

Chairman's Announcements

Item No. 05

Air Quality Strategy for Wiltshire

Legal requirements to monitor air quality

Local Councils are required by law to monitor air quality and compare the results to national standards. There are seven main pollutants identified for councils to keep under review and a number of others, such as ozone, are monitored nationally. We submit a report annually to DEFRA on Air Quality, which is published on our website at:

<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/environmentandplanning/publicprotection/pollutionandnoise/airandwaterpollution/airquality.htm>

Why monitor air quality?

Air pollution can have a considerable effect on health of the young, elderly and vulnerable. In the 1950's the focus was on smog, which affected London, and other major cities. The smog had significant impact on people's day to day lives. The Clean Air Acts brought in controls to smoke. Today air pollution is not visible in the way it was in the 1950's however it still has the potential to have an impact significantly on health.

Parliament's Environmental Audit Committee published a report in March of this year stating that poor air quality reduces average life expectancy in the UK by an average of seven to eight months and it could lead to up to 50,000 premature deaths every year. The MPs said that the UK should be 'ashamed' of its air quality and called for dramatic changes to be made to the UK's transport policy in order to improve the situation.

The report said failing to act would result in EU fines, which could total as much as £300 million pounds.

Is air quality a problem in Wiltshire?

We enjoy a high quality environment in Wiltshire however there are some locations which fail to meet the national objectives. These are:

- Masons Lane Bradford on Avon
- Warminster Road Westbury
- Shanes Castle Bath Road Devizes.
- Salisbury City Centre
- Part of Wilton Road Salisbury (A36)
- Part of London Road Salisbury (A30)

How is air quality monitored?

The pollutant that is of most concern in Wiltshire is Nitrogen dioxide which is contained in exhaust fumes from vehicles. We monitor Nitrogen dioxide using a network of small diffusion tubes which are attached to buildings and lamp posts in locations where people are exposed to higher concentrations of exhaust fumes. We also have 4 locations where we use more sophisticated monitoring equipment to measure nitrogen dioxide and fine particulates.

What is the Air Quality Strategy about?

The Air quality Strategy for Wiltshire is a general core document that sets out in broad terms our commitment to reduce levels of air pollution across the county. It will help shape policy across the council encouraging a consistent approach to this subject. It provides a framework which supports more specific work in areas where problems have been found to exist.

If the strategy is the core, what else is going on?

We have Air Quality Action Plans for the problem areas identified in the list above and we work closely with our colleagues in Transport Planning and Forward Planning in connection with these.

If you would like to contribute your comments on the Air Quality Strategy in either generally or specific terms or would like more information on air quality, Please contact the Specialist Environmental Protection Team at

- Public Protection Services, Wiltshire Council, PO Box 2126 Salisbury, Wiltshire SP2 2DJ or
- Email publicprotectionsouth@wiltshire.gov.uk or
- visit our web page at Wiltshire.gov.uk (just enter Air Quality into the search option).

Our consultation is open until the 18th June 2010.

G Tomsett,
Specialist Environmental Protection Team Manager.

Contaminated Land Strategy for Wiltshire

Legal requirement to have a Contaminated Land Strategy

Under the terms of the Environment Act 1995, Local Councils are required to prepare a statement detailing how they will implement their responsibilities to inspect the council's area, identify contaminated land and secure its clean up (remediation). The legislation is quite complex and the type of land affected is carefully defined. This legislation covers past pollution of land; ongoing or recent pollution is normally covered by other legislation.

Wiltshire's historic legacy

Past generations were not as conscious of causing environmental damage as we are today. It is obviously undesirable to have a situation for example, where wildlife is being harmed or chemicals are entering a drinking water supply. The Contaminated Land Strategy looks to remedying some of this damage and to prevent further damage. These sites may include gasworks, old landfill sites and industrial premises.

What is in the strategy?

The strategy is a technical document based on the law. It includes;

- A brief description of Wiltshire's historic Industrial and commercial history.
- An overview of the legislation
- A review of technical issues such as the hydrology (water environment), and geology (land/soil composition) of Wiltshire. Both these affect how pollutants migrate through the environment.
- Describes work done to date by the old district councils'
- It states how Public Protections Services proposes to continue this work, how they will survey the county for further sites that require attention, prioritise new sites for further investigation to determine whether they are contaminated and causing or likely to cause harm.
- It describes how we will work with the Environment Agency, who are responsible for 'special sites' and other parties such as English nature and English Heritage.
- It provides information on how we propose to implement the legislation.

- It provides for the keeping of a Public Register of Contaminated Land.

What is in the public register?

The public register is not a list of all the land that may or may not be contaminated. It is a record of action taken by a local council under the Environment Act 1995. It is available for inspection by the public during office hours free of charge. There may be a charge for making copies of entries. We currently have 4 documents, originally published by the district councils. Each is held at the original district council offices, however we are developing an online version for ease of access and some entries have been listed on the site, just enter contaminated land into the Wiltshire Council website search facility.

How do I find out more about my property?

There are only a handful of entries on the public register. We do provide a chargeable service for house purchases/ vendors, where we will review our database and provide a report detailing any contaminated or potentially contaminated sites in close proximity to your property. We will also advise you of any remediation carried and what records we hold. Some sites have very detailed reports supporting any clean up that was carried out and we make these available if people wish to read them.

Planning is the preferred mechanism for dealing with contaminated land.

The contaminated land strategy is only one way of dealing with land. The preferred and more sustainable route is through the planning system, when brown field sites are brought back into use. There are numerous sites across the county that used to have an industrial use that fell into disuse and have now been redeveloped for housing, offices, small business units etc. As part of the planning process we will require a site investigation to be carried out and if necessary remediation. We hold these reports for reference and access by members of the public.

If you would like to contribute your comments on the Contaminated Land Strategy in either general or specific terms or would like more information on contaminated land, Please contact the Specialist Environmental Protection Team at

- Public Protection Services, Wiltshire Council, PO Box 2126 Salisbury, Wiltshire SP2 2DJ or
- Email publicprotectionsouth@wiltshire.gov.uk or
- visit our web page at Wiltshire.gov.uk (just enter contaminated land into the search option).

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Highways Programme for 2010-11

The annual programme of highway maintenance and improvement schemes for 2010/11 has been approved. This information is presented on an individual community area basis and is available on the Council's website under Community Area Highway Information. The information includes lists of proposed highway and related works for 2010/11 with facts and figures about the roads in your area.

Further enquiries should be made to Spencer Drinkwater, Principal Transport Planner, on 01225 713480.