people of our borough.

The action plan highlights existing measures as well as new initiatives, both which demonstrate the Council’s commitment to tackling poor air quality. We will work with external partners and stakeholders collaboratively to reduce pollution across the borough. We want to make sure that public services, residents, communities, businesses and schools in the borough can work together to make the small but significant changes needed to create a clean, green place that we all look after and enjoy.

I am pleased to endorse Our Air Quality and Transport Action Plan, created to achieve the ambitions of the Outline Climate Change Strategy.



FOREWORD

JULIE MIDDLEHURST

Chair of the Air Quality and Transport Working Group

“Wigan Council is committed to maintaining good standards of air quality across the borough, but we cannot achieve this alone, everybody has a role to play in improving air quality.”

Poor air quality is the largest environmental risk to the public’s health, and therefore, taking action to improve air quality is crucial. Whilst air quality has generally been improving over time, particular pollutants remain a serious concern.

You can’t always see it, but air pollution is all around us. We breathe harmful gases and tiny particles deep into our lungs, with some of the smallest particles passing into our bloodstream. Long-term exposure may contribute to the development of cardiovascular or respiratory disease and may reduce life expectancy. The youngest, the oldest, those living in areas of deprivation, and those with existing respiratory or cardiovascular disease are most likely to develop symptoms due to exposure to air pollution.

In Greater Manchester, road transport is responsible for approximately 80% of NO₂ concentrations at roadside, of which diesel vehicles are the largest source. We have been working with colleagues in Greater Manchester to improve air quality at a regional level through the joint Clean Air Plan aimed at bringing NO₂ levels on local roads within legal limits and we want to continue this good work at a local level.

Wigan Council is committed to maintaining good standards of air quality across the borough, but we cannot achieve this alone, everybody has a role to play in improving air quality. We know that air quality and climate changes are issues that many of us are concerned about and through the

development of our local Our Air Quality and Transport Action Plan we pledge to work with residents, communities, schools and businesses to deliver our ambitions, alongside enabling and empowering them to take their own actions.

We recognise that the COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to change many aspects of our lives, however, we have also seen the benefits of reduced congestion and an increased use of our green spaces. Whilst this has led to reduced air pollution in the short term, it is unknown if there will be any long-term air quality benefits. We want to build on the lessons we have learned during the pandemic to help realise lasting gains in air quality.

This action plan is an opportunity for us all to think about small steps that we can take to have a positive impact on the quality of our air in our borough:

- Can we change the way we travel, by walking, cycling, or taking the bus or train?
- Can we park away from schools and walk the rest of the way, or can we leave the car at home and walk to school?
- Can we plant a tree in our garden, our school or at our workplace?
- Can we save energy at home by turning off lights and not leaving our appliances on standby?

We must be ambitious in our work in this area, if we are to protect the health of those who live, work and visit our borough.

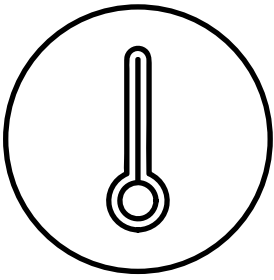
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| AQAP | Air Quality Action Plan |
| AQMA..... | Air Quality Management Area |
| AQ&T..... | Air Quality and Transport |
| CAZ | Clean Air Zone |
| EV | Electric Vehicle |
| GM | Greater Manchester |
| GMLAs | Greater Manchester Local Authorities |
| LAQM | Local Air Quality Management |
| LA | Local Authority |
| LTS | Local Transport Plan |
| NO ₂ | Nitrogen dioxide |
| NOx..... | Nitrogen oxides |
| PM ₁₀ | Particulate matter less than 10 micron in diameter |
| PM _{2.5} | Particulate matter less than 2.5 micron in diameter |

SECTION 1 : INTRODUCTION

SECTION 1

INTR  DUCTION



“There are many sources of air pollution within the UK, from the large-scale emissions produced by power stations, agriculture and industry to vehicle emissions and the burning of wood and fossil fuels in open fires and stoves in domestic homes, many of our day-to-day activities have an impact on the quality of the air we breathe.”

1.

INTRODUCTION

Like many areas of towns within the UK, Wigan has areas of the borough that suffer from poor air quality. This document is ‘Our Air Quality and Transport’ (OAQ&T) Action Plan, designed to bring together a robust plan with well-developed and effective actions to reduce emissions from transport and other sources with the aim of improving air quality and public health within the borough.

There are many sources of air pollution within the UK, from the large-scale emissions produced by power stations, agriculture and industry to vehicle emissions and the burning of wood and fossil fuels in open fires and stoves in domestic homes, many of our day-to-day activities have an impact on the quality of the air we breathe.

Transport is a significant source of emissions in the UK and one of the immediate challenges is to reduce emission of nitrogen oxides in the areas where concentrations of these gases exceed legal limits. It is essential to look at transport in parallel with air quality if we are to tackle the impacts of air quality on climate change and therefore, we have chosen to develop an action plan which considers these two areas.

OAQ&T is one of the six themes of Wigan’s Outline Climate Change Strategy¹ and this action plan has been developed to achieve the aims set out within the strategy. Air quality and climate change are inextricably linked and an integrated approach is key to developing a strategic plan to address air quality and climate change through joined

up actions, using resources effectively to generate positive outcomes. Air quality benefits can be realised in the present, in the form of improved public health and environmental improvement, whilst the benefits of reducing greenhouse gas emissions will be felt decades into the future.

The action plan is split into two sections. The first provides the background for Wigan borough’s actions on air pollution and sustainable transport and looks at the legislative and environmental drivers behind the actions, the current picture in Wigan and how the action plan was developed. The second section is a table of measures detailing high level actions aimed at encouraging behaviour change, improving infrastructure for sustainable transport and reducing pollution at source.

To ensure interventions are directed where they are most required, actions are split into four themes; communities, businesses, schools and council services. By being clear on our priorities, we can focus on them and realise them more effectively. Air quality is something that the Council cannot tackle alone, we need everyone’s help to ensure that the air we breathe in Wigan borough is clean, safe and healthy.

¹<https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Docs/PDF/Council/Strategies-Plans-and-Policies/climatechange/Outline-Climate-Change-Strategy.pdf>

SECTION 2

LEGISLATION  **N**

AND

GU  **DANCE**

2.1

AIR QUALITY LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

The development of air quality legislation in the 1950's was largely influenced by smog experienced in cities. Due to early these legislative controls the UK no longer experiences high levels of smoke and Sulphur dioxide and the emphasis has changed to focus on problem areas within local authorities. Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 requires all local authorities in the UK to review and assess air quality in their area, and the Air Quality (England) Regulations 2000 set national objectives for air pollutants. If any standards are being exceeded or are unlikely to be met by the required date, then that area should be designated an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and an Action Plan developed to tackle exceedances.

The UK has several other legislative tools that can be used to control specific areas of air pollution and nuisance, such as the Clean Air Act 1993, Environmental Protection Act 1990, Environmental Permitting Regulations 2010 and the Road Traffic (vehicle emissions) Regulations 2002.

Most recently, in 2019, the UK Government published the Clean Air Strategy that outlined the ways in which it would reduce pollution and improve health.

