

Arun District Council

REPORT TO:	Environment Committee – 21 November 2023
SUBJECT:	Air Quality Strategy
LEAD OFFICER:	Karl Roberts, Director of Growth
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Sue Wallsgrove
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improving the wellbeing of Arun• Supporting our Environment to Support us	
DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT: <p>Air Quality responsibilities within Arun principally rest with the Environmental Health Service. The service vision within the Growth Directorate Plan July 2023 is <i>to protect public health by focusing our work on the quality of what we eat, where we live and work, the air we breathe and the land we stand on.</i></p>	
FINANCIAL SUMMARY: <p>No additional expenditure has been identified as a result of this report.</p>	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To seek adoption of an Air Quality Strategy for Arun.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That Committee adopts the Air Quality Strategy.

2.2 That authority is given to the Group Head of Technical Services to make minor and administrative amendments to the Strategy.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3.1 Local authorities are expected to take proactive action to improve air quality. For Arun, which does not have any Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA), this means developing an Air Quality Strategy setting out the actions that will be taken to improve air quality in our area.

3.2 This report seeks adoption of an Air Quality Strategy for Arun.

4. DETAIL

- 4.1 Air quality in the UK has improved significantly in recent decades with a decrease in all five major air pollutants. Between 2010 and 2020 emissions of fine particulate matter (PM2.5) decreased by 18%; emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx) decreased by 44%; sulphur dioxide (SO₂) by 70%, non-methane volatile organic compounds (NMVOC) by 14%, and ammonia (NH₃) by 0.2%. These reductions have produced significant benefits for our health and environment. (Government environmental improvement plan 2023). However, air pollution continues to be the biggest environmental risk to human health, disproportionately affecting those who are already vulnerable.
- 4.2 Air pollution is associated with a number of adverse health impacts. It is recognised as a contributing factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer. Additionally, air pollution particularly affects the most vulnerable in society: children, the elderly, and those with existing heart and lung conditions. There is also often a strong correlation with equalities issues because areas with poor air quality are also often less affluent areas.
- 4.3 Areas with poor air quality are often less affluent areas. In Arun there are some areas that are within the most 10% deprived areas in England and Arun is the second most deprived district in West Sussex after Crawley.
- 4.4 While emissions from transport continue to decrease, data from 2020 indicates transport is still the source of 41% of NO₂ emissions and 16% of PM_{2.5} emissions. Reducing emissions from transport is therefore essential to delivering better air quality.
- 4.5 According to the 2021 Census, Arun has a higher proportion of car ownership than the average for England. It is therefore appropriate to focus on reducing transport related emissions in Arun.
- 4.6 The Government have recently published their revised Air Quality Strategy (2023) and their Environmental Improvement Plan (2023). The air quality strategy has revised the local air quality management framework which Arun follows and now places a new requirement on Local Authorities without air quality management areas to produce an air quality strategy setting out the action that they will take to improve air quality in their area.
- 4.7 Air quality monitoring carried out by the Council continues to indicate that there is good air quality within the District and in particular the air quality objectives for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) are being met. Thus, it has not been necessary to declare an Air Quality Management Area in Arun District.
- 4.8 Despite pollution levels being generally low in the District road traffic exhaust emissions are the major source, and they have the potential to cause excessive levels of NO₂ when large volumes of road traffic are queuing.
- 4.9 As NO₂ levels are within government targets we have not had to declare an AQMA, but this means we are now required to develop an Air Quality Strategy.

- 4.10 This first Air Quality Strategy sets out the steps already being taken to help improve air quality, as part of the Sussex Air Quality Partnership and specifically within Arun, and the proposed priority areas.
- 4.11 The priority areas for focus within Arun include continuing with existing workstreams such as the NO₂ monitoring programme, amendments to the taxi licensing policy and our work as part of Sussex Air, which can be met within existing resources.
- 4.12 Initial work to determine the feasibility of smoke control areas, investigate use of fixed penalty notice powers relating to idling vehicles, and evaluating options for proactive dust monitoring of large construction sites, would also be carried out utilising existing capacity within the Environmental Health Service. However, the ability to take some of these items forward, for example should it be determined appropriate to introduce a smoke control area or a programme of proactive dust monitoring, may be contingent on identifying additional capacity or resources, such as may be available through Defra grants, or revenues received from fixed penalty notice receipts, as well as support from other stakeholders.
- 4.13 The Air Quality Strategy is provided at Appendix 1 and is recommended for adoption.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Consultation has taken place with internal stakeholders including Planning Policy, Parking Services, Climate Change and Sustainability, and with external stakeholders, including Sussex Air Quality Partnership, which includes West Sussex County Council and the West Sussex Public Health, and their comments have been incorporated into the strategy as appropriate.

6. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

- 6.1 Not to adopt an Air Quality Strategy. This would mean that Arun will not comply with its obligations under the local air quality management framework. It would also mean less transparency and accountability in relation to air quality and potentially that this area of work is not given priority.

7. COMMENTS BY THE GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 7.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 Adopting an Air Quality Strategy ensures Arun meets its obligations under the revised air quality management frameworks and importantly sets out the actions that will be taken to improve air quality within Arun.

9. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

The Local Air Quality Management Framework underpinned by the Environment Act 1995 sets local limits put into place through the Air Quality (England) Regulations 2000 (as amended in 2002). The framework requires relevant local authorities to assess the quality of their air and, if it does not comply with relevant concentration limits, put in place a plan to remedy the problem.

The recently published Air Quality Strategy (2023) and Environmental Improvement Plan (2023) which were recently revised now places a new requirement on all Local Authorities without air quality management plans to produce an air quality strategy setting out the action that they will take to improve air quality in their area by specifying proactive measure they will take in the air quality strategy.

Arun District Council does not currently have any air quality management areas and is therefore required to produce this air quality strategy. Paragraph 4.10 of the report suggests however, that although this is the first Arun Air Quality Strategy (intended to set out the action that Arun will take to improve air quality in the area), Arun in fact is not proposing to do anything differently as air quality monitoring carried out by the Council continues to indicate that there is good air quality within the District, and in particular the air quality objectives for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) are being met . Thus there are no legal or governance implications arising from this report.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

10.1 There are no direct human resource impacts arising from the proposals.

11. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT

11.1 Air pollution is associated with a number of adverse health impacts. The Air Quality Strategy sets out priorities and actions aimed at improving air quality within Arun, and as such will have a positive impact on health.

12. PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

12.1 There are no direct property and estates impacts from the proposals.

13. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

13.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out and is provided at Appendix 2 of this report.

13.2 Air pollution particularly affects the most vulnerable in society: children, the elderly, and those with existing heart and lung conditions. There is also often a strong correlation with equalities issues because areas with poor air quality are also often less affluent areas.

13.3 The priority areas identified should have a positive impact on these groups. For example, we currently have a project working with schools across Sussex funded by a Defra grant until early 2024. It is hoped further grant funding will continue for this project. Anti-idling powers could also potentially be focused on schools.

14. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

14.1 There are direct links between air quality and environmental impact and climate change and therefore work to improve air quality will also have positive environmental and climate change impacts.

15. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

15.1 There are no direct impacts to crime and disorder from the proposals.

16. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

16.1 There are no direct human rights impacts from the proposals

17. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

17.1 There are no freedom of information or data protection impacts from the proposals.

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Appendix 1 - Air Quality Strategy 2023

Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment

Air Quality Annual Status Reports 2018-2023 [Air quality | Arun District Council](#)