



CABINET

Tuesday, 01 June 2021

Subject	Air Quality Strategy
Report by	Cllr James Mallinder Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment
Supporting Officer	Andrew Reynolds Environment Protection Manager Andrew.reynolds@eastsoffolk.gov.uk

Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN
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Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is NOT in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.	Not applicable
Wards Affected:	All Wards

Purpose and high-level overview

Purpose of Report:

To seek approval for adoption of an Air Quality Strategy.

Options:

Approve for adoption or reject.

Recommendation/s:

That the draft Air Quality Strategy set out at Appendix A be approved.

Corporate Impact Assessment

Governance:

No impacts.

ESC policies and strategies that directly apply to the proposal:

No impacts.

Environmental:

The Strategy references policies and initiatives which have the potential to have a significant positive impact on the Council's own Environmental credentials and well as positively influencing external parties.

Equalities and Diversity:

No impacts

Financial:

There are no additional direct financial implications in relation to the Air Quality Strategy.

Human Resources:

There are no Human Resources implications in relation to the strategy. The resources required to implement the projects required come from within the various teams responsible for their implementation. The resources required to review and update the strategy already exist within the Environmental Protection Team.

ICT:

No impacts.

Legal:

Adoption of an Air Quality Strategy supports fulfilment of our legal obligations relating to Local Air Quality Management

Risk:

No impact.

External Consultees:	None
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Strategic Plan Priorities

Select the priorities of the Strategic Plan which are supported by this proposal: <i>(Select only one primary and as many secondary as appropriate)</i>		Primary priority	Secondary priorities
T01	Growing our Economy		
P01	Build the right environment for East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P02	Attract and stimulate inward investment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P03	Maximise and grow the unique selling points of East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P04	Business partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P05	Support and deliver infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T02	Enabling our Communities		
P06	Community Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P07	Taking positive action on what matters most	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P08	Maximising health, well-being and safety in our District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P09	Community Pride	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T03	Maintaining Financial Sustainability		
P10	Organisational design and streamlining services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P11	Making best use of and investing in our assets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P12	Being commercially astute	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P13	Optimising our financial investments and grant opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P14	Review service delivery with partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T04	Delivering Digital Transformation		
P15	Digital by default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P16	Lean and efficient streamlined services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P17	Effective use of data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P18	Skills and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P19	District-wide digital infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T05	Caring for our Environment		
P20	Lead by example	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P21	Minimise waste, reuse materials, increase recycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P22	Renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P23	Protection, education and influence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
XXX	Governance		
XXX	How ESC governs itself as an authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How does this proposal support the priorities selected?			
<p>The strategy sets out in one document the numerous steps being taken by the Council across a wide range of its activities which contribute to improvements in air quality. This demonstrates the Council's commitment to improving the environment and with it, the health of residents and visitors, helping to make East Suffolk a more attractive and healthier place to live and work.</p>			

Background and Justification for Recommendation

1 Background facts	
1.1	The responsibilities of a Local Authority with regard to Air Quality have evolved over many years from the industrial revolution to the present, taking in the responsibility for controlling emissions from filthy industrial processes in the 19 th century, through to dealing with the causes of smog in the middle part of the 20 th Century and, since the passing of the 1995 Environment Act, responsibility for proactively monitoring and managing local air quality to standards promoted by the relevant European Directives and the Air Quality Standards Regulations.
1.2	In particular, Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 requires local authorities in the UK to review air quality in their area and designate Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) if improvements are necessary to achieve the ‘national objective levels’ for certain pollutants. This is a key part of a local authority’s Air Quality Strategy.
1.3	Where an AQMA is designated, local authorities are also required to work towards objectives prescribed in regulations for that purpose. An Air Quality Action Plan describing the pollution reduction measures must then be put in place. This is another key part of the Air Quality Strategy. The Action Plan contributes to the achievement of air quality limit values at local level.
1.4	The Department of the Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) publishes Technical Guidance on exactly how we should fulfil our legal responsibilities at local level and how we should report on this, annually.
1.6	The pace of change in global and national Environmental Policy is increasing. The UK Government is steering the Environment Bill through Parliament at present and this is set to make further changes and improvements to UK Air Quality legislation and guidance.

2 Current position	
2.1	We currently have 2 AQMAs but both are due to be revoked in the foreseeable future: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodbridge – this year • Stratford – showing reductions to sub-threshold levels of NOx (oxides of nitrogen), we think, over and above the simple effect of COVID lockdowns. Revocation is a positive step because it means that
2.2	Given these impending revocations, there is no specific requirement to report separately in the specific format of an Air Quality Strategy at present; however, having regard to the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • probable revocation of the existing AQMAs • strong Environment Theme in the corporate strategy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Suffolk Council’s declaration of a climate emergency in 2020 • growing evidence of harms caused by poor air quality • growing public awareness about air quality matters, and • the likelihood of revisions to air quality targets in the future <p>...it is appropriate to bring this requirement forward and draw-up an Air Quality Strategy at this point.</p>
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3 How to address current situation

3.1	<p>An Air Quality Strategy serves as a means of drawing together in one document the council’s initiatives which have an impact on air quality.</p> <p>It also provides an opportunity to communicate some of the technical aspects of air quality in accessible language, relating them to real-world examples, helping to promote a wider understanding of the role everybody can play in achieving better quality air.</p>
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4 Reason/s for recommendation

4.1	<p>This Air Quality Strategy brings together the initiatives being pursued across the organisation which contribute to better air quality in a format which meets the requirements of the technical guidance for preparing our statutory Annual Status report.</p> <p>It is an appropriate means of documenting progress towards achieving some of the council’s environmental aspirations and at the same time, contributes to the fulfilment of a legal responsibility.</p> <p>It is intended to be the first version of a dynamic document which will be updated as projects develop and it will be reviewed and reported each year via the statutory Annual Status Report to DEFRA.</p>
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Appendices

Appendices:

Appendix A	Draft Air Quality Strategy
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Background reference papers:

Date	Type	Available From
2016	DEFRA Air Quality Technical Guidance	Technical Guidance LAQM.TG(16) Online Viewer - Defra, UK