It is followed by the Environment Bill, which at the time of writing is going through parliament. Should it become enshrined in law, Schedule 11 of the Environment Bill amends Part 4 of the Environment Act 1995 and sets out changes to the local air quality management framework. Relative to this body of work, it strengthens the duties of local authorities to prepare action plans for those 'designated areas' by inserting Section 83A into the Environment Act 1995². It also includes powers to recall motor vehicles that do not meet relevant environmental standards. The introduction of this bill will have an impact on the action plan and it will be revised and updated accordingly.

Alongside the clean air strategy, Public Health England produced a comprehensive review of interventions to improve outdoor air quality and public health aimed at Local Authorities. The general approach to the interventions, is widely acknowledged, that it is better to reduce air pollution at source rather than mitigating the consequences. This hierarchy of interventions is central to the approach taken to deal with air pollution within Wigan Council's OAQ&T action plan.

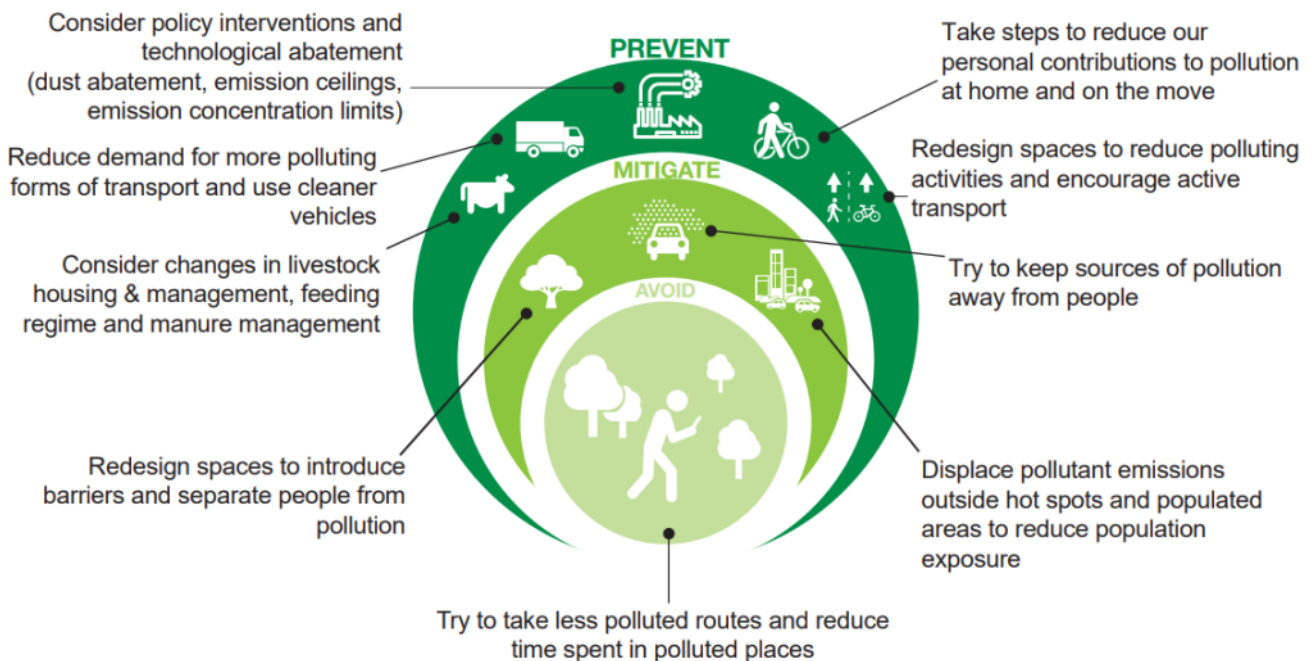


Figure 1: Illustrated Pollution Hierarchy³

²<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-01/0220/200220.pdf>

³https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/937341/Principal_interventions_for_local_authorities-air_quality_public_health.pdf



2.2

TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

Our Five-Year Transport Delivery Plan supports the implementation of Our Network, a ten-year plan to create an integrated, modern and reliable London-style transport system for Greater Manchester. It brings together different modes of public transport - bus, tram, rail, tram-train and cycling and walking - in an integrated, easy-to-use system with seamless connections, and simplified ticketing and fares.

At a local level, the key drivers towards sustainable transport are the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 and Delivery Plan, which have recently been refreshed and updated to support spatial planning development.

The Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 aims to establish a fully integrated, high capacity transport system for Greater Manchester, with travelling customers at its heart, taking advantage of the opportunities afforded by devolution to take a much bolder and longer-term view of our transport needs.

The strategy has seven core principles outlined to the left. One of these is to increase the quality of urban areas and natural environments, with transport emissions reduced to near zero and new transport schemes delivering environmental enhancements whenever possible.

It sets out our ambition to improve our transport system so that by 2040, 50% of all journeys in Greater Manchester are made by public transport or active travel, supporting a reduction in car use to no more than 50% of daily trips. This will mean one million more sustainable journeys every day in Greater Manchester by 2040, enabling us to deliver a healthier, greener and more productive city-region.

The Greater Manchester Five Year Transport Delivery Plan sits alongside the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040. The two documents form the Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan.

The Delivery Plan has been prepared to respond to the transport opportunities and challenges facing Greater Manchester, in parallel with spatial planning development.

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At a National level, some of the fundamental drivers are the Governments ambitious 2050 net zero target for carbon emissions. As part of this they are phasing out the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles by 2030, with all new cars to be zero emission at tailpipe by 2035. £1.3 billion has been allocated to accelerate the roll out of charge points for electric vehicles in homes, streets across the UK and motorways in England⁴.

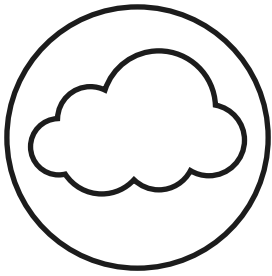
Alongside this will be investment in innovative clean technology and grants for zero or low emission vehicles. Green number plates were introduced in December 2020, to increase awareness of cleaner vehicles and help local authorities bring in new incentives for owners. The Air Quality and Transport action plan considers the implications of these initiatives measures will support and strengthen these aims.



⁴ www.gov.uk/government/news/government-takes-historic-step-towards-net-zero-with-end-of-sale-of-new-petrol-and-diesel-cars-by-2030

