Date: 31 March 2017

Subject: World Health Organisation Breathe Clean Campaign

Report of: Tony Lloyd, GM Interim Mayor, Portfolio Lead for Transport and Jon Lamonte, Chief Executive, TfGM

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To provide an overview of the health impacts of air pollution in Greater Manchester;
2. To update on current activity to reduce the health impacts of air pollution; and
3. To seek support and agree for an application for Greater Manchester to become a WHO ‘BreatheLife’ City Region.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Members are recommended:

i) to support an application for Greater Manchester to become a WHO ‘BreatheLife’ City Region.

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RISK/ FINANCIAL/ LEGAL CONSEQUENCES/DETAILS
The decision regarding accepting WHO ‘BreatheLife’ status has not been subject to scrutiny by the GMCA.
No significant risks and no significant financial or legal consequences relating to this decision have been identified.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:
N/A

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Recent years have seen an improved understanding of the significant impacts of air pollution upon health and the environment. This has been associated with increased public and political awareness of the issue, and a collective desire to take actions which improve air quality.

1.2 Greater Manchester (GM) has recently published an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) and Low-Emission Strategy (LES).¹ These outline a comprehensive approach to reducing air pollution across the conurbation, to be delivered by TfGM in conjunction with GM Local Authorities.

1.3 This paper outlines an opportunity for the Greater Manchester City Region to further develop current activity in this area by partnering with the ‘BreatheLife’ campaign, a global initiative co-ordinated by the World Health Organisation.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Exposure to air pollution is associated with a range of health problems, including cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease (including lung cancer and asthma) and stroke. Vulnerable groups are disproportionately susceptible to the effects of air pollution; including children, the elderly, those suffering with long-term medical conditions and those living in the most deprived areas.

2.2 Based on 2010 data, there were 1,346 attributable deaths and 14,452 life years lost due to air pollution in Greater Manchester.²

2.3 Although air quality has improved over recent years, Greater Manchester continues to exceed recommended annual limits for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2), similar to many other urban areas in the UK. Road transport is responsible for the majority of these emissions.

3. CURRENT AND PROPOSED AIR QUALITY WORK IN GM

3.1 Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) leads on air quality on behalf of theCombined Authority. The GM Air Quality Working Group brings together TfGM, local authority air quality officers, local authority public health, academics, voluntary sector organisations and Public Health England to co-ordinate activity.

3.2 An AQAP has been drafted and will be delivered through the Air Quality Working Group and includes actions relating to:

¹ http://www.tfgm.com/GMLES/Pages/default.aspx
• Development control and planning regulation;
• Freight interventions;
• Actions to improve buses;
• Actions to increase cycling;
• Actions to improve travel choices;
• Actions to decrease emissions from cars; and
• Actions to improve information and resources

3.3 Actions relating to information and resources include plans to deliver a Clean Air Day in June 2017 as part of National Clean Air Day. The key themes are reducing contribution to air pollution and reducing exposure. The planned focus is primarily on schools by targeting parents in order to reduce air pollution and targeting children in order to reduce exposure. A secondary focus on businesses and reducing pollution is being considered. This is partially supported by a DEFRA grant.

4. PROPOSED ‘BREATHELIFE’ INITIATIVE AND ANTICIPATED BENEFITS

4.1 ‘BreatheLife’ is a global campaign co-ordinated by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in collaboration with UN Environment and the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC).3 Its purpose is to mobilise cities and individuals to take action to reduce levels of air pollution in order to meet WHO air quality targets by 2030. BreatheLife’s strategy involves identifying partner Cities/City Regions whom it recognises are taking positive actions to improve air quality. These partners are then given official WHO BreatheLife City status.

4.2 In addition to this designation, the campaign also provides partners with a range of resources and technical advice to support ongoing work. There is also an opportunity to take a leadership role; using the network to share best practice with other cities and using the BreatheLife website to profile and publicise GM efforts to improve air quality.

4.3 There is no financial cost associated with becoming a member of the ‘BreatheLife’ network. It is expected that efforts involved in developing Greater Manchester ‘BreatheLife’ branding would form part of ongoing work outlined in the AQAP to develop information and resources.

4.4 The campaign was launched recently, and the intention is to have a global network of Cities/City Regions. To-date, no other UK Cities have been awarded ‘BreatheLife’ status and very few across Europe.

3 http://breathelife2030.org
4.5 Representatives from the WHO, CCAC and the United Nations Environment Programme held a teleconference with Greater Manchester representatives on 14 February 2017 to review existing GM Air Quality plans. On the basis of the GM plans, it was agreed that the GM City Region is eligible to become a ‘BreatheLife’ City Region.

4.6 We anticipate that becoming a ‘BreatheLife’ City Region will bring significant benefits for Greater Manchester and its residents. These include the opportunity to be recognised as the first City/City Region in the UK and one of very few in Europe to be awarded this status. This will highlight the work already undertaken and the planned activities and measures summarised in the AQAP and Low Emissions Strategy.

4.7 Importantly, the branding and creative support offered by the WHO will also support the ongoing work to develop public information and resources on air quality, including in relation to the planned Clean Air Day in June 2017.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Members are recommended:

i) to support an application for Greater Manchester to become a WHO ‘BreatheLife’ City Region.

Dr Jon Lamonte,

Chief Executive, TfGM