

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet **DATE:** 14 December 2020

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PORTFOLIO: Cllr Rob Anderson – Environment and Leisure

PART I **KEY DECISION**

LOW EMISSION STRATEGY 2018-2025

1 Purpose of Report

To approve the formal review of the Low Emission Strategy 2018-2025, two years post adoption of the Strategy.

2 Recommendation(s)/ Proposed Action

The Cabinet is requested to resolve that the review of the Low Emission Strategy 2018-2025 be approved.

3 The Five Year Plan

The Low Emission Strategy (LES) contributes to the following objectives in the Five Year Plan:

Outcome 1 – Slough children will grow up to be happy, healthy and successful

- The outcomes of the LES will lead to a reduction in the number of combustion vehicles the Council operate and promote the uptake of low emission vehicles throughout the Borough, to improve local air quality. Children are more likely to be affected by air pollution due to relatively higher breathing and metabolic rates as well as the immaturity of their lung and immune system. Impacts of poor air quality on children are linked to worse life outcomes.

Outcome 2 – Our people will be healthier and manage their own care

- Work with all our partners to improve the health and wellbeing of our residents through improved communication and awareness of the effects of poor air quality on human health and by advising on actions residents can take to reduce their exposure and reduce their emissions. Slough has particular

challenges around cardiovascular health, obesity, diabetes and other preventable diseases. These medical conditions make people more sensitive to air pollution.

Outcome 3 – Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and stay.

- The Low Emission Strategy will promote the acceleration of ultra low emission vehicles, electric vehicle infrastructure, and sustainable travel as well as undertaking a feasibility assessment, if necessary, for implementing a Clean Air Zone/s within Slough to reduce air pollution which will improve the attractiveness of Slough.

Outcome 5 – Slough will attract, retain and grow businesses and investment to provide opportunities for our residents

- The LES will promote investment in the green economy which will benefit local businesses and present investment opportunities for the council such as Electric Vehicle Charging Stations. It also encourages modal shift to sustainable forms of transport, reducing congestion and emissions.

4 Other Implications

Financial

- 4.1 This report is an update report on the Council's Low Emission Strategy at the two-year formal review period. There are no direct financial implications relating to this report.
- 4.2 The Low Emission Programme requires significant funding to be secured to enable its successful delivery – totalling approximately £14.8 million as outlined in Table 1 and Appendix C (Low Emission Programme).

Table 1 Low Emission Programme Financial Status

Total Estimated Cost to deliver LES Programme (19 objectives and 52 projects)	<u>£14.775 million</u>
Capital Programme Secured	£3,001,000
Grant Funding Secured	£5,157,000
S106 Funding Secured	£273,987
S106 Funding Negotiated	£1,575,000
Grant Fund Applications pending outcome	£370,035
Funding still to be secured for delivery of the LES programme	<u>£4.4 million</u>

- 4.3 Capital Borrowing of approximately £2.2 million has already been secured towards the electric vehicle network programme (on street, off street, rapid

chargers and EV taxi infrastructure) and EV car club programme, and approximately £865k towards the Fleet Challenge Programme. Local Enterprise Partnership funding bids such for the Park and Ride proposal at Brands Hill, provide significant EV infrastructure on site, subject to obtaining planning permission. Central Government funding of £157,000 has also been awarded towards EV taxi infrastructure.

- 4.4 One of the primary sources of on-going funding is via developers' S106 contributions. This means that some projects can only progress as and when sufficient funding has been pooled. The current S106 contribution towards low emission programmes schemes are outline in Appendix D (S.106 AQ and Low Emission Contributions) these include secured contributions received now and those expected in the future which are contingent upon the commencement and occupation of new major developments (i.e. Octagon, Akzo Nobel, Berkley – Horlicks Schemes).
- 4.3 Any additional Capital borrowing will be sought via robust business cases for each specific project. The LES Programme is not currently anticipated to generate additional pressure on existing revenue budgets as staff and consultancy resources will be funded through capital budgets.
- 4.4 It is also important to note that some projects may be brought forward as privately funded and commercially operated third-party led ventures. The Low Emission Programme enables and is supportive of this type of inward investment in Slough. Such private sector investment is anticipated for some projects (i.e. town centre EV charging hub, and Colnbrook hydrogen station) that we are actively involved in promoting and/or supporting through the planning process.

