

Wiltshire Council

Health and Wellbeing Board

23 May 2019

Subject: Wiltshire Air Quality Strategy

Executive Summary

- I. Local authorities have a duty to monitor air quality within their areas having regard to national air quality objectives and standards and report this information to Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) annually.
- II. As part of the development of the revised Wiltshire Air Quality Strategy views and comments have previously been sought from the Environment Select Committee.

Proposal(s)

- I. To bring to the attention of the Board the updated Air Quality Strategy ahead of its consideration by Cabinet.

Reason for Proposal

- I. The Environment Act 1995 Part IV places a duty on Wiltshire Council to monitor and achieve the Air Quality Objectives contained in the National Air Quality Strategy and regulations. The strategy contributes to discharging this duty and improving air quality in Wiltshire.
- II. To refresh the original Wiltshire strategy on how the council will work with other parties to improve air quality.

Tracy Daszkiewicz
Director of Public Health
Wiltshire Council

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Purpose of Report

1. To seek the approval of the Board for the draft Air Quality Strategy prior to consideration by Cabinet.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. The Wiltshire Council Business Plan 2017- 2027 sets out the vision to create strong communities, with priorities for growing the economy, strong communities and protecting the vulnerable. As part of strong communities the council recognises the need to work with community groups to build engagement and to work together to support a healthier population.

Background

3. The draft Air Quality Strategy was considered by Environment Select Committee at its meeting on 23 April 2019. Comments made by Committee have been incorporated in to the attached draft.
4. Despite some limited improvements in national air quality the targets imposed by EU legislation have been missed and as a result the UK Government has been taken to the High Court on a number of occasions. In response to these legal challenges the Government published the Air Quality plan for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) in UK (2017) in July. The plan, was designed to reduce the impact of diesel vehicles and accelerate the move to cleaner transport and resulted in additional funding being made available to a small number of local authorities to support their plans to tackle poor air quality. No financial support was given Wiltshire Council.
5. The existing Wiltshire Air Quality Strategy needs to be refreshed as it was originally published in 2011. In the first three months of 2019 there have been a number of significant national publications relating to air quality and these have been referred to in the revised strategy. These documents include a national Clean Air Strategy issued by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), Outdoor air quality and health issued by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), and a Review of interventions to improve outdoor air quality and public health published by Public Health England.

Main Considerations

6. Wiltshire enjoys very good air quality in the vast majority of its town and villages. This is perhaps unsurprising given the rural nature of much of county. The areas of concern are very localised and involve a small number of specific streets.
7. Local authorities are required to review and assess local air quality in accordance with the statutory Local Air Quality Management guidance under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995. Specifically local councils have a duty to review and assess the air quality in its area against specific pollutants focusing on locations where members of the public are likely to be exposed over the averaging period for the pollutant objectives. There are currently eight Air Quality Management Areas in Wiltshire where traffic related pollution levels exceed national standards. One in Bradford on Avon for NO₂ and PM₁₀ and solely NO₂ in Calne, Devizes, Marlborough, Salisbury (3) and Westbury. Work has been ongoing with local air quality groups in the affected towns and reporting through the Area Boards to start to address the issues in these areas.
8. The Air Quality Strategy provides high level guidance to inform policy and direction across a range of council services with the aim of improving air quality and reducing NO₂ and PM₁₀ levels below the national trigger levels. Improvements in air quality are generally difficult to achieve as they rely on individuals, businesses and communities changing their travel behaviour. Given this, the strategy recognises that improving areas of poor air quality can only be achieved by working collaboratively across the council, and with local communities and other relevant organisations and agencies.
9. The Air Quality Strategy does not contain specific local actions but these are included in the more detailed Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP), which provides further information and includes local community area action plans in relation to the eight Air Quality Management Areas within Wiltshire. The AQAP has been developed with local members and community involvement.
10. The Board is asked for its views and comments on the draft strategy, and specifically on the areas listed below:

Safeguarding considerations

11. None

Public health implications

12. The issue of air pollution is a major public health concern, and poor air quality is recognised as the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK and results in an estimated 40,000 premature deaths a year. Work to improve traffic related air pollution would contribute to improving the health of the local population.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

13. The Air Quality Strategy forms part of the council's wider response to climate change and supports reductions in local air pollution levels.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

14. Improvements to local air quality will benefit all Wiltshire residents and visitors to the county including all segments of the general public.

Risk Assessment

15. If the strategy is not revised it will become more out of date and risks not delivering the desired improvements to air quality in the county.

Financial implications

16. There are no costs associated with publication of the Air Quality Strategy, however there may be an opportunity to lobby Defra for additional funding to deliver local improvements.

Legal implications

17. Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 places a duty on the local authority to monitor air quality in its areas and report to Defra on an annual basis.
18. The Development of this up to date Strategy provides for a framework for future action to improve air quality within Wiltshire which permits flexible implementation within broad outlines.
19. It is consistent with national guidelines and will assist the Council to achieve its objective of improving the air quality within Wiltshire to help to better the environment and the health and well-being of all residents and visitors to its area.

Conclusions

20. Approval of the Health and Well Being Board is sought before the final strategy is placed before Cabinet for adoption as a formal strategy of the Council to form part of the Budget and Policy framework.

Tracy Daszkiewicz
Director of Public Health and Public Protection

Report author: John Carter
Head of Public Protection