**Air Quality Strategy for Tamworth Borough**

**2022-2027**

**Executive Summary**

This strategy recognises that no one single agency, department or community has all the answers; improvements to air quality can only be achieved by taking an integrated, collaborative approach. It acknowledges that economic growth and improving the local environment are not mutually exclusive.

The document provides an overview of air quality across Tamworth Borough and focuses on key areas where air quality could and should be improved.

The Council is committed to making the Borough a great place to live, study and work and recognises that good air quality is an essential part of achieving this.

This strategy sets out how Tamworth Borough Council will continue to work towards improving air quality in the Borough.

The Strategy will inform the decision making processes around significant infrastructure projects such, large housing developments and town centre changes.

Tamworth Borough is semi-rural in nature and the air quality complies with the national standards throughout the Borough.

Our air quality is being challenged because the Borough population is growing, as it lies between the large conurbations of Burton, Sutton and Birmingham and has major transport links such as the M42 motorway, A5 and the A38. Regional Air pollution issues associated with the West Midlands may result in Government directives against local authorities, the actions contained in this strategy will mitigate against such occurrences.

Officers from various Council services consider air quality issues within the Council’s Environment Management Group. The group works with partners, neighbouring authorities and government agencies when considering air quality issues and improvements.

• Community involvement and cohesion is the key to the future success of the strategy and collaborative working with such groups will build sustainable local solutions.

In summary, the Council will:

• Consult with partners and stakeholders with regard to air quality.

• Consider all the options available to reduce pollutants.

• Use both regulatory and non-regulatory powers to improve air quality.

• Consider the wider economic, social and environmental air quality impacts of new developments.

• Annually produce an Air Quality Report as required by statute.

• Annually produce an Air Quality Action Plan.

1. **Introduction** 
   1. **Air Quality Strategy**

**Vision.**

To maintain good air quality in the Borough for all and to ensure a healthy environment for our futures.

This strategy sets out the aims and objectives as to how the Council will continue to work towards improving air quality in the Borough by:

• Adopting a corporate approach.

• Considering all the options available.

• Using both regulatory and non-regulatory powers.

• Considering the wider economic, social and environmental impacts.

• Engaging with communities to build sustainable solutions.

* 1. **Air Quality in Tamworth Borough.**

**a) Effects on Health.**

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.

Air pollution particularly affects the most vulnerable in society, children and older people, 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 the less affluent areas. A report published by Public Health England in 2016 highlighted the increase in mortality risk associated with poor air quality and estimated the Local Mortality Burden in all local authority areas. In 2013 there were 62 deaths attributable to exposure to poor air quality in the Tamworth Borough Council area.

The annual health cost to society of the impacts of particulate matter alone in the UK is estimated to be around £16 billion. Air quality is an important consideration for our communities when people choose where to live, study and work. Good air quality is linked to the choices for schooling, training, the workplace environment and housing

**b) Air Pollution Sources.**

**i) Local**

The Tamworth Borough Council area does not have any Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA’s) but is still affected by air pollutants. The main roads in the Borough such as the M42 motorway, A5 and A38 all generate significant traffic pollution in the form of nitrous oxides and particulate matter. The traffic hotspots for nitrogen dioxide concentrations are continuously monitored around the junctions and trunk roads Monitoring evidence indicates that the pollutants arising from traffic on these routes is not increasing year on year. (please see Graph 1 below).

Industrial sources of air pollution (in particular combustion activities) are regulated by the Council or the Environment Agency, no industrial sources have been found to be likely to cause a breach of the air quality standards.

**ii) Regional Air Pollution Sources**

Tamworth Borough Council is a member of the Staffordshire Air Quality Forum (SAQF) which includes representatives of all of the Staffordshire Local Authorities including Staffordshire County Council and National bodies such as Highways England, the Environment Agency and Public Health England. Partnering with these organisations ensures that changes to existing conditions such as cross boundary air quality management strategies, new or altered routes, new technology and public advice in Tamworth Borough is current and meaningful.

**c) Future Air Quality Challenges.**

Tamworth Borough Council is undergoing a time of considerable housing growth and commercial investment. The local traffic that this growth will generate is estimated to increase additional vehicle movements per day and needs to be properly managed so that the burden of extra vehicles does not result in a significant deterioration of the local air quality. All planning applications for new housing receptors are assessed for the air quality impacts and it remains an air quality priority.

Tamworth Borough Council does not have any Air Quality Management areas however it remains important that improvements to air quality are pursued wherever possible particularly through planning design. Tamworth Borough Council has important regional motorway and trunk routes and as a result is keen to pursue opportunities that will improve transboundary pollution levels.