SECTION 3

AIR QUALITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE



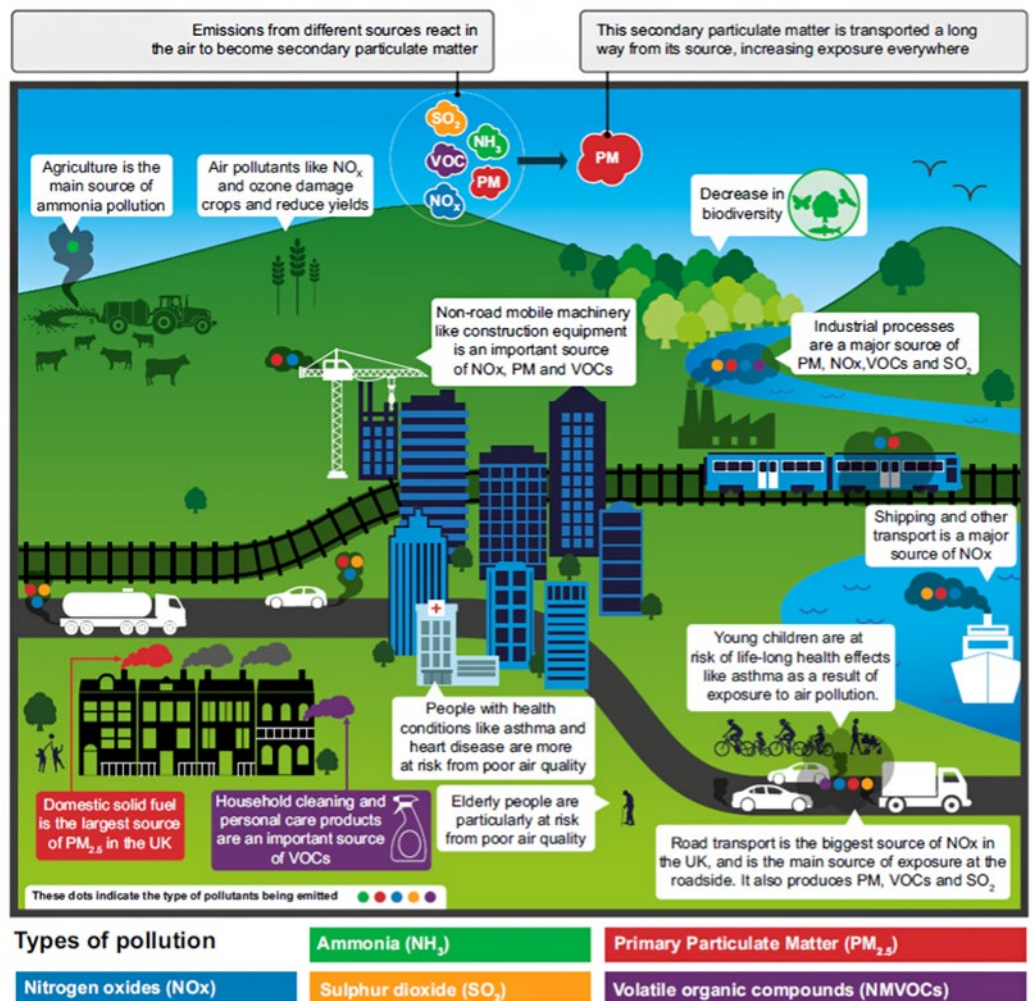
3.1

WHAT IS AIR QUALITY?

Because the pollution exceedances identified in Wigan borough can largely be attributed to vehicle emissions, the actions within this plan will directly target Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter. However, many of the suggested actions and interventions will have the beneficial effect of indirectly lowering levels of other pollutants.

Air quality is the term we use to describe how polluted the air we breathe is. The air is polluted when harmful gases are introduced into the environment, causing levels of those gases to be higher than usual. When air quality is poor, pollutants in the air may be hazardous to people, particularly those with lung or heart conditions.

Air pollution is caused by a variety of gases, but there are five main pollutants that the UK has made a commitment to reduce emissions of these pollutants and their sources are outlined in the figure below.



Reproduced from the Clean Air Strategy 2019⁵

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Clean air is a basic requirement of a healthy environment for us all to live in, work, and bring up families. Air Quality in Wigan borough has improved over recent years, however there are still areas that require improvement to bring them within acceptable limits.

⁵ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/770715/clean-air-strategy-2019.pdf



3.2

IMPACTS OF POOR AIR QUALITY

Climate change

Often the greatest burden of air quality can fall on the most deprived communities and individuals. Of the 200 smaller geographical areas, known as Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the borough, 57 are in the 20% most deprived LSOAs in England. 28.6% (91,773) of the borough's population live in these areas .

The Earth's long-term global temperature equilibrium is dependent upon the balance between the incoming solar energy and the outgoing radiation, reflected or emitted from the atmosphere or the surface of the earth. Gases that absorb radiation and therefore prevent it from being emitted from the atmosphere, result in warming of the Earth's atmosphere. These are known collectively as 'greenhouse gases.' The increased incidence of these gases in the atmosphere due to human activity is causing the global climate to change.

The average global temperature has risen by 0.7°C over the last 100 years and

the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicts that by 2100 average global temperatures will increase by between 1.4 and 5.8°C above 1990 temperatures⁶.

The changing climate conversely impacts air quality. Warmer climates can lead to increased water vapour in the atmosphere which, in turn, can lead to increases in the formation of ozone in areas with existing high nitrogen oxide concentrations. In addition, hot summers could lead to a higher frequency of summer pollution episodes such as the photochemical smog seen in 2013.

Health

Air quality and climate change are fundamentally inter-related. Many common air pollutants are greenhouse gases and therefore reducing air pollution will lessen the warming effect on our climate. Poor air quality and climate change have a direct impact on the health and well-being of both humans and the natural environment.

Air pollution is the biggest environmental threat to health in the UK, with between 28,000 and 36,000 deaths a year attributed to long-term exposure⁷.

There is strong evidence that human exposure to air pollution is associated with premature death and serious illness from cardiovascular (heart) and cardiopulmonary (lung) disease. In addition, existing health conditions such as asthma and other respiratory illnesses, can be exacerbated by air pollution.

The fraction of mortality attributable to anthropogenic (human-made) particulate air pollution in Wigan is 4.5%⁸ which is the same as the average across the Northwest region but below the England average

of 5.1%. The UK Air Quality Strategy estimates that air pollution reduces the average life expectancy across the UK by 7-8 months⁹. These impacts also have an economic cost to society. The UK Air Quality Strategy estimates that PM2.5 pollution alone imposes an annual cost to the UK economy of between £9 and £20 billion.

Often the greatest burden of air quality can fall on the most deprived communities and individuals. Of the 200 smaller geographical areas, known as Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the borough, 57 are in the 20% most deprived LSOAs in England. 28.6% (91,773) of the borough's population live in these areas¹⁰. In many cases the most deprived communities live closest to the busiest roads, thereby increasing their exposure to pollution. The Marmot Review¹¹ highlighted the role that action to tackle air pollution can play in addressing health inequalities. It is important that we act to improve air quality to protect the most vulnerable in our communities.

⁶ https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/assets/documents/ozone-uv/Tackling_Climate_Change_defra.pdf

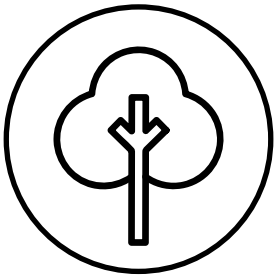
⁷ Review of interventions to improve outdoor air quality and Public Health, Public Health England, 2019

⁸ Public Health Outcomes framework <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/public-health-outcomes-framework>

⁹ www.defra.gov.uk/environment/qaity/air/airqaity/strategy

¹⁰ Wigan Borough Public Health Training Prospectus 2019

¹¹ www.local.gov.uk/health/-/journal-content/56/10180/3510094/ARTICLE



“Air pollution is not an issue that occurs in isolation. Measures that improve air quality also offer wider public health and wellbeing co-benefits, including overall improvement in environmental quality, increased physical activity, noise reduction, greater road safety and climate change mitigation. Multiple interventions, each producing a small benefit, can act to produce significant overall benefits.”

Economy and Environment

There are strong economic drivers for improving air quality, it affects people of working age, for instance if they take days off work through ill health. A recent report by CBI Economics, commissioned by the Clean Air Fund, estimated that by achieving the WHO guidelines for air quality the UK could gain 3 million working days per year lost through ill health, prevent 17,000 deaths and boost the UK economy by £1.6 billion per year¹².

