
REPORT TO:	ENVIRONMENTAL AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 6
DATE OF MEETING:	18 APRIL 2024	CATEGORY: RECOMMENDED
REPORT FROM:	STRATEGIC DIRECTOR – SERVICE DELIVERY	Open
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	MATT HOLFORD, matthew.holford@southderbyshire.gov.uk ,	DOC:
SUBJECT:	AIR QUALITY STRATEGY	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	All	TERMS OF REFERENCE: EDS01, EDS14

1. Recommendations

1.1 That the Committee approves an Air Quality Strategy for South Derbyshire.

2. Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To advise Committee of recent statutory and policy developments relating to air quality.
- 2.2 To propose the adoption of an Air Quality Strategy for South Derbyshire to synchronise with the Derbyshire County and Derby City Air Quality Strategy 2020-30.

3. Background

- 3.1 South Derbyshire District Council has had a statutory duty to review and assess air quality since the introduction of the Environment Act in 1995. This duty requires the Council to review and assess air quality across the administrative area of the Council. This assessment must establish if there is any human exposure to any of seven key pollutant gases which exceed Air Quality Limit Values set down in the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010.
- 3.2 Where evidence of exceedances of these health-based Limit Values are established, then the Council has a legal duty to declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and to develop an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) to work towards achieving these Limit Values within the fastest possible time.
- 3.3 It is also a legal duty for the Council to publish an annual Air Quality Status Report to demonstrate to DEFRA that it is meeting the duties laid out in the Environment Act.
- 3.4 Air quality exceeds the Limit Values in approximately half of Council's across the UK. There are roughly 610 AQMAs in the UK. Most of these have been declared due to the impact of emissions from road traffic.

- 3.5 All previous annual assessments have determined that air quality in South Derbyshire meets the Air Quality Limit Values, and so no local AQMA has been declared. The latest version of the South Derbyshire Annual Status Report is published on our website at [Air quality | South Derbyshire District Council](#)
- 3.6 More recently there is emerging evidence that exposure to airborne pollution may have greater health impacts than were originally understood when the Environment Act was enacted. The impacts of air quality over the full human lifecycle have been summarised in an influential joint report published in 2016 from the Royal Society of Physicians and Royal Collage of Paediatrics and Child Health "[the Lifelong Impact of Air Pollution](#)"
- Based on current estimates, air pollution is the top environmental risk to human health in the UK, and the fourth greatest threat to public health after cancer, heart disease and obesity.
 - The Department of Health and Social Care's Advisory Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants (COMEAP) have recently estimated that long-term exposure to man-made air pollution in the UK has an annual impact on shortening lifespans, equivalent to 28,000 to 36,000 deaths every year.
- 3.7 This emerging evidence resulted in the government making a commitment in the 2021 Environment Act to establishing a long-term air quality target for air quality. This target was adopted in the Environmental Targets (Fine Particulate Matter) (England) Regulations 2022.
- 3.8 The government also published further statutory guidance in 2023 when it published an [Air Quality Strategy: Framework for Local Authority Delivery](#).
- 3.9 Within the Framework for Local Authority Delivery the government set out the following 'Actions for Partners':
- *All local authorities are expected to take proactive action to improve air quality, whether or not they have an Air Quality Management Area. Local authorities without an Air Quality Management Area, should specify proactive measures they will take in their Air Quality Strategy.*
 - *Local authorities' Air Quality Strategies should be informed by their monitoring and assessments. Air Quality Strategies should set out an enforcement strategy which prioritises reduction of population exposure, including in areas experiencing disproportionately high levels of pollution.*
- 3.10 As a result of the increasing evidence of the adverse health impact of air quality, there has been an increased imperative within the public health community to deal with its causes and effects. Cleaner air was identified as one of the top 10 priorities for Public Health England (PHE) in their 2020-25 Strategy.
- 3.11 In response to the PHE Strategy, the Directors of Public Health for Derbyshire and Derby have identified air quality as being an important factor in ensuring healthy local communities. A Derbyshire County and Derby City Air Quality Strategy 2020-30 was jointly approved by the Derby and Derbyshire Health and Wellbeing Boards in January 2020.
- 3.12 The Derbyshire County and Derby City Air Quality Strategy contains the core vision that "*Together we will reduce the health impact of poor air quality for the people of*

Derbyshire County and Derby City” along with a set of guiding principles, strategic priorities and quantitative outcomes.