New provision of electric vehicle charging points at new and existing car parks are examples of traffic pollution management schemes and will be addressed in a future policy.

The development of sustainable transport links to enhance cycling and walking options throughout communities as well as the promotion of the healthy enjoyment of our open spaces will remain important considerations as the Borough develops.

**1.3 A Mandate for Air Quality Management.**

The Council is committed to making Tamworth a great place to live, study and work and recognise that good air quality is an essential part of achieving this. Air Quality is good in our area and there is no current need for a statutory Air Quality Management Area, it is however important that air quality issues are formally proactively addressed because of the significant future growth challenges facing us.

The Council has a number of corporate plan priorities that are relevant to achieving these goals in the following areas :

**1. THE ENVIRONMENT**

* Development of infrastructure for acting on Climate Change

**2. INFRASTRUCTURE**

* Review Local Plan to improve the transport links within Tamworth
* Improve existing walkways and cycling routes
* Ensure more people can access council services digitally/digital enhancement with partners and within Council housing stock

**3. TOWN CENTRE**

* Make the town centre more accessible

**2. Legislative Background.**

**2.1 Clean Air Acts of 1956, 1968 and 1993**

During the 1950s national government decided that action was needed to drastically reduce the number of deaths resulting from smog (a combination of smoke and fog). The government introduced legislation to reduce the amount of smoke produced from industrial and domestic properties, by introducing the Clean Air Acts 1956 and 1968

These Acts, together with other associated clean air legislation, were repealed and consolidated by the Clean Air Act 1993 which, together with regulations and Orders made under the Act, provide the current legislative controls. Control of smoke emissions may also help reduce emission of a wide range of other pollutants such as particles, sulphur dioxide, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) and polycyclic dioxins and difurans (PCDD/F) all of which may be present in smoke.

**2.2 Environment Act 1995**

While the Clean Air Acts focused on emission sources, the Environment Act has a different approach by setting standards or targets for specific pollutants in air.

The Environment Act 1995 part IV section 80 (now schedule 11 of EA (2021)) requires the Secretary of State to prepare and publish a National Air Quality Strategy containing policies with respect to the assessment or management of air quality and include statements with respect to:

• Standards relating to the quality of air;

• Objectives for the restriction of the levels at which particular substances are present in the air; and measures which are to be taken by local authorities and other persons for the purpose of achieving those objectives.

• Section 82 of the Act requires each local authority to review air quality in its area from time to time and to report both current and likely future air quality.

• Section 83 requires local authorities to designate an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) where air quality objectives are not being achieved.

• Section 84 requires local authorities who have declared an AQMA to prepare an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) which sets out what actions it will take to work toward achieving air quality standards and

**2.3 UK Air Quality Strategy**

The current Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland sets out air quality objectives and policy options to further improve air quality in the UK now and into the future. The strategy sets out a way forward for work and planning in air quality issues. It details the standards and objectives to be attained for various pollutants and suggests measures to be considered to help achieve them.

**2.4 Air Quality (England) Regulations 2000 amended 2002**

These regulations implement the objectives of the Air Quality Strategy and state the concentration of each pollutant, the relevant time period (as prescribed by regulations) and the date by which they should be achieved.

* 1. **Working together to Improve Air Quality**

**3.1 Environment Management Group.**

The Environment Management Group is made up of officers from various Council services with responsibility for:

• Corporate Priorities and Environmental Management Group

• Planning Policy & Design

• Environmental Health

• PR & Communications

The group works to ensure that air quality in the Borough improves from direct and indirect actions.

In particular the group:

• Consult with partners and stakeholders with regard to Air Quality Action Plans.

• Consider all the options available to reduce pollutants.

• Use both regulatory and non-regulatory influence to improve air quality.

• Consider the wider economic, social and community impacts of air quality.

• Require relative contributions to action from industry, transport and individuals that are cost-effective and proportionate.

**3.2 Council Partners and Neighbouring Authorities**

Tamworth Borough Council will continue to work with partners and neighbouring authorities to:

Ensure that actions taken by the council do not result in worsening of air quality in our own or neighbouring authorities.

• Consider the joint benefit for communities, partners and neighbouring authorities of actions that are proposed to improve air quality.

• Aim to ensure relative contributions to a solution that are cost-effective and proportionate for partners and neighbouring authorities.

**3.3 Consultation**

The Council will exchange data and aim to consult with the following when writing or amending Air Quality Reports:

• The Secretary of State

• The Environment Agency

• The Highways Agency

• The County Highways Authority

• Neighbouring local authorities

• Local businesses

• Local communities and residents groups

• The Primary Care Trust

Consultation periods will last no less than four weeks, to ensure that all consultees have the opportunity to review the proposals and respond with comments for consideration

1. **Local Air Quality Management (LAQM).**

**4.1 Review and Assessment**

The Council began the process of LAQM in 1998, by assessing which pollutants were most likely to be of concern and which pollutants could be “screened out” because sources of those pollutants were not present in the Borough.