Risk Management

- 4.5 There are no recommendations contained within the report so there is no risk associated with this report.
- 4.6 This report outlines the current status of the LES, with progress in 2020 reported in Appendix A together with key issues and risks to individual objectives and projects. The current delivery plan for all objectives is provided in Appendix B. The unfolding situation with COVID-19 could result in some revision to the delivery plan in the coming months.

Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

- 4.7 There are no changes to Human Rights Act implications as a result of this review. The strategy seeks to promote the right to clean air through encouraging and facilitating use of low emission vehicles. Any measures, such as Clean Air Zones, to restrict or penalise owners of more polluting vehicles

entering an area(s) would need to be subject to full cost benefit assessments considering the economic, social, equality and human rights implications.

- 4.8 There is a legal requirement to pursue, achieve and maintain air quality standards. The European Union Air Quality Directive 2008/50/EC13 sets out the obligations for Member States in terms of assessing ambient air quality and ensuring Limit Values (LV) for certain pollutants are not exceeded. The requirements of the Directive have been transposed into domestic law through the Environment Act 1995 and subordinate regulations. While the Government has a duty to meet EU Limit Values, local authorities have a duty to pursue the achievement of National Air Quality Objectives.
- 4.9 The European Union has commenced infringement proceedings against the Government for failing to meet the EU Limit Value for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂). The reserve powers of the Localism Act 2011 allow the Government to pass on any EU fines imposed to any public organisation “whose act or omission” has contributed to the breach of any EU Limit Values.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 4.10 Government studies show that air pollution has an adverse effect on the health of the majority of the population. These studies also identify specific groups that are particularly susceptible to the impact of poor air quality, including pregnant mothers, children and the elderly, with deprived communities known to be disproportionately affected. The Low Emission Strategy focuses mainly on positive and proactive interventions designed to reduce air pollution. SBC and its partners are taking an “exemplar” role in changing travel patterns and incentivising initiatives that improve air quality and public health outcomes.
- 4.11 However, some elements of the strategy may have policy change or sanctions that could potentially adversely affect some groups. Specifically, these are the Clean Air Zones (Charging) and changes to Taxi Licensing provisions. There are currently no charging Clean Air Zones at present and the council will conduct a thorough impact and feasibility studies before any are implemented. There are no plans to include passenger vehicles.
- 4.12 An Equalities Impact Assessment was carried out in August 2018 prior to the adoption of the Low Emission Strategy. This considered the impacts of the whole life of the strategy through to 2025. The draft LES was also subject to extensive public consultation prior to its formal adoption. Specific elements of the LES have also been subject to individual and separate consultation (e.g. taxi licensing conditions). The Equalities Impact Assessment for the LES is published on the Council’s Low Emission Strategy webpage – http://www.slough.gov.uk/downloads/Equalities-Impact-Assessment_LES_CF050918.pdf .

Workforce

- 4.13 The Corporate Management Team in June 2019 had approved the establishment and recruitment of four new capital funded posts to deliver the Low Emission Strategy objectives:
- Two posts (Low Emission Programme Manager and a Project Officer) to deliver the core programme such as the Slough Electric Vehicle Plan (including public rapid and on-street EV charging, and EV taxi charging), and the EV car club schemes; and
 - Two posts (Fleet manager and a Fleet officer) to manage Fleet Challenge (decarbonisation of grey fleet and electrification of the Council fleet) as well Community Transport Fleet (home to school).
- 4.14 Recruitment to these posts was delayed due to the re-grading and new job descriptions being required. Further delays have resulted due to the COVID-19 pandemic placing programmes on hold.
- 4.15 Phase 2 of the “Our Futures” programme has meant that the new structure will need to consider how the service is delivered and where functions best sit. As a result the new posts can be considered as soon as the phase 2 is completed.
- 4.16 At the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Panel on 22 October 2020, in response to a report providing an update on the implementation of the Low Emission Strategy, it was resolved that Cabinet be recommended to ensure that the relevant posts be filled so that the projects of the Low Emission Strategy can be implemented.

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 The Slough Low Emission Strategy (LES) was approved by Cabinet on 17th September 2018 and by Full Council on 27th September 2018. The details of the LES are contained within the SBC webpage <http://www.slough.gov.uk/pests-pollution-and-food-hygiene/low-emissionstrategy-2018-2025.aspx> .
- 5.2 The principal aim of the LES is to:
- Improve air quality and health outcomes across Slough by reducing vehicle emissions through the accelerated uptake of cleaner fuels and technologies.
- 5.3 Slough, in common with many urban areas in the UK, experiences elevated levels of air pollution, which have a measurable impact on the health of the local population. While there are several factors contributing to our local air quality, including heating and energy production, construction activities, and the

cross-boundary transportation of pollution, the emissions from road transport vehicles are the most significant source at present.

