

Air quality strategy for North Somerset

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A Local Air Quality Strategy for North Somerset

Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 required the Secretary of State to draw up a National Air Quality Strategy (NAQS), and for local authorities to review and assess local air quality against standards and objectives in the Strategy and where necessary to declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) to improve air quality.

A local air quality strategy (LAQS) for North Somerset has been developed, which with the individual Local Air Quality Strategies for the other three unitary authorities of the former Avon area, will help underpin the NAQS. The development of this LAQS for the area aims to ensure that the council moves towards a healthier community with a better quality of life and environment through actions and initiatives to improve air quality locally. This requires the integration of air quality considerations into the various planning functions of local authorities, including land-use planning and planning control, transport, economic development and environmental and sustainable planning.

The objects of this LAQS are to identify how North Somerset Council can assist in securing air quality improvements across the district, both within any designated AQMA's identified and through planning frameworks and wider activities within the council.

The specific aims and objectives for North Somerset are as follows:

- To meet the national air quality objectives
- To prevent the deterioration of air quality where it is already satisfactory
- To ensure that North Somerset makes a contribution to the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions in line with national targets
- To support policies such as the Local Transport Plan, North Somerset Local Plan and the Community Plan and
- To protect and enhance the environment so that plants, animals and people are free from the consequences of air pollution

Corporate commitment to the promotion and implementation of initiatives and policies that reduce air quality impacts, or at least do not add to them, is vital for overall improvements to be made. The LAQS for North Somerset Council will be most effective if adopted corporately across and within the authority. North Somerset Council is recommended by Central Government to continue its work programme on air quality management, and in so doing:

- Maintain, and where appropriate enhance the air quality programme underway across the authority.
- Prepare further annual air quality review and assessments.
- Maintain, and where appropriate improve upon, collaboration across council departments within the authority such that air quality is considered at the earliest stage possible.
- Consider emerging pollutants within EU Directives and which may require action on part of the council.

- Consider any further reviews of the National Air Quality Strategy, with respect to implications for the air quality objectives, which may again require action by the council; and
- Continue collaboration with air quality professionals within the other councils of the former Avon area to maximise opportunities for sharing resources, experiences and information.

The LAQS for North Somerset Council will provide the context for ensuring air quality considerations are included in planning, development and health frameworks across the council. North Somerset Council is recommended to consider indicators evaluating the effectiveness of LAQS.

Air Quality Monitoring currently undertaken by the council

- North Somerset monitors, using diffusion tubes, nitrogen dioxide at over 40 receptor sites. No continuous monitoring is carried out at present but it is anticipated that a monitoring site will be established shortly at Bristol International Airport. Ozone is already monitored here.
- Benzene concentrations are measured at 31 locations using BTX diffusion tubes.
- Sulphur Dioxide levels are monitored at Nailsea and Portishead again using diffusion tubes

Industrial Processes

The council has a Statutory Duty to assess emissions from specific industrial processes through the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2007. A public register of permitted processes is available on the council's website.