Once it had been established which pollutants needed to be monitored to assess whether national objectives were being met, monitoring was and continues to be carried out in accordance with guidance from the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

Local authorities are not required to meet the air quality objectives due to the influence of factors outside their control, but must demonstrate that they are working towards them through local actions. Periodically, each authority must also review and re-assess air quality in their area and report on the findings and the outcomes from their actions to Defra.

Where air quality does not meet the objectives set in the Air Quality (England) Regulations, an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) is declared. The Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) becomes the mechanism for improving the local air quality and the plan forms the statutory element of the local air quality management process. Once an AQMA has been declared there is a statutory duty for the local authority to produce an AQAP to pursue achievement of the relevant air quality objective(s).

The main pollutant of concern in Tamworth Borough is nitrogen dioxide (NO2). Nitrogen dioxide is mostly associated with emissions from road vehicles. Nitrogen oxides are formed at high temperature during combustion processes from the oxidation of nitrogen in the air and any nitrogenous components of the fuel or other material being burned. NO2 is an irritant gas that can aggravate the respiratory system through inflammation of lung tissue and the airways. The groups of people most vulnerable to these effects are young children and asthmatics.

The council have undertaken all stages of the LAQM process and published results which are available on the authority’s website.

**4.2 Air Quality Action Plans.**

An Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) has to be published for each Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) declared in the borough and will be subject to an annual review process. Currently Tamworth Borough has not breached the Air Quality Standards and therefore has no AQMA’s. Where necessary an AQAP details:-

• The pollutants to be reduced.

• An indication of the source of each pollutant.

• What the Council and other agencies will do to reduce the pollutant.

• The emission reductions expected, including concentration, if possible.

• The timescale for implementing each proposal.

Whilst AQAPs contain specific actions, it is recognised that some of the success in improving air quality involves lifestyle changes and personal commitment to live, work and travel in different ways. There is on-going support for the principles to encourage less car usage, reduce congestion, promote walking, cycling and the use of public transport

It is a requirement of the action planning process to regularly review and report progress and achievements to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

**Action Plan 2022 - 2027**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Timescale** | **Lead** | **Outcome** |
| **Year 1 2022/2023** |  |  |  |
| TBC street-scene fleet partial replacement with electric vehicles | 2024 | Group Manager – Operational Services |  |
| Promotion of walking  reduction in vehicle use in Tamworth | Ongoing | Local Plan & SCC  <https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Education/Schooltransport/Active-school-travel/Active-school-travel-team.aspx> | Reduction in air pollution |
| Corporation Street interchange improvements planned for future delivery | Ongoing | Discussions ongoing with SCC |  |
| **Year 2 2023/2024** |  |  |  |
| Installation of electric vehicle charging stations in 2 public car parks | 2024 | Regeneration Manager. |  |
| Domestic smoke control | Ongoing | Environmental enforcement team using new Environmental Act 2021 powers | Reduction in particulates. |
| **Year 3 2024/2025** |  |  |  |
| Installation of 2  electric vehicle charging hubs for council tenants. | 2025 | Assistant Director Assets. | Reduction in air pollution |
| Regulation of industrial processes | Ongoing | Environmental enforcement team | Control of air pollution |
| **Year 4 2025/2026** |  |  |  |
| Taxi and bus idling policy | 2026 | Ass Director Regulatory Services | Reduction in air pollution |
| Continued Integration with planning system | Ongoing |  |  |
| **Year 5 2026/2027** |  |  |  |
| Increase of cycle use by extending cycle routes | 2027 | SCC www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Transport/cycling/cyclemaps.aspx | Increased miles/ connectivity of cycle paths. |
| Planned improvements at Tamworth Railway Station | 2027 |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

**5. Monitoring and Evaluation.**

The Council will monitor progress against this strategy on an annual basis. The priorities identified in the table above will be incorporated into the on-going work of the Environmental Management Group. Performance will be reported by exception and annual reports provided for Cabinet and Scrutiny. Methods of evaluation will be determined by non breaches of Air Quality Standards.

Tamworth Borough Council will continue to operate an air quality monitoring regime and fulfil Defra’s reporting requirements. The council will publish copies of reports on-line. Environmental and Health Services will take the lead in measuring improvements in air quality and continue to work with colleagues in other council departments, partner agencies, communities and neighbouring authorities, with the overall aim of improving air quality.