- 5.4 Under Section 83 of the Environment Act 1995 (Part IV), areas with persistent exceedance of pollutant EU limit values must be designated as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and be followed by production of an Air Quality Action Plan. The Council has designated five AQMAs due to elevated levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) which breach the National Air Quality Objective (annual mean NO₂) and where there is relevant exposure to residents. The AQMAs are located around the M4, Tuns Lane, Bath Road, Town Centre/A4 and Brands Hill/A4 and cover over 2,000 residential properties.
- 5.5 The Council has a statutory duty to prepare an annual report to DEFRA on the progress we are making to address poor air quality in Slough. This report includes air quality monitoring and measures, including low emission measures we are taking to improve air quality. This is known as the annual status report. The latest annual status report 2020 is published on the Council's air quality webpage <http://www.slough.gov.uk/pests-pollution-and-food-hygiene/air-qualityreports.aspx>). Air quality is improving in the Borough but at a slow rate, and none of the AQMAs can be revoked at this time.
- 5.6 We are currently nine months into the COVID-19 pandemic response in the UK which has seen an unprecedented drop in road and aviation traffic movements, especially at the beginning of first lockdown. While there have been some recovery in traffic levels, we have also been in the summer months when levels of nitrogen dioxide are typically at their lowest levels of the year and economic activity in the Heathrow area remains severely depressed. There is much uncertainty about how much and how quickly traffic and activity levels may return to pre-COVID levels. Air quality levels are likely to start to increase as we head towards the winter months. This winter they may remain lower than in recent years, but it remains to be seen whether changes to the homeworking and sustainable travel modes, for example, will be sustained over a longer period.
- 5.7 The UK Government is advocating a 'Green Industrial Revolution' to repair the economic damage caused by restrictions during the pandemic response to build back better, support green jobs, and accelerate the UK's path to net zero. Greening public transport (through electrifying rail and zero emission buses), increasing cycling and walking and accelerating the shift to zero emission vehicles (both from electric and hydrogen) featured highly within the Government's Ten Point Plan announced in November 2020. The Government has also brought forward the ban on sale of new cars and vans powered wholly by petrol and diesel in the UK from 2030. The Low Emission Strategy programme will help to ensure that the Council, its residents and businesses

are ready to make this transition early and encourage inward investment in the Borough.

- 5.8 The Council's air quality monitoring consultant prepared a review of the initial impacts of COVID-19 on local air quality in Slough up to June 2020. Using complex modelling forecasts it was estimated that lockdown had resulted in a temporary reduction in nitrogen dioxide levels of between 33-50% at the four continuous monitoring locations assessed in Slough. Their analysis is available here: www.airqualityengland.co.uk/assets/reports/312/Slough_report_covid_analysis.html .
- 5.9 The consultant has prepared an updated report on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on local air quality in Slough through to the beginning of November 2020. The analysis compares actual monitored nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) levels with modelled levels using actual 2020 weather data and emissions data of a non-COVID scenario, termed Business As Usual (BAU). As might be expected the biggest drop between simulated BAU NO₂ levels and actual levels following the on-set of the pandemic were in April and May, coinciding with Lockdown 1 and the tightest restrictions. The difference was up to 18ug/m³ lower monthly mean NO₂ at Brands Hill in April 2020, for example. Since May 2020 the difference in monthly mean NO₂ level from the non-COVID scenario is between 5-8 ug/m³ at Brands Hill. Comparison of the current annual averages for 2020 shows that the 2020 BAU scenario predicts that without COVID the year 2020 would have recorded lower levels of annual mean NO₂ than 2018 and 2019 – by a margin of at least 5-6 ug/m³ at the roadside continuous monitoring sites. This means that up to 45% of the reduction in annual mean NO₂ for 2020 could be due to weather and continued downward trend of background and emissions, while the remainder relates to changes due to COVID restrictions. The analysis is currently being subject to final checks and will be published shortly on the Air Quality England website: https://www.airqualityengland.co.uk/local-authority/reports?la_id=312 .
- 5.10 The analysis of air quality impacts from the COVID-19 restrictions is currently limited to nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and does not cover particulate matter. This is because particulate matter is a transboundary pollutant, especially fine particulate matter such as PM_{2.5} or smaller, meaning it can travel long distances on air currents. Depending on wind strength and direction a very high proportion of the particulate matter monitored in Slough could originate from London, the South East of England or even industrial areas of Northern Europe. Shortly after the COVID-19 pandemic struck the UK easterly winds actually led to higher levels of particulates during some of Lockdown 1 than preceding it. Analysis of monthly mean levels of PM₁₀ at the background monitor at Pippins, Colnbrook in 2020 compared to average levels of past years (2013-19) indicates that PM₁₀ was only lower than past years in July and October 2020. At a roadside monitoring site such as Brands Hill on the A4 monthly mean