As well as affecting human health, the quality of our air also impacts on the environment we live in. Low level ozone affects the growth of plants and can reduce crop yields in species such as wheat. Nitrogen deposition can adversely affect the biodiversity of sensitive ecosystems.

Air pollution is not an issue that occurs in isolation. Measures that improve air quality also offer wider public health and wellbeing co-benefits, including overall improvement in environmental quality, increased physical activity, noise reduction, greater road safety and climate change mitigation. Multiple interventions, each producing a small benefit, can act to produce significant overall benefits¹³.



¹² [www.cleanairfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Breathing life into the UK economy-Report-Final.pdf](http://www.cleanairfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Breathing%20life%20into%20the%20UK%20economy-Report-Final.pdf)

¹³ www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-air-pollution/health-matters-air-pollution



3.3

AIR QUALITY IN WIGAN

In 2018, Wigan developed an internal Air Quality Action Plan to target actions at a local level aimed at encouraging behaviour change across the borough. Actions have been ongoing and will be refreshed and updated in the OAQ&T Action Plan to include additional actions in line with new legislation and guidance and the key outcomes for air quality and transport within Wigan's Outline Climate Change Strategy.

Over the last two decades, air quality in Wigan has been monitored by the council, via a network of continuous analysers and passive diffusion tubes, to identify areas within the borough with potentially high levels of pollutants. Each year, in conjunction with the nine other Greater Manchester local authorities, an Annual Status Report is produced to determine if the health-based objectives are being achieved.

Under the Environmental Permitting Regulations, the council issue permits to businesses that emit pollutants into the air and regularly inspect them to ensure that the emissions are within legal limits. We also have a duty to investigate complaints about smoke from domestic and commercial burning.

In May 2016, in response to exceedances of NO₂, Wigan Council with the other Greater Manchester local authorities declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), covering the 10 districts. Long term trends show that there have been improvements in air quality, however a small number of areas within Wigan borough remain above the annual mean air quality objective for NO₂.

Air pollution does not respect geographic boundaries, and for this reason Wigan Council committed to working with the Greater Manchester local authorities and Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), to secure improvements in air quality through the Greater Manchester

Air Quality Action Plan (2016-2021) ¹⁴.

In 2017, local authorities within Greater Manchester were identified in the UK plan for tackling NO₂ concentrations, as having exceedances of the EU limit value of 40 µg/m³ beyond 2020. The UK plan compelled local authorities to develop plans to deliver compliance in the shortest time possible.

In March 2020, a further ministerial direction was received from central government setting out the expectation to implement a Class C charging Clean Air Zone (CAZ). Wigan, as part of Greater Manchester have developed the Great Manchester Clean Air Plan (GMCAP) which includes the introduction of a Class C CAZ for Greater Manchester. Introduced from Spring 2022, it will impose a charge on the most polluting vehicles and is anticipated to accelerate the transition to Low Emission Vehicles (LEVs) or Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) and allow us to meet legal limits for NO₂ in the shortest time possible.

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¹⁴ Greater Manchester Air Quality Action Plan (2016), TfGM & GMCA.

SECTION 4

TRANSP RT AND CL MATE CHANGE



4.1

WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT?

Sustainable transport allows the basic access and development needs of society to be met, operates fairly and efficiently, offers a choice of transport mode and importantly, limits the use of natural resources and emissions. Sustainable

transport includes walking, cycling, using public transport, and to a lesser extent car sharing and using vehicles that minimise greenhouse gas emissions, such as electric cars.



By providing people with options to choose sustainable modes for everyday local transport choices we can help boost economic growth by facilitating access to local jobs.

4.2

IMPACTS OF VEHICLE EMISSIONS

During the 20th century our culture has become increasingly reliant on their cars. Transport is now the largest greenhouse gas-emitting sector in the UK, accounting for 28% of emissions, and road transport accounts for 87% of this figure. If we are to meet our commitments to reduce carbon emissions from transport, there will have to be a switch to much greater use of active travel for short journeys and more sustainable travel modes such as public transport.

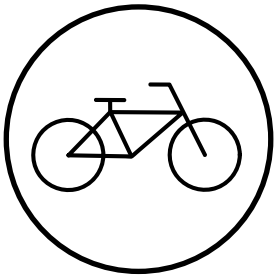
Reducing transport emissions is a particular challenge, given that economic and population growth will increase the demand for travel, hence more radical measures will be needed to enable us to meet challenging standards and targets, in terms of air quality and in response to the challenge of climate change.

Making the best use of existing infrastructure will help to reduce environmental impacts. Locating new developments where there is good access to public transport and services will reduce car travel and therefore emissions. Road and rail networks must also be used

efficiently and be well maintained.

Around two out of every three trips we make are less than 5 miles in length, many of which could easily be cycled, walked or undertaken by public transport. Increasing the use of sustainable transport will reduce the negative impacts of car use. Many people do not currently see sustainable transport modes as realistic alternatives, so we must continue to work hard to improve the quality of our walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure to provide people with the facilities and training to make them natural, easy choices.

By providing people with options to choose sustainable modes for everyday local transport choices we can help boost economic growth by facilitating access to local jobs. Sustainable transport can also influence the quality of our lives, the air we breathe, how healthy and fit we are, the money in our pockets and how long we spend in traffic queues, as well as the pleasantness of our environment and public spaces.



4.3

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT IN WIGAN



The Council's Transport Strategy is a vital tool that will help us work with stakeholders to strengthen our place-shaping role and delivery of services to the community. It will be guided by the Council's Corporate Plan, The Deal 2030, which sets out how the council, in conjunction with residents, community organisations, businesses and public bodies, will work together to create a truly world class place to live in the decade ahead.

Wigan borough is growing both in terms of population and economy and this growth needs to be supported by increased connectivity. Good transport is a vital factor in building sustainable local communities. It contributes to the achievement of stronger and safer communities, healthier children and young people, equality and social inclusion, environmental objectives and better local economies. Where transport fails, these aspirations are put at risk.

Many of the transport challenges facing Wigan borough are historical in nature. One example is the location of the borough on the western boundary of Greater Manchester, with borders to West Lancashire, Lancashire and Cheshire, alongside the constrained road infrastructure that stems from the borough's mining and industrial past. Although the borough is well served by an axis of strategic road and rail connections, travel from east to west through the heart of borough is heavily constrained, and the borough has some of the most congested roads in Greater Manchester.

It is imperative to review the borough's transport infrastructure, in line with the Greater Manchester Congestion and Clean Air Plans. By improving the quality, reliability and affordability of our public transport services and providing new sustainable connections between people and places, we can empower people to make informed travel choices to suit their needs.

Looking from this new perspective, Wigan borough's historical infrastructure becomes a key asset which offers opportunities to support sustainable economic development such as rail and water freight, and for creating new

transport connections such as walking and cycling routes along canal towpaths and disused railway lines, which can increase connectivity. The Leigh-Salford-Manchester guided busway and the Standish Mineral Line are excellent examples of how investment can unlock the historic past to provide new connections for today.

Wigan Council is embarking on a refresh of the local transport strategy as the existing Transport Strategy "Wigan Borough on the Move", launched in 2011, is out of date and does not reflect the most recent changes to national transport policy and priorities. For example, Greater Manchester has recently been directed by Government to introduce a Clean Air Zone and accelerate the installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

The updated Local Transport Strategy (LTS) will include Wigan Council's policies and delivery plans relating to transport, explaining how these contribute to the wider local agenda. It is imperative that the transport strategy interfaces with the most recent local, regional and national documents such as the Greater Manchester (GM) 2040 Transport Strategy and the Transport for North (TfN) Strategic Transport Plan.