- 3.13 The Derbyshire County and Derby City Air Quality Strategy was reviewed in 2023. The review focused on updating the key performance indicators in order to make them more representative of the recent changes in law and guidance. The Derbyshire County and Derby City Air Quality Strategy was approved by the Health Protection Board in September 2023.
- 3.14 In 2023 South Derbyshire District Council declared an ‘Ecological Emergency’. Poor air quality can have an adverse effect on ecological abundance and diversity. Historically, air quality assessments and policies have solely focused on the impact of poor air quality on human health. This review of the Air Quality Strategy provides an opportunity to factor in the Councils ecological emergency declaration and to include air quality targets relevant to sensitive ecosystems as well as sensitive human populations.

4. Purpose and Contents of the Proposed Air Quality Strategy

- 4.1 While the government has set out in the Framework for Local Authority Delivery an ‘expectation’ that every local authority should produce an Air Quality Strategy, the content and format of any such Strategy has not been specified.
- 4.2 In order to meet this expectation, it is proposed to adopt an Air Quality Strategy which aligns with the existing Derbyshire County and Derby City Air Quality Strategy.
- 4.3 The benefits of taking this approach are:
- The proposed Strategy provides South Derbyshire Councillors and residents with a clear and simple set of measures against which to understand current and future air quality in the District.
 - The proposed Strategy sets air quality targets which offer a significant improvement over and beyond the statutory targets contained in the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010 and the Environmental Targets (Fine Particulate Matter) (England) Regulations 2022.
- 4.4 The proposed Air Quality Strategy is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. It contains a single objective – namely to reduce the health impact of poor air quality for the people of South Derbyshire. It also contains four key priorities, three of which match the Derbyshire County and Derby City Air Quality Strategy, plus a fourth to ensure that any conflicts between air quality and the Council’s key aim of reducing climate change are harmonised as much as possible.
- 4.5 The Strategy contains a number of quantified outcomes. All of the outcomes reflect the same metrics as are contained in the Derbyshire Strategy; are set at meeting targets which exceed the current statutory standards and are set at targets which ensure progressive improvement in air quality. This reflects the aspiration of continuous environmental improvement in accordance with the Council’s ISO14001 environmental management standard.
- 4.6 The Strategy also contains a targets which is aimed at monitoring the impacts of air quality on the most sensitive ecological sites within the District in order to align with the Councils recent declaration of an Ecological Emergency.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications to adopting the proposed Strategy other than it commits the Council to maintaining the existing resource commitment to monitoring and reviewing air quality.

6. Corporate Implications

Employment Implications

- 6.1 None.

Legal Implications

- 6.2 The Strategy is not a statutory document and there is no form of challenge to it other than the normal form of judicial review against any Council action by a disgruntled party.
- 6.3 The adoption of the Strategy may offer additional leverage (for example in a Planning Inquiry) to support the Council in resisting matters which may be contrary to the Council's aspirations, but for which there is no other existing means of objection.

Corporate Plan Implications

- 6.4 The proposals align with the "Shape Our Environment" priority of the Council Plan.

Risk Impact

- 6.5 None.

7. Community Implications

Consultation

- 7.1 The content of the Derbyshire County and Derby City Air Quality Strategy has already been the subject of extensive consultation led by Derbyshire County Council Public Health.

Equality and Diversity Impact

- 7.2 A screening EDI has been completed and no adverse impacts have been identified.

Social Value Impact

- 7.3 Beneficial.

Environmental Sustainability

- 7.4 The Strategy reflects the positive environmental aspirations of the Council and has been identified as an opportunity within the ISO14001 risk and opportunity register.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 That the Committee approves the South Derbyshire Air Quality Strategy 2024-28.

9. Background Papers

Appendix 1 – South Derbyshire Air Quality Strategy 2024-28

All other relevant papers have been hyperlinked in the body of the report.