particulate levels in 2020 were slightly lower than past years in most months since April – though data is only available since late 2017 for this site and there is current no business as usual comparison. This could be partly reflective of a lower local contribution from vehicle exhausts and tyre and brake wear. The annual mean at Brands Hill for 2020 currently stands at 3-4 ug/m³ lower than 2019 and 2018, respectively – though this data is still provisional and subject to change, with a likely peak in November due to fireworks celebrations.

5.11 The Low Emission Strategy is detailed and broad. It extends to 2025 and it can be broken down into three key themes:

1. Evidence for Change – why are we taking action to improve air quality?
2. Creating a Low Emission Future: Leading by Example - what the council can do with its powers to improve emissions.
3. Clean Air Zone (CAZ) Framework for Slough: A framework to control emissions delivery in partnership with key stakeholders.

5.12 Progress has since been made in each of these three areas, with updates presented in Appendix A. In total there are 19 LES objectives across these themes.

Evidence for Change

5.13 Exposure to poor air quality is associated with both ill health and premature death. Scientific studies show that long-term exposure to air pollution (over years or lifetimes) reduces life expectancy, mainly due to cardiovascular and respiratory diseases and lung cancer. Short-term exposure (over hours or days) to elevated levels of air pollution can also cause a range of health impacts, including effects on lung function, exacerbation of asthma, increases in respiratory and cardiovascular hospital admissions and mortality.

5.14 Slough, like many urban areas in the UK, experiences elevated levels of air pollution which have a measurable impact on the health of the local population. Slough is disadvantaged by a poor respiratory and cardiovascular health profile, with a burden of disease that is higher than expected rates based on regional and national averages. The proportion of overall deaths in Slough that can be attributed to particulate air pollution is estimated (2018) at 6.5% (5.6% in the South East). This remains one of the highest in the South East region and England as a whole and is more comparable to London.

5.15 It is estimated that long-term exposure to man-made air pollution in the UK has an annual effect equivalent to 28,000 to 36,000 deaths. Over an 18 year period a 1ug/m³ reduction in fine particulate air pollution in England could prevent around 50,900 cases of coronary heart disease; 16,500 strokes; 9,300 cases of asthma; and 4,200 lung cancers in the UK. The benefits of sustaining

reductions in air quality through sustainable transport and cleaner fuels beyond COVID-19 are therefore very tangible.

Fleet Challenge Programme

- 5.16 This low emission programme is set up with our corporate Project Management Office (PMO). This programme was set up September 2016 and reports to the PMO on a monthly basis.
- 5.17 Currently, there are 6 electric pool fleet vehicles (3 Nissan Leafs and 3 Renault Zoes). These were used regularly by staff, prior to the Covid pandemic, with 55 staff and Councillors currently signed up to the voluntary scheme for the electric pool fleet cars and 101 for the E-bikes (as of 1st September 2020). The electric vehicles have reached 43,700 miles and the E-Bikes have reached total usage of 1767 miles.
- 5.18 This equates to 10.2 tonnes of CO₂e avoided relative to the Grey fleet baseline data and £19,666 revenue savings from grey fleet mileage claims (July 2020 data).
- 5.19 In addition to the electric pool fleet vehicles, there are also:
- 3 community transport fleet vehicles (2 Kia Souls and 1 Peugeot ION)
 - 1 highway inspection fleet EV (1 Electric Leaf)
 - 1 Children's Trust EV (1 Kia Soul)
- 5.20 The community transport fleet are used daily to transport children with special needs to school, The Children's Trust EV is at St Martins Place and is used by its staff for site visits. The highway EV is used for highway inspections. Typically, the fleet averages ~48,000 miles per year, however there has been significant impact on usage as a result of COVID-19 and a reduction in mileage. The mileage is reported annually from 1st April to 31st March.
- 5.21 We are intending to scale up this programme which has been put on hold due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The programme has been running on a trial phase for just over three years. A procurement business case was approved in July 2019 to procure Electric Vehicles for the Council to operate:
- Electric pool car fleet (Fleet Challenge Programme)
 - Electric fleet for high mileage service teams (i.e. Building Management/Community Wardens)
 - Electric community transport fleet (Community Transport)

The procurement was to run over 3 phases (Phase 1 – 2019/20 HQ focussed) and (Phase 2 – 2020/21 HQ and Hubs) and (Phase 3 – 2021/22 Children's Trust).