The Council's Transport Strategy is a vital tool that will help us work with stakeholders to strengthen our place-shaping role and delivery of services to the community. It will be guided by the Council's Corporate Plan, The Deal 2030, which sets out how the council, in conjunction with residents, community organisations, businesses and public bodies, will work together to create a truly world class place to live in the decade ahead.

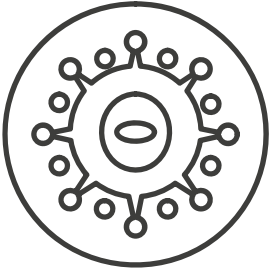
SECTION 5

THE IMPACT OF

C VID-19 ON

TRANSP RTATION

AND AIR QUALITY



5.1

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

The most pronounced changes in UK air quality during lockdown, were in the urban environment, notably for nitrogen oxides (NOx). During the weeks preceding and following the first lockdown the UK air quality was negatively influenced by a change in meteorological conditions.

The emergence of Coronavirus (COVID-19) at the start of 2020 has caused marked changes in the ways we live our lives in the UK. Transitional shifts include a significant increase in the amount of people working from home, a large reduction in usage of public transport due to fears of further spread of the virus, combined with notable reductions in vehicular usage and increases in active travel, particularly during the first lockdown in Spring 2020. At the time of writing, the full impact of traffic and vehicle usage reductions on local air quality is not yet known. At a national level, in June 2020, the Air Quality Expert group published a rapid review of the air quality impacts of COVID-19 in the UK from the first lockdown. This was based on limited data but showed a marked decrease in emissions from the transport sector.

The most pronounced changes in UK air quality during lockdown, were in the urban environment, notably for nitrogen

oxides (NOx). During the weeks preceding and following the first lockdown the UK air quality was negatively influenced by a change in meteorological conditions. However, once weather effects are accounted for, mean reductions in urban NOx averaged over the lockdown period considered were typically 30-40%, with mean NO₂ reductions of 20-30%. In general, NOx and NO₂ reductions have been greater at roadside than at urban background sites. These reductions would typically correspond to decreases in concentrations of 10-20 µg m³ if expressed relative to annual averages¹⁵. However, other evidence shows that weather conditions have led to increased PM_{2.5} levels during lockdown in some areas.

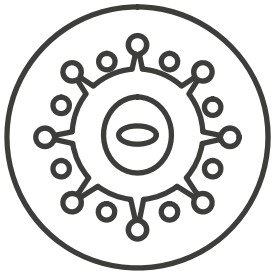
There have been some beneficial changes to people's mode of transport during the pandemic, the decrease in vehicle traffic led to an upsurge in walking and cycling, as streets felt safer and less polluted.

Wigan
Council

STAY LOCAL

STAY SAFE

¹⁵ https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/ass15%20ets/documents/reports/cat09/2007010844_Estimation_of_Changes_in_Air_Pollution_During_COVID-19_outbreak_in_the_UK.pdf



Actions within this plan aim to build on positive gains to secure improvements in air quality and in turn, improve public health and the resilience of communities to manage public health threats in the future.

However, with social distancing measures in place there is decreased capacity on public transport and as we move towards recovery this disparity in capacity is likely to be taken up by private cars. We need to ensure that sustainable transport options and space for walking and cycling are sufficient to ensure we do not have a 'car led recovery', which could lead to pollution levels above those seen before the pandemic.

It is widely acknowledged that long-term exposure to air pollution is associated with increased morbidity and mortality from chronic diseases, some of which have also been identified as increasing the risk of severe COVID-19 symptoms, therefore any reduction in pollution levels will have a positive impact on population health.

In summary, whilst the pandemic has changed transport patterns and behaviour, the short-term influence of COVID-19 is not expected to lead to sufficiently long-term reductions in pollution. In response

to the pandemic, the public have had to make lifestyle changes and many of these positive lessons learned will help us to make a transition to more sustainable modes of living and working in a post-COVID society. Actions within this plan aim to build on positive gains to secure improvements in air quality and in turn, improve public health and the resilience of communities to manage public health threats in the future.



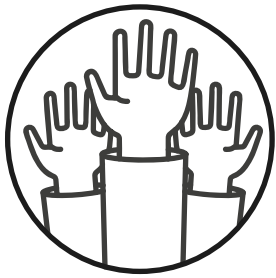
SECTION 6

ACTION  **PLAN**

FRAMEWORK  **WORK**

AND

DEVELOPMENT



6.1

ACTION PLAN FRAMEWORK AND DEVELOPMENT

Our Air Quality and Transport Working Group consists of officers representing the council's internal service providers and is supported through consultation with external stakeholders. This action plan is underpinned by standards set out within the Local Air Quality Management Framework.

The environment and climate change are key themes within our corporate strategy, The Deal 2030, with the vision 'to create a clean, green place for us all to enjoy'. The Deal 2030 was created in response to the ideas brought forward by our residents and communities who highlighted concerns over the state of the environment, including the impacts of climate change, air quality, pollution and single use plastics.

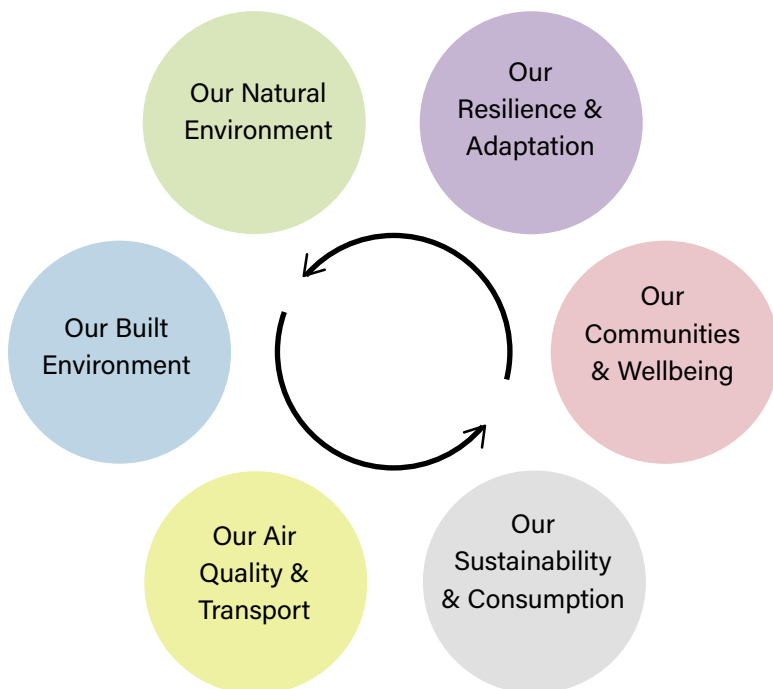
Wigan Council declared a climate emergency on the 17th July 2019 and the Outline Climate Change Strategy was adopted in October 2020. 'Our Air Quality and Transport' is one of the six climate change action themes defined within the Outline Climate Change Strategy. Each of the action themes have an operational working group.

