Transport for Norwich

Norfolk County Council

Transport for Norwich — Strategy —

Improving the quality of our air

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Chapter Seven - Improving the quality of our air

Highlights of this Chapter

This section sets out what the main difference the policies set out in this chapter will make, and some of the key commitments and interventions that the strategy will bring about:

- This chapter includes commitment to achieve clean air
- To achieve this will require, as for reducing carbon, significant and far-reaching interventions including reductions in travel demand, mode shift through an increased emphasis on active travel and accelerating the switch to electric vehicles
- This is likely to result in imposing measures that will limit or restrict use of the private car within the city, particularly internal combustion engine vehicles. Such restrictions are also required to achieve the ambitions for clean air
- These measures will need significant further study and engagement work to consider before being able to commit to delivery of a preferred option, but the following interventions should be further considered:
  - Clean Air Zone
  - Workplace parking place levy
  - Road charging / congestion charge
  - Vehicle bans (eg prohibiting petrol and diesel engine vehicles from the city centre)
  - Promoting less polluting public transport.




Context

Introduction

7.1 Poor air quality is considered by the UK government as being the "largest environmental risk to public health in the UK" (House of Commons Library, 2019). Government has legally binding targets in place in order to reduce emissions of five damaging air pollutants, including nitrogen oxides and particulate matter.

7.2 Transport has a key role to play in improving air quality and meeting the targets. The Clean Air Strategy 2019 reports that road transport, domestic shipping, aviation and rail are responsible for a significant proportion of air pollutant emissions: 50% of nitrogen oxides, 16% particulate matter and 5% of non-methane volatile organic compounds, all of which are bad for health. Government's Clean Air Strategy 2019 and the Road to Zero Strategy 2018 pave the way to improving air quality in transport and achieving legally binding targets, such as plans to ban the sale of new conventional petrol and diesel cars and vans in 2030.

7.3 Air pollution is also a significant issue more locally in Norwich. The city centre is an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) due to the annual average nitrogen dioxide levels exceeding the recognised thresholds. High levels of nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter have also been identified along the primary routes into the city as well as in the wider urban area of Norwich. This has a detrimental effect on human health causing a reduction in life expectancy and increasing the risks of heart disease and lung cancer.

7.4 Various interventions to improve air quality in Norwich have been undertaken, alongside Norwich City Council's Air Quality Management Action Plan which sets out a five- year plan for improving air quality.

Strategy and Policy

Air quality

7.5 Air quality is an issue within the Norwich area. In some places, air quality falls below recognised standards, meaning that an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) has been declared across much of the city centre. An Air Quality Management Action Plan has been agreed. In some locations elsewhere, for example Wroxham Road/ Ring Road, Sprowston and Reepham Road, Hellesdon, nitrogen dioxide levels are near to the levels where an AQMA would have to be considered. Because poor air quality has detrimental effects on human health, we want to ensure that air quality is tackled, that we no longer have to have an AQMA, and that our range of future interventions means that this doesn't become a problem again in the future.

Statement of Policy

AIR QUALITY

Air quality across Norwich and its strategic growth areas will improve so that we will:

i) Remove the need to have AQMAs

ii) Improve air quality across Norwich and its strategic growth areas in the long term.

Key Actions

7.6 Significant and far-reaching interventions will be considered including measures limiting or restricting use of the private car within the city, particularly vehicles powered by internal combustion engines, and promotion of low/zero emission public transport.

7.7 We need significant further study work to understand the impacts that such measures will have, and which might be appropriate for further consideration. This will be done through a mix of technical study work alongside extensive engagement with a range of partners and the public to understand what it means for business, and the effects such measures might have on how easy people find it to get about.

7.8 Considerable further work is required before being able to commit to delivery, but we envisage that the following interventions should be further considered, with a view to taking forward the preferred option:

- Clean Air Zone to charge vehicles with higher emissions
- Workplace parking place levy
- Road charging / congestion charge
- Vehicle bans on certain roads or areas

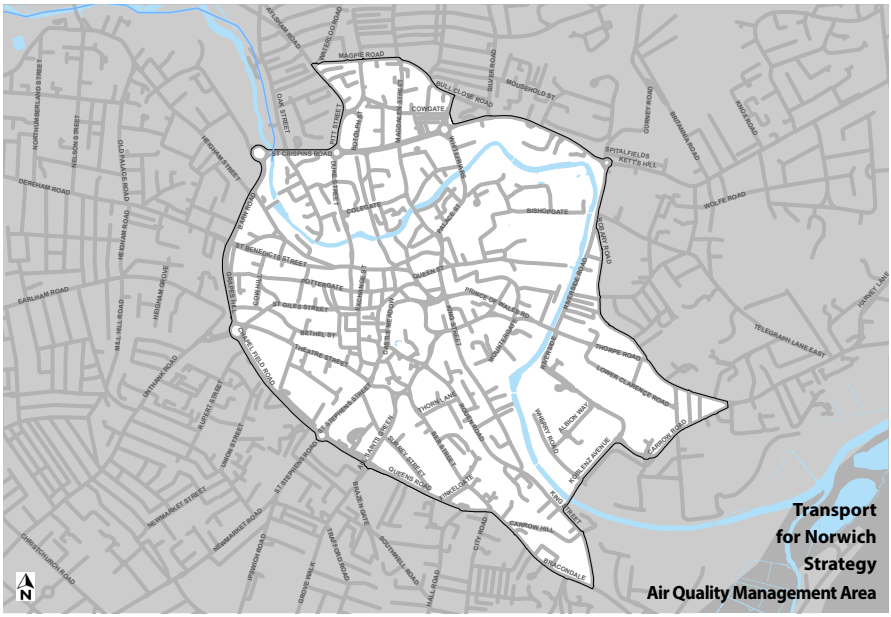
Supporting Actions

7.9 We will also:

- Adopt an electric vehicle strategy, setting out how we will work on the provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure for fleet vehicles (buses, vans etc) and for private motorists. This will accelerate the switch to electric vehicles
- Implement traffic management schemes to improve vehicle flow and reduce idling
- Work on behaviour change campaigns to discourage unnecessary journeys and encourage active travel and clean travel modes (see Chapter 8 Changing Attitudes and Behaviours)




- Work with partners including Public Health and local communities to understand and investigate concerns about air quality in local areas, such as outside schools. We will look to whether innovative technology will help monitor air quality and will look to work with local communities on innovative measures such as school streets
- Assess whether any routes across Norwich and its strategic growth areas are at risk of falling into AQMA status, or lie close to the AQMA threshold, and identify appropriate mitigation strategies
- Work with public transport and taxi operators and freight companies to introduce cleaner vehicles
- Assess the air quality impacts of any transport scheme promoted under the Transport for Norwich strategy.



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