5.22 Works had started in October 2019 on phase 1 by procuring additional workplace electric vehicle (EV) chargers these have now been installed by Pod Point at Observatory House/Herschel car park. We have placed on hold the procurement of additional EV fleet. As reported in paragraphs 4.13 – 4.16, additional staff resource is required for to enable expansion and management of the fleet challenge programme. In addition the COVID 19 pandemic has resulted in significant changes to working practices, whereby the majority of our staff are now home working. It is likely that long term working arrangements will change across the council operations to more smart working, as part of the Covid 19 recovery plan.

5.23 We intend to implement expansion of the EV fleet in readiness for staff returning to the workplace, with particular focus on those services who undertake regular and high mileage business journeys. This will be coordinated carefully with our senior leadership team approving the process, we also intend to ensure that our community hubs will have EV infrastructure and EV pool car provision, where appropriate. The Fleet Operations Manager and Environment Manager will also consider how best to utilise electric pool fleet to maintain its flexibility and to ensure high utilisation and to maintain the sustainable decarbonisation of our grey fleet, this is likely to require updating of Council fleet policies and the business travel hierarchy.

<http://insite/media/3181/appendix-a-business-travel-hierarchy.pdf> .

Slough Electric Vehicle Plan

5.24 When the Low Emission Strategy was prepared the national market share of diesel car sales was around 60%. Since the Volkswagen diesel-gate scandal the market share of diesel cars has fallen rapidly, with a market share in 2020 below 20% for the first time in twenty years. While this has been mirrored by an upturn in petrol car sales, there has also been significant growth in sales of electric vehicles. The total share of the UK new-car market so far in 2020 made up of battery electric cars now stands at 5.5%. Battery electric car sales went from 7,704 in September 2019 to 21,903 in September 2020 – a 184% increase. Year-to-date, 75,946 battery electric cars have been sold in the UK so far in 2020 (October 2020), which is up from the 28,259 that had been sold by the same point in 2019 – a 268% increase¹.

5.25 Slough now has the third highest registrations of plug-in vehicles per local authority in the UK, having overtaken Milton Keynes. Trend data suggests Slough could soon also overtake Peterborough into second place (see Figure 1).

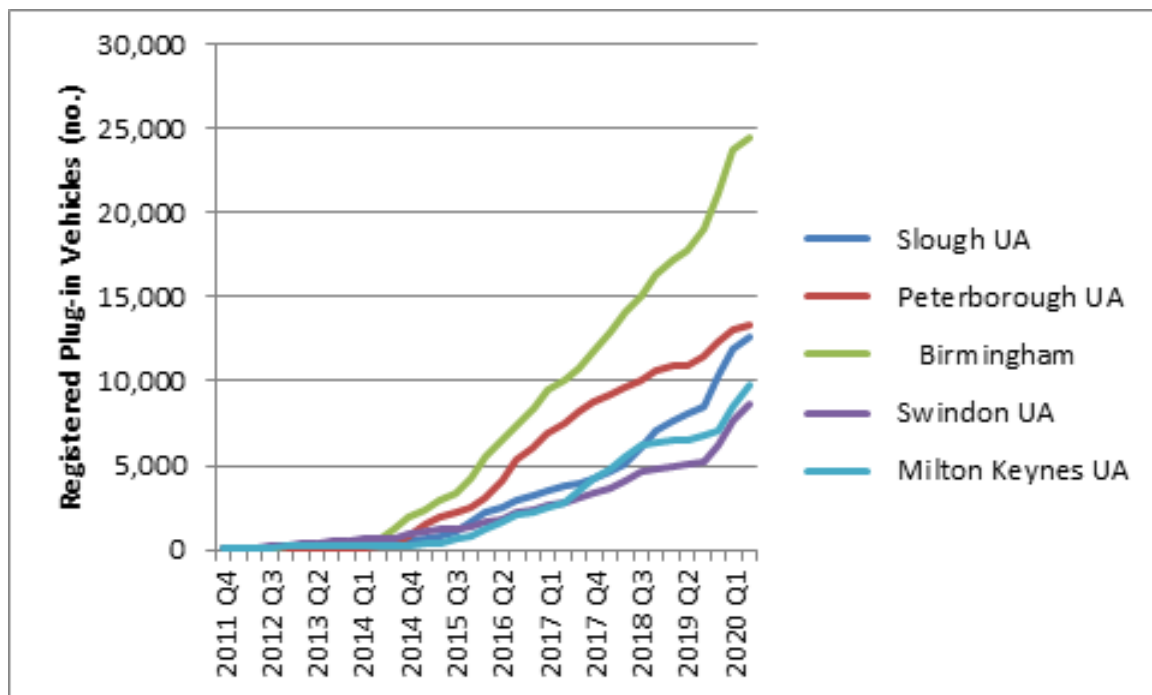
5.26 Plug-in vehicle registrations in Slough have risen sharply from 4,580 at Q1 2018 as reported in the final draft LES technical report to 12,646 at Q2 2020.

