

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET
19TH February 2009

Draft Air Quality Strategy

OPEN	
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APPENDICES:	Appendix 1 – Worcestershire & Herefordshire Air Quality Strategy (Part 1) Appendix 2 – Worcestershire & Herefordshire Air Quality Strategy (Part 2) Appendix 3 – Planning Protocol (These appendices are available electronically and a public inspection copy is available on request - see front cover for contact details).

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Members of the completion of the Hereford & Worcestershire Air Quality Strategy, and to recommend adoption by full Council.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is asked to RECOMMEND to Council:

- 2.1 that the Air Quality Strategy, as contained the separate appendices to this report, be adopted.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 As Members are aware the Council has actively been assessing air quality within the District since 1998 as part of the Government's strategic approach to improving air quality.

- 3.2 In April 2006 Council adopted a local air quality strategy for Wyre Forest, and its original aims were to:

- To develop strategic plans with respect to reducing poor air quality within the Wyre Forest area
- To monitor and quantify current air pollution status within the District.

- To assist in the delivery of the action plan and improve air quality within existing air quality management areas in the Horsefair and Welch Gate.

3.3 Since adoption the Council has continued to progress air quality work, and have produced detail assessments in Coventry Street/Radford Avenue in Kidderminster and in Maypole Close in Bewdley. In April 2008 a progress report and statement on the current state of air quality within Wyre Forest was submitted and approved by DEFRA.

4. KEY ISSUES

4.1 The progress report conclusions and recommendations confirmed that the District Council's realisation of air quality action plans were being delayed by the lack of engagement by the County Council on these issues and the subsequent delivery of the objectives set out in the Local Transport Plan 2. Other members of the Herefordshire & Worcestershire Pollution Group echoed these concerns, and feared that air quality had lost its impetus and profile with regard to other regional priorities.

4.2 This concern was subsequently put to the Chief Environmental Health Officers' Group, with the proposal that district and borough authorities within Worcestershire should develop a single strategy as part of its 2008 -2009 work plan.

4.3 It is envisaged that a Joint Strategy would facilitate and drive the delivery of air quality's improvement by making it a key priority within transport planning. In addition to this other strategic advantages can be realised through having a regional strategy, these are:

- Provides greater consistency across a range of policy areas for the achievement of improved local air quality, including local planning, transport planning, health, industry, housing and environmental protection, and ensures air quality is addressed in a multi-disciplinary way within the different departments of a local authority and across Herefordshire and Worcestershire;
- Provides the framework for a consistent approach to addressing local air quality considerations in development control processes;
- Become a vehicle for developing a coherent air quality policy across Herefordshire and Worcestershire for local planning processes;
- Provides a link to wider initiatives across both the one and two-tier Authorities (for example Local Transport Plans, Climate Change programmes, Community Plans and energy efficiency programmes), and

- Provides the platform for local air quality considerations in future rounds of Local Transport Plans.
- The strategy becomes the first point of contact and source of information relating to local air quality policy for regional bodies and others (for example, the Regional Development Agency, Highways Agency and Environment Agency).

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Air Quality Strategy is to be delivered within existing budgets.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 No legal implications. The Strategy will seek to tie up with existing local and regional planning, health and sustainable development policies within Worcestershire & Herefordshire.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 A long term regional strategy is required to secure future improvement in air quality, which builds on the previous adopted strategy in April 2005.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 No representations were received from interested parties.

9. CONSULTEES

- Forward Planning Manager
- Environment Agency
- Neighbouring Local Authorities
- Primary Care Trust

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- DEFRA Policy Guidance – LAQM PG(03)
- The Wyre Forest District Council Sustainable Strategy 2004-2007
- Wyre Forest District Local Plan 2004