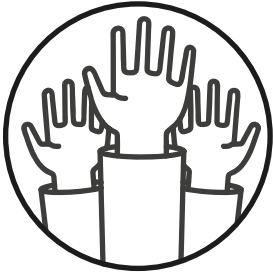
Key outcomes of the theme for OAQ&T as set out by the outline climate change strategy are:

- We will be air quality compliant by 2025 or sooner
- We will promote transport modal shift by developing walking and cycling infrastructure
- We will significantly increase the number of electric vehicle charging points
- We will significantly reduce the Council's business mileage
- We will improve the air quality and health for residents, providing alternative green travel and reducing congestion

Our Air Quality and Transport Working Group consists of officers representing the council's internal service providers and is supported through consultation with external stakeholders. This action plan is underpinned by standards set out within the Local Air Quality Management Framework.

Work on air quality is well established within Wigan Borough, both locally and regionally. This action plan builds upon current understanding of air quality issues, as well as legislative, environmental, and economic drivers to frame delivery of improvements between 2021 and 2026. A workshop comprising internal stakeholders from various sectors throughout the Council was held in Autumn 2020 to share knowledge and gather opinion.





The OAQ&T workshop focussed on the themes of improving local air quality and transitioning towards sustainable, green, and active local travel. The principle aim of the work was to understand the fundamental basics behind the perception of local air quality and sustainable travel, within the Council's daily operations and strategic planning for the Borough.

The four areas considered were:

Communities – Working with residents and community groups to improve knowledge and awareness of air quality. Improving the immediate and future health of the people in our communities, through preventing and reducing air pollution.

Businesses – Embedding air quality into business culture, whilst ensuring economic prosperity and the health and wellbeing of the workforce

Schools – Protecting and educating our children at school. Empowering them to be part of the solution and give them the knowledge to make the best decisions growing up.

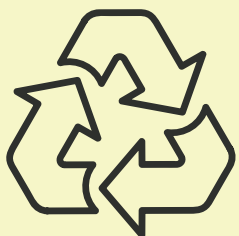
Staff - Embedding air quality into our culture and ensuring we lead by example.

Responses were collated and utilised to create a first draft of the action plan and which was subsequently circulated to the working group. The action plan was refined in response to the comments received and developed into a comprehensive action plan that will provide the framework for delivery of this climate change action theme.

This action plan outlines how Wigan Council can improve sustainable transport infrastructure and the quality of our air now and in over the next five years by initiating, developing and delivering measures to prevent and reduce air pollution. In turn, we will realise the benefits of these measures through increased awareness, improved health and well-being and enhanced economic prosperity within the Borough.

SECTION 7

GOVERNANCE



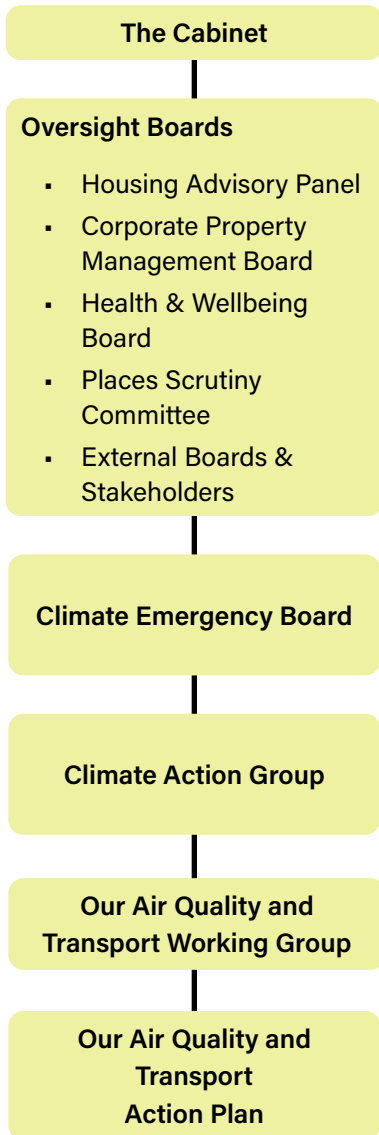
F THE

ACT^{ION} PLAN



7.1 GOVERNANCE OF THE ACTION PLAN

Overall governance of the action plan lies with the Council's Cabinet.



This OAQ&T Action Plan will be monitored and implemented by the OAQ&T Working Group, which will be chaired by the Service Manager for Regulatory Services and will consist of representatives from Environmental Health, Public Health, Planning Policy, Transport Planning, Human Resources, Major Projects and other relevant teams. Representatives from TfGM, the GMCA and other interested organisations will also be asked to join.

The action plan is a live document, and the working group will continue to assess:

- If there are additional or existing programmes in other Council services that could contribute to emissions reductions
- What factors may influence local pollution in the future
- Likely future trends
- What additional technical assessments may be needed

The OAQ&T Working Group will meet on a quarterly basis, to track progress on short, medium and long-term actions as defined by the action plan.

These progress reports will be submitted to the Climate Action Group on a quarterly basis so that progress can be tracked alongside the five other developing climate change action themes.

On an annual basis, the working group will be required to create an annual progress report on air quality improvements for the Council and the borough. The progress report will be submitted to the Climate Action Group for approval and will then go on to the relevant oversight boards for additional review and comments.

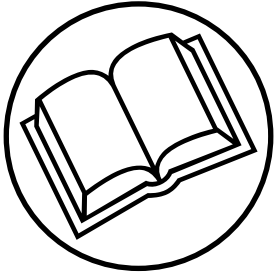
At this stage, progress reports will also be provided to external stakeholders to ensure continuous engagement of private sector, education and voluntary organisations with regards to overall progress on work related to climate change.



Figure 2: Governance of the Our Air Quality and Transport Action Plan

SECTION 8

LAYOUT OF THE ACTION ON PLAN



8.1

LAYOUT OF THE ACTION PLAN

“Progress of actions will be evaluated on a quarterly basis at the working group meetings. All actions will be reviewed on an annual basis, and the Working Group will generate an annual progress briefing. The action plan will undergo a holistic review and refocus targets by 2026, whereby a new updated action plan will be created to outline delivery between 2026 and 2031.”

The interventions outlined in the action plan have been categorised into four main themes according to the groups within the borough that they target and impact. These are:

- Communities
- Schools
- Businesses
- The Council

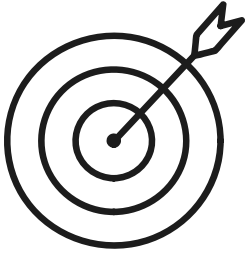
Each of the actions states a responsible service area within the Council, a timescale for review and / or completion, objectives and partner organisations and service teams that can provide additional support.

For future reporting purposes each action will be ‘RAG’ rated through a system of red, amber and green which infers:

- Green actions are where the project is on track to meet scheduled dates.
- Amber actions are projects which are in danger of over running project deadlines or budget if risks are not addressed.
- Red actions are those projects which are likely to miss scheduled dates or are over budget or out of scope.

Progress of actions will be evaluated on a quarterly basis at the working group meetings. All actions will be reviewed on an annual basis, and the Working Group will generate an annual progress briefing. The action plan will undergo a holistic review and refocus targets by 2026, whereby a new updated action plan will be created to outline delivery between 2026 and 2031.





8.2

ACTION PLAN AIMS

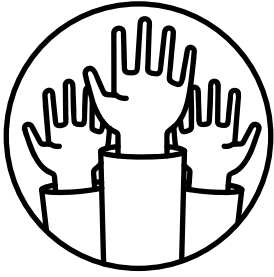
The development of this Action Plan, will support wider work taking place within Greater Manchester and has identified local interventions that are required to provide a holistic approach to tackle air quality issues within our borough. It ensures we have the tools required, so the council, communities, businesses and schools can all play their part in improving the quality of our air.