¹ <https://www.smmmt.co.uk/vehicle-data/car-registrations/>

Registrations in Slough are 50% higher than those in the whole of Buckinghamshire, RB of Windsor & Maidenhead, and the London Boroughs of Hounslow and Hillingdon combined. It is assumed that a significant proportion of these registered plug-in vehicles are lease and fleet vehicles as there are a number of leasing companies located in Slough.

5.27 The adoption of the Low Emission Strategy in autumn 2018 introduced a requirement for all new major developments to provide a minimum standard of electric vehicle charging in 10% of car parking spaces for the development. Whilst the number of charging units provided under this requirement is not easily quantifiable, this will be ensuring that going forward residents and businesses have readily available access to charging infrastructure in new homes and workplaces.

Figure 1 Registered Plug-in Vehicles by Local Authority²



5.28 When the Low Emission Strategy was prepared there were over 700 licensed Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles licensed in Slough. This currently stands at 104 Hackney Carriages and 451 private hire vehicles. Over 90% of licensed hackney carriages and two-thirds of PHVs are diesel fuelled. Uptake of pure-electric vehicles has been slow with only three ultra-low emission vehicles being licensed.

5.29 As part of the Low Emission Strategy, to help improve emissions from the taxi fleet, Slough Borough Council's Taxi Licensing Committee introduced taxi

² Vehicle Licensing Statistics from Table VEH0131 <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/vehicles-statistics>

emission standards for the first time in 2018. The new standards aimed to bring all taxis up to a Euro 6 diesel standard by 2020 and new drivers to meet an ultra-low emission vehicle (ULEV) standard in 2019 with existing drivers required to meet the ULEV standard by 2025. The composition of these fleets (as of September 2020) is displayed below in Figure 2. There are 56 PHVs licensed where a change of vehicle will be required at next renewal in 2020 due to the age and emissions criteria on the vehicle licensing standards. In 2021, a further 70 vehicles will be due to be replaced.

5.30 National modelling of roadside nitrous oxide (NOx) source apportionment (2015) estimated that diesel taxis accounted for 2% of roadside NOx concentrations. This is known to rise significantly in cities and urban centres. Source apportionment modelling commissioned by Slough Borough Council is due to be published later in 2020. Draft outputs for the 2017 base year indicate that on road links across the town centre, taxis (including PHVs) account for up to 13.5% of total vehicle emissions (i.e. including all petrol & diesel cars, buses, LGVs and HGVs) of NOx . The majority of PHVs which are approaching 9 years old are diesel and meet the Euro 4 diesel emissions standard, emitting more than three times the NOx limit for Euro 6.

Figure 2 Slough Licensed Vehicles by Emission Standard

Emissions standard	Date Vehicle newly registered from:	Licensed PHVs	Licensed Hackney Carriages
Euro 1	31 December 1992	0	0
Euro 2	01 January 1997	0	2
Euro 3	01 January 2001	0	11
Euro 4	01 January 2006	9	14
Euro 5	01 January 2011	290	47
Euro 6	01 September 2015	117	21
Euro 6 RDE ³	01 September 2017	35	9

5.31 Interim staff resource has been provided from the DCO team since late summer 2020, with a particular focus on the delivery of the Electric Vehicle (EV) Taxi Project:

- Project initiation was completed Summer 2020.
- An Update report has been submitted to Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV).

³ The **Euro 6** test became more stringent from September 2017 with the addition of an extended on-road emission test known as Real Driving Emissions or **RDE**.

