

Air Quality Strategy for Wiltshire- Summary

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.