The purpose of this action plan is to provide robust and deliverable measures to ensure air quality and sustainable transport are considered throughout the decision-making procedure in all areas of the council. It will also provide a strategic overview, guidance and planning to ensure both Wigan Council and Wigan borough are progressing towards a future where they not only comply with air quality objective set out in legislation but go beyond these to create a healthy and sustainable borough for residents. Key outcomes from the action plan and associated working group include:

- Raise awareness and understanding of air quality issues with residents and communities.
- Work with schools to improve environmental education and provide schools with the tools to encourage walking and cycling for the school journey.
- Provide local-based solutions to enable everyone to make small beneficial behaviour changes and work towards the larger goal of reducing pollution in Wigan.

- Ensure that air quality and sustainable transport is embedded in decision-making activities throughout all departments within the Council.
- Engage with local businesses and organisations to promote more sustainable ways of working.
- Work towards providing a sustainable transport network within Wigan and Greater Manchester with the goal of achieving the 'Right Mix' of 50% of journeys made by public transport or active travel by 2040.
- Identify areas that require further interventions to improve air quality or sustainable transport.

The development of this Action Plan, will support wider work taking place within Greater Manchester and has identified local interventions that are required to provide a holistic approach to tackle air quality issues within our borough. It ensures we have the tools required, so the council, communities, businesses and schools can all play their part in improving the quality of our air.



8.3

CONTINUING OUR JOURNEY TOWARDS CLEAN AIR AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

As an authority we also have a valuable role to play in encouraging and influencing behaviours, in providing the tools to make that change through education and infrastructure, and by providing support and assistance in all areas of our communities. At the heart of the actions is the importance of engaging residents, communities, schools and businesses, as only through working together can we achieve the level of reduction in emissions to improve our air and reduce climate change.

The QAQ&T action plan builds upon the work undertaken by the council over the past decades and is the vital next step to improving the quality of our air and sustainable transport systems over the next five years. Most air pollution is caused by human activities and the health impacts of poor air quality can affect us all. Wigan Council recognise that we need a collective effort to achieve the ambitions set out in this plan and we want to lead the change, by transforming the way in which we think about and deliver our services. We will work alongside key local and national stakeholders and partner organisations, to successfully deliver measures and drive change.

As an authority we also have a valuable role to play in encouraging and influencing behaviours, in providing the tools to make that change through education and infrastructure, and by providing support and assistance in all areas of our communities. At the heart of the actions is the importance of engaging residents, communities, schools and businesses, as only through working together can we achieve the level of reduction in emissions to improve our air and reduce climate change. The QAQ&T action plan is our commitment to improving air quality within our borough now and over the next five years and it is the hope that this document can start us on our shared journey to a cleaner, greener future for the borough.

SECTION 9



OUR AIR

QUALITY AND

TRANSPORT

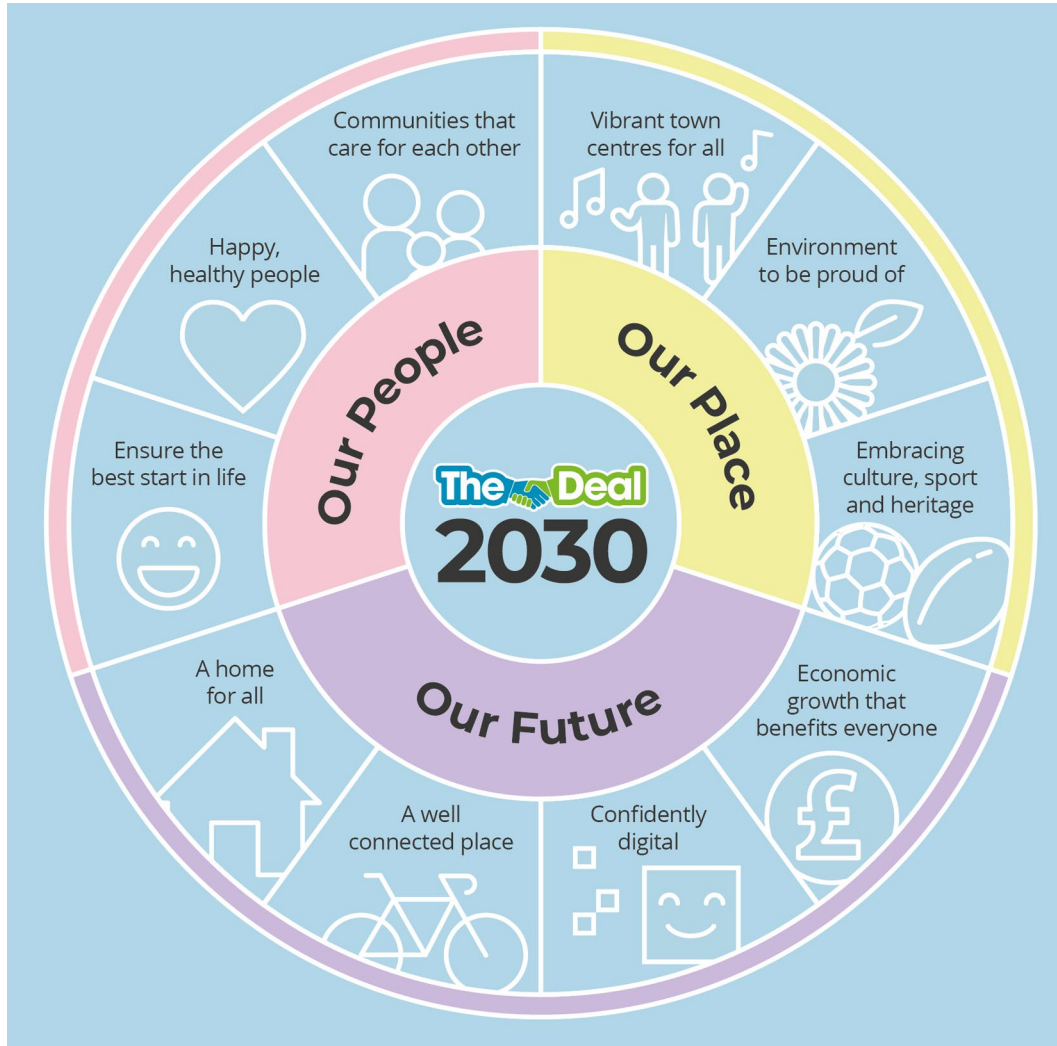
ACTION PLAN

2021-2026



9.1

OUR AIR QUALITY AND TRANSPORT ACTION PLAN 2021-2026



Theme 1. Communities

| Action Number | The Deal 2030 Priorities | Lead Service Areas | Action | Timescales | Key Performance Indicators | Partner Organisations / departments |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------------|--|------------|---|--|
| 1.1 | Our People | PR/Media | Establish a well-connected communication strategy for air quality and sustainable transport, to focus on engagement and education. | Ongoing | Number or people reached with messaging | Internal: Public Health, Regulatory Services, Civil Contingencies, Climate Change Manager External: Clinical Commissioning Group, NHS, private healthcare |
| 1.2 | Our Place | Regulatory Services | Build on and establish new relationships with community groups to highlight air quality issues. | Ongoing | Number of sessions attended | Internal: Communities and SDF teams, Climate Change Manager |
| 1.3 | Our Future | Regulatory Services | Continue the development of an Anti-idling campaign targeted at particular hotspots throughout the borough. | 1-2 years | Number of hotspots targeted. Number of residents engaged | Internal: Regulatory Services, PR and Media, Network Management |
| 1.4 | Our Future | Major projects | Further develop feasibility and funding opportunities surrounding the implementation of electric vehicle charging points across the Borough. | 3 years | Number of EV charge points installed | Internal: Major Projects, Regulatory Services External: TFGM, OLEV, Energy Saving Trust |

| Action Number | The Deal 2030 Priorities | Lead Service Areas | Action | Timescales | Key Performance Indicators | Partner Organisations / departments |
|---------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--|------------|--|--|
| 1.5 | Our Place | Major projects | Improve local cycling and walking infrastructure for Wigan Borough | 3-5 years | % increase in walking/cycling journeys | Internal: Network Management, Transport Planning, Planning Policy, Regulatory Service |

