

## **Summary**

A draft Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) was produced in July 2023 as part of the Council's duty under the Environment Act 1995 (as amended in 2021). The action plan outlines the actions we will take to improve air quality in Wiltshire between 2024 and 2029.

The Action Plan has been widely consulted on. The first stage of consultation involved collaboration and consultation with relevant council teams such as transport, highways, public health and climate to help shape the action plan. The draft plan went to the Environment & Climate Change Forum in January 2023 to obtain initial public feedback, which led to the development of a non-technical summary to support the full public consultation. In addition, a public consultation was carried out between July and September 2023 with interested local organisations and bodies including the Environment Agency, Defra and Wiltshire residents and local businesses.

## **What we heard during the public consultation**

Consultees were asked the following two questions:

Q1 - To what extent do you agree or disagree that the actions in the draft Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) will overall deliver the necessary air quality improvements in Wiltshire?

*Agree - 19% of respondents agreed with this statement*

*Disagree - 48% of respondents disagreed with this statement*

*Neither agree or disagree - 33% of respondents neither agreed or disagreed with this statement*

Q2 - Do you have any comments about the overall objectives contained in the AQAP?

The comments questions raised by respondents have been grouped into the following main topics each headed below:

**There is little in the way of actual plans and no objectives or action plans that have time delivery that can be monitored and assessed.**

*We consider that the measures include those set out in table 5-11 represent the outcome of a prolonged period of consultation with key partners to determine their viability. Further details of this process can be found in the section titled 'Development and Implementation'.*

### **The action plan does not consider fine particulates (PM2.5)**

*PM2.5 is not included within the LAQM framework and there is no duty to monitor in the same way as is required for other pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide and PM10. The action plan is required by the Environment Act to Address breaches of the UK air quality annual mean objective in eight locations in Wiltshire. Boarder objectives are detailed in the Air Quality Strategy for Wiltshire which we plan to review & will include issues such as PM2.5. Although Pm2.5 concentration are mainly influenced by transboundary sources the council can help to reduce levels within it's control. Examples of this action are inspecting industrial installations via the LAPPC to ensure levels of VOCs meet permit requirements and taking action via Environmental Protection Act 1990 provisions where bonfires are found to be causing a statutory nuisance.*

**The monitoring of air quality is not comprehensive enough meaning pollution ‘hotspots’ are missed. There needs to be more monitoring.**

*In total we have around 70 monitoring sites spread across Wiltshire comprising a mix of passive diffusion tubes and automatic analysers. The air pollution levels reported are sourced from a combination of our annual status report and ADMS modelling software. The ASR can be downloaded here <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/article/6472/Air-quality-annual-reports>.*

**There is a lack of detail on how the air quality ADMS modelling works**

*The AQAP refers to the technical aspects of the ADMS modeling software on page 40 via Reference 32 <http://www.cerc.co.uk/environmental-software/ADMS-Roads-model.htm>*

**There should be no idling signage setup in each AQMA and fines handed out to repeat offenders who leave engines idling**

THE DFT have advised us on the following in relation to engine idling:

- 1) *Under Regulation 98 of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986, it is an offence to cause emissions or noise by leaving engines running unnecessarily whilst a vehicle is stationary. These requirements apply when a vehicle is parked at the roadside. Enforcement is carried out by the police. Also, under the Road Traffic (Vehicle Emissions) (Fixed Penalty) (England) Regulations 2002, local authorities may issue fixed penalty notices for this offence.*
- 2) *‘Switch off engine’ signs require DfT authorisation. However, there are strict guidelines on the number, location etc. for authorisation of these signs. These signs are not intended for general use. Applications will only be considered on a site specific basis where there is evidence that engines are habitually left running. We are exploring the option of no idling schemes with colleagues in our highways team.*

*We will be exploring schemes targeted at sites and times where unnecessarily idling is known to be a particular problem such as schools at the start and end of the school day, or around areas which are particularly vulnerable to poor air quality.*

**There needs to be a bypass for Westbury and Salisbury to achieve significant air quality improvements to these towns.**

*The original AQAP focused on a proposed A350 bypass for Westbury. The cancellation of the bypass in 2009 forced a shift in action planning toward other measures such as promoting cycling and walking within Westbury.*