- Planning phase of the project has started through engaging with potential suppliers, other Local Authorities and commencing specification and tender documentation. Tender to be launched early 2021.
 - Phase 1 installation timetabled for Autumn 2021.
 - Phase 2 installation scheduled for Summer 2022.
- 5.32 Further a grant funding application was made to the Defra AQ grant in October 2020 for £370k towards a project designed to accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) by licensed taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) operators in the town centre, by demonstrating the feasibility, viability and affordability of owning an electric vehicle and availability of charging infrastructure including a “try before you buy” EV taxi loan scheme.
- 5.33 During 2020, officers have also made progress with the workplace Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure project with:
- Completed EV charge point installation of 13 fast chargers and 1 rapid charger
 - Power connection to chargers due by end of 2020
 - Fully operational workplace EV charge points by New Year
 - Procurement of additional EVs in 2021 for staff business use in line with COVID-19 recovery return to the workplace.
- 5.34 A free zero-emission electric bus service has been launched on 26 October 2020 for passengers travelling to and from Slough town centre. The council has partnered with Thames Valley Buses and BYD UK, an electric bus manufacturing specialist based in Iver, to provide this additional, sustainable way to travel in Slough. The service will use the A4 Bath Road experimental bus and cycle lanes along part of the route during the 13 week bus lane trial funded by the Council. The bus is completing an hourly circuit along the A4 Bath Road between Mercian Way, Cippenham, and the Uxbridge Road roundabout.
- 5.35 An updated full delivery plan is presented in Appendix B. It has been recognised that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused major disturbance and delay in delivery of the LES, particularly to the appointment of staffing. The Low Emission Programme will be continually subject to further revisions, by its nature it needs to be very adaptable.
- 5.36 The Low Emission Strategy programme is presented spatially in Appendix C through maps of which projects are proposed for specific air quality mitigation zones and for the Borough as a whole.

Clean Air Zone Feasibility Study

- 5.37 During the development of the Low Emission Strategy detailed air quality modelling and source apportionment was undertaken to provide evidence of the

air quality levels across the whole borough and the causes of local air pollution emissions. The modelling also tested the impact of some low emission objectives such as electrification of bus and car fleets, and retrofitting of emission standards to existing bus fleets. The modelling was based on monitoring data from 2014.

- 5.38 In July 2020 updated detailed air quality modelling and source apportionment was commissioned. This will model the baseline year of 2017 and project forward to air quality levels in 2022 and 2026. This will show when and if air quality levels in Slough will comply with national air quality objectives. The model will then be rerun applying one or more Clean Air Zones across Slough to consider whether compliance with national air quality objectives could be brought forward if such a zone(s) were introduced.
- 5.39 A Clean Air Zone defines an area where targeted action is taken to improve air quality. They have a particular focus on measures to accelerate the transition to a low emission economy to ensure improvements in air quality are on-going and sustainable, support future development and decouple local growth from air pollution. They can be a charging clean air zone where vehicle owners are required to pay a charge to enter, or move within, a zone if they are driving a vehicle that does not meet the particular standard for their vehicle type in that zone.
- 5.40 The outputs of the air quality modelling of a clean air zone framework for Slough are due in 2021. The feasibility study will then also need to include a cost-benefit analysis to ensure that any air quality benefits of a zone(s) are duly weighed against economic, social and equalities impacts. Any proposal taken forward for a Clean Air Zone would be subject to full public consultation.

Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) and Clean Air Plan

- 5.41 The Low Emission Strategy forms part of the Council's Air Quality Action Plans. The current Action Plans were established for AQMA 1 and AQMA 2 in 2006 [M4 motorway and Brands Hill], and for AQMA 3 and AQMA 4 in 2012 [Tuns Lane and A4 Town Centre] - updated in 2017 when AQMA 3 was extended to include a section of Bath Road. These action plans are currently being re-written under one comprehensive new AQAP to tackle air quality issues in all of our AQ Management Areas. The AQAP will identify any extra measures, in addition to the Low Emission Strategy, needed to tackle air pollution in the Borough. The updated plan, due April 2021, will also use the updated detailed air quality modelling and source apportionment (detailed at 5.34) with additional scenario testing to quantify air quality benefits of proposed action plan measures. It will reflect regeneration of the town centre and impacts posed by upcoming major infrastructure schemes.