Theme 2. Businesses

| Action Number | The Deal 2030 Priorities | Lead Service Areas | Action | Timescales | Key Performance Indicators | Partner Organisations / departments |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------------|--|--------------|---|--|
| 2.1 | Our Place | Regulatory Services | Continue the development of installation points for electric taxis. | 1 year | Number of taxi EV charge points installed | Internal: Network Management External: Transport for Greater Manchester |
| 2.2 | Our Future | PR/Media | Establish a communications plan for air quality and sustainable transport information directed at businesses. | 1-2 years | Number of businesses reached/ Number taking up incentives | Internal: Regulatory Services, Business engagement, Climate Change Manager |
| 2.3 | Our Future | Regulatory Services | Deliver the Air Quality Supplementary Planning Document to be utilised in all new developments across the borough. | 6 months | Number of consultees/ Publication of report | Internal: Planning Policy, Development Management |
| 2.4 | Our People | Business engagement | Work with businesses to establish alternative ways of working to reduce pollution. | 12-18 months | Number of businesses engaged | Internal: Business engagement External: GM Business Growth Hub, Chamber of Commerce, Sustainable Transport TfGM |

| Action Number | The Deal 2030 Priorities | Lead Service Areas | Action | Timescales | Key Performance Indicators | Partner Organisations / departments |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------------|--|------------|--|--|
| 2.5 | Our Future | Regulatory Services | Deliver improvements in the Environmental Permitting Regime. | 2 years | Number of permitted activities/ changes in emissions | Internal: Business Engagement |
| 2.6 | Our Future | Licensing | Implement recommendations from the Greater Manchester minimum licensing standards. | 2 years | Number of electric taxis/ PHVs | Internal: Licensing External: TfGM |
| 2.7 | Our Future | Trading Standards | Regulate the sale of coal and wet wood for domestic use. | 2 years | Number of businesses advised | Internal: Regulatory Services External: TfGM, GM AQ working group |

Theme 3. Schools

| Action Number | The Deal 2030 Priorities | Lead Service Areas | Action | Timescales | Key Performance Indicators | Partner Organisations / departments |
|---------------|--------------------------|--|--|------------|--|--|
| 3.1 | Our Future | Regulatory Services | Use internal and external funding to deliver modal shift around schools. | 2 years | Number of pupils engaged. Increase in school active travel | Internal: Environmental education Planning Policy, Network Management, Major Projects |
| 3.2 | Our Future | Environmental Education | Collaborate with schools to adopt Air Quality Awareness policies through education and engagement. | 2 years | Number of schools/ pupils engaged. | Internal: Climate Change Manager, Regulatory services, Road safety, Traffic Management |
| 3.3 | Our People | Network Management | Work with schools to identify potential candidates for school street schemes during peak hour, or where unfeasible, implement walking bubbles. | 2 years | % change in modal shift for school journeys | Internal: Planning Policy, Regulatory Services, Road Safety Team, Parking Services. |
| 3.4 | Our People | Road safety/ Environmental Education Teams | Increase the number of schools achieving school travel plan accreditation through the 'Modeshift Stars' scheme. | 3 years | Number of schools achieving accreditation | Internal: Regulatory Services, Communities teams External: TfGM Sustainable Journeys Team, Living Streets |
| 3.5 | Our People | Environmental Education | Collaborate with the Youth Cabinet to share ideas on sustainable transport and air quality issues. | 2 years | Number of young people reached | Internal: Regulatory Services. External Manchester Environmental Education network |

Theme 4. Council

| Action Number | The Deal 2030 Priorities | Lead Service Areas | Action | Timescales | Key Performance Indicators | Partner Organisations / departments |
|---------------|--------------------------|--|--|---------------|---|--|
| 4.1 | Our People | Human Resources & Organisational Development | Develop a Council travel plan and internal communications strategy to promote sustainable travel. | 2 years | Number of staff using sustainable transport | Internal: PR and Media, Planning and transport policy |
| 4.2 | Our Future | Regulatory Services | Complete a review of the grey fleet. | 3-4 years | Number of total annual business miles. Reduce the number of staff business miles | Internal: Human resources, Finance, Waste and Fleet. External: Energy Saving Trust |
| 4.3 | Our People | Human Resources & Organisational Development | Continue our working differently journey, based on a digital first methodology and taking a blended approach to home, office and community working within the Council. | 18 -24 months | Number of employees in the office. | Internal: Regulatory Services, Major Projects |
| 4.4 | Our Future | Waste and Fleet | Upgrade the council fleet to low emission vehicles. | 5 years | Number of low emission miles | Internal: Regulatory Services, Major Projects |
| 4.5 | Our Future | Major projects | Develop and implement an electric vehicle charging infrastructure strategy within Wigan Council and Greater Manchester. | 2 years | Increase in number of EV charge points. | Internal: Network Management, Regulatory Services External: Transport for Great Manchester. |
| 4.6 | Our Future | Regulatory Services | Deliver the Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan and associated Clean Air Zone. | 2 years | Number of ULEVs registered in Wigan | Internal: Regulatory Services |
| 4.7 | Our Place | Planning and transport policy | Update the Wigan Transport Strategy. | 12-18 months | Publication of report | Internal: Climate Change Manager, Network Management, Major projects. External: Transport for Greater Manchester. |

| Action Number | The Deal 2030 Priorities | Lead Service Areas | Action | Timescales | Key Performance Indicators | Partner Organisations / departments |
|---------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--|------------|---|---|
| 4.8 | Our People | Regulatory Services | Implement a working group to explore targeted measures aimed specifically at nitrogen dioxide exceedances that fall outside the Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan. | 2 years | Number of areas exceeding NO ₂ objectives. | Internal: Network Management, Major Projects |
| 4.9 | Our Future | Planning and transport policy | Update Travel Plan supplementary planning document. | 2 years | Number consulted/ Publication of report | Internal: Network Management, Major Projects, Regulatory Services |
| 4.10 | Our Future | Planning and transport policy | Develop schemes detailed in Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 and Delivery Plan 2020-25, in conjunction with TfGM. | 5 years | Schemes delivered | Internal: Network Management, Major Projects External: TfGM |
| 4.11 | Our People | Regulatory Services | Use innovative techniques and cross party working to improve air quality data collection. Utilise data to effectively target actions against the most polluting sources, inform policy decisions, track progress and evaluate risks. | 5 years | Data capture | Internal: Network Management, Major Projects. External: GMCA, TfGM, GM AQ working group. |