*It is recognised that there is a historic and ongoing desire for a Salisbury bypass. The Council supports the principle of a bypass for Salisbury but the strategic need for it will be understood through the Department for Transport / National Highways M4 to Dorset Coast RIS2 (Road Investment Strategy) study 2020-2025. If identified as a need and a priority, the scheme would be progressed through a subsequent round(s) of the RIS and / or through the DfT’s Major Road Network / Large Local Majors process and the Western Gateway Sub-national Transport Body. This is unlikely to deliver any improvements in the short to medium term and costs would be well in excess of £100 million.*

## **The council should adopt a ULEZ or clean air zone scheme similar to Bath or Bristol to charge polluting vehicles**

*The UK Supreme Court ordered the government in 2015 to produce new air quality plans to bring air pollution down to legal levels in the “shortest possible time”. Since 2017, the Government has used its powers under the Environment Act 1995 to ‘direct’ 64 local authorities to produce clean air plans. Clean air zones are often the most effective way to deliver compliance, in the shortest possible time and government funding has been granted to directed local authorities to assist with the setup of these types of schemes. Wiltshire Council was not one of these councils directed by the government to produce clear air plans and therefore plans to seek compliance with legal emissions targets through this updated air quality action plan.*

## **Why is the Westbury incinerator being allowed so close to the Westbury AQMA?**

*The incinerator planning application was refused by the council; however this decision was subsequently approved by the planning inspector following an appeal. However, the poor air quality in the Westbury AQMA is wholly caused by slow moving traffic (in particular diesel cars) along the A350 between Warminster Road and Haynes Road.*

## **Large scale housebuilding should not be allowed close to AQMAs**

*A new SPD has been developed alongside this action plan for consultation and adoption by the council. The new SPD compliments core policy 55 of the Core Strategy, establishing a risk rating procedure for proposed sites on the basis of their impact on air quality (including proximity to existing AQMAs) and requires good design along with measures to mitigate/offset impacts of proposals. Provision is made to request financial contributions to assist in the delivery of measures contained within this action plan. This is a new area of work for the council and one we hope help ensure that developments must take into their impact on AQMAs.*

## **The AQAP report is too long and difficult to read**

*Unfortunately we are unable to change the format of the report as it is a requirement of Defra to structure the report in this way. However, recognising this we have also published a plain english non-technical summary document which can be downloaded on our air quality pages <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/air-quality-reports>*

## **The pollution limits for nitrogen dioxide are too low at 40 ug/m3. The limits should be redrawn to require levels to be below the latest WHO standards of 10ug/m3.**

*The Environment Act 1995 (as amended in 2021) and the associated Air Quality (England) Regulations 2000 set the UK framework for local authorities in England. The Regulations specify that the UK air quality annual mean objective for Nitrogen Dioxide is 40 ug/m3.*

## **The air quality measures don’t go far enough.**

*We consider that the measures include those set out in table 5-11 represent the outcome of a prolonged period of consultation with key partners to determine their viability. Further details of this process can be found in the section titled 'Development and Implementation'.*

### **The air quality measures won't work as predicted**

*The modelled measures have been subject to detailed ADMS Roads dispersion modelling which is the gold standard for air quality predictions. Many of these measures would be subject to detailed feasibility plans prior to their implementation and so the exact detail may change following this.*

### **The proposed one way system at BoA will cause air quality to worsen on new road and Springfield**

*Monitoring of the areas highlighted took place when the social distancing one way system was in place in 2020/2021 and nitrogen dioxide levels were found to be significantly below the annual objective. The re-implementation of a similar traffic scheme to that of the social distancing scheme would assist in achieving the Bradford-on-Avon air quality objective in the shortest timeframe.*

### **Car parking charges across council owned car parks should be based on vehicle emissions with the most polluting vehicles paying more.**

*Car parking charges based on emissions was explored at shortlisting stage however this option was ruled out as it was not sufficiently compatible with the policies of the parking service team.*

### **HGVs are more polluting than cars so why do you claim that diesel cars are the most polluting?**

*The data on traffic emissions for vehicle was obtained using Department for Transport traffic counts, Wiltshire Council's own traffic counts and the source apportionment and emissions factor toolkit methodology <https://laqm.defra.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/EFTv11.0-user-guide-v1.0.pdf> On a vehicle-by-vehicle basis it is correct that emissions from HGVs are greater than diesel cars. However, the traffic counts confirm that there are significantly more diesel cars on the road than HGVs, and therefore as a collective, diesel cars are significantly more polluting.*

### **What we have done with your suggestions**

We have considered all the comments made and modified the plan as appropriate. Following approval by the relevant parties, the adopted AQAP will be subject to a cabinet approval process and progress each year will be reported in the Annual Status Reports, as part of our statutory LAQM duties.