- 5.42 During 2021, once the statutory Air Quality Action Plan is complete, the Council will be developing a new Clean Air Plan (CAP). The CAP will act as the overarching strategy which will consolidate all air quality aspirations and improvement plans across the Borough into one comprehensive strategy. This will encompass existing projects, such as the Defra funded sensor study, and emerging projects, such as the Clean Air Zone Feasibility Study.
- 5.43 A Low Emission Strategy Communication Plan was prepared in 2018 to launch the Strategy and promote its objectives. This is available on the Council's Low Emission Strategy web page: http://www.slough.gov.uk/downloads/LES_Comms_plan.pdf . While many measures are on-going (such as AirTEXT; educational awareness raising through engagement and sustainable travel initiatives with schools; and events for National Clean Air Day), the plan will be refreshed under the new Air Quality Action Plan (due Spring 2021) and subsequent overarching Clean Air Plan.

6 Comments of Other Committees

- 6.1 Progress on implementation of the Low Emission Strategy programme was last reported on at the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Panel of 22 October 2020, and previously on 28 November 2019. Links to these update reports are provided in Section 9, Background Papers.
- 6.2 At the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Panel on 22 October 2020 it was resolved:
- (a) That the report be noted.
 - (b) That Cabinet be recommended to ensure that the relevant posts be filled so that these important schemes could be progressed.
 - (c) That the Health Scrutiny Panel be encouraged to establish an Air Quality Task and Finish Group.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 The Low Emission Strategy (LES) 2018 – 2025 forms part of the Council's emerging Air Quality Action Plan. This report outlines the current status of the LES in particular with respect to the progress and issues over the past 11 months.
- 7.2 The delivery plan has also been updated. There is a need to resource the delivery of the Low Emission programme. Previous CMT approvals for the recruitment of additional staff to enable the delivery of the Low Emission programme have been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic response. There

is a further short delay until the Council's Our Futures Phase 2 staff reorganisation consultation is completed. Additional staff provided via the reorganisation, and any future CMT approvals, are needed to deliver key aspects of the Low Emission programme:

- The expansion and mandatory adoption of the Fleet Challenge Programme (a programme focussed on the decarbonisation of the Councils grey fleet and service fleet by providing electric and ultra low emission vehicles to conduct business travel). This programme runs until 2025.
- The procurement and delivery of the Taxi EV Rapid Charger Infrastructure Programme between 2020 and 2022.
- The procurement and delivery of EV (rapid and fast) off-street and Car Park Programme between 2020 and 2025.
- The procurement and delivery of the Slough Electric Car Club Programme in partnership with a national car club provider over several phases from 2020 - 2025.
- The procurement and delivery of the EV (rapid and fast) on-street Programme between 2020 – 2025.

7.3 It is expected that appointment to the Low Emission Programme roles and recruitment for the new Fleet Challenge posts will be progressed later in 2021.

7.4 Funding and resources continues to remain a significant barrier to the effective delivery of the LES objectives. S106 contributions will continue to remain an important source of funding for the delivery of low emission infrastructure in Slough. This means that some projects can only progress as and when sufficient funding has been pooled.

8. **Appendices Attached**

- 'A' - Low Emission Strategy Objectives Update November 2020
- 'B' - Outline Low Emission Delivery Plan
- 'C' - Low Emission Programme
- 'D' - S.106 Air Quality and Low Emission Contributions

9. **Background Papers**

- '1' - Low Emission Strategy and associated LES documents (see <http://www.slough.gov.uk/pests-pollution-and-food-hygiene/low-emission-strategy-2018-2025.aspx>)

'2' Low Emission Strategy report to Cabinet September 2018 (see <http://www.slough.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s52743/Report.pdf>)

'3' Low Emission Strategy Update Report to Neighbourhoods and Community Services Panel of 28 November 2019 (see <http://www.slough.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=569&MId=6482&Ver=4> .

'4' Low Emission Strategy Update Report to Neighbourhoods and Community Services Panel of 22 October 2020 (see <http://www.slough.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s61603/Low%20Emission%20Strategy%20Update.pdf>)

'5' - Annual Status Report 2020 (see <http://www.slough.gov.uk/pests-pollution-and-food-hygiene/air-quality-reports.aspx>)

10. **Glossary**

'AQAP'	Air Quality Action Plan
'AQMA'	Air Quality Management Area
'BAU'	Business as Usual –a 2020 non-COVID-19 modelling scenario
'CAP'	Clean Air Plan
'CAZ'	Clean Air Zone
'CMT'	Corporate Management Team
'DCO'	Development Consent Order team
'EV'	Electric Vehicle
'LES'	Low Emission Strategy
'NO ₂ '	Nitrogen Dioxide
'PMO'	Project Management Office