

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Environmental Services Portfolio Holder 27 January 2009  
**AUTHOR/S:** Executive Director / Corporate Manager Health & Environmental Services

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### LOCAL AIR QUALITY STRATEGY

#### Purpose

1. To endorse the local Air Quality Strategy for South Cambridgeshire District Council for adoption.
2. This is a key decision because adoption of the Local Air Quality Strategy will bring together various Policies and teams both within the Council and from external organisations on a common goal of working towards achieving cleaner air and sustainable development within the District. This will result in key decisions having to be made with regard to the following reason(s):
  - it is likely to be significant in terms of its effects on existing, new and proposed communities living or working in an area of the District
  - it will provide a framework on which the Council can build towards achieving a better quality of life for the local population

#### Background

3. This report follows from the Portfolio Holder decision to endorse and support the draft Local Air Quality Strategy 2009 – 2014 for consultation considered on 6 November 2008. The strategy has not materially altered from that provided as part of the Portfolio Holder meeting in November. Therefore it has not been reproduced here and Members are requested to bring their original copies to the meeting. Copies are however available on request from the Health Protection Team Leader, Susan Walford.

#### Considerations

4. The Local Air Quality Strategy (LAQS) is not a statutory document.
5. The LAQS contains various actions that the Council will follow as standard procedure for the duration of the existence of the Strategy.
6. The LAQS refers to other documents and policies that are already adopted within the Council. It identifies common areas and goals within each of those documents that are related to improving health, quality of life and air quality. It is not intended that the LAQS will contradict these documents and policies, rather that it will work successfully alongside them.
7. The additional consultees suggested in the Environmental Services Portfolio Holders' meeting of November 2008 were included in the consultation exercise. No comments were received back from these additional consultees regarding the Local Air Quality Strategy.

## Options

8. The Council is not statutorily obliged to submit a LAQS to DEFRA. However, adoption of the Local Air Quality Strategy will allow South Cambridgeshire District Council to set out its objectives and detail how it will achieve improvements in air quality.
9. In not adopting the LAQS, there remains the risk within the Council that the varying documents and policies that will have an impact on air quality will become unknown to each other, resulting in a detrimental impact on air quality.

10. Financial	A budget for the future air quality-monitoring programme has been identified within the budget estimate process.
Legal	The European Union's Air Quality Framework and Daughter Directives prescribe limit values for certain pollutants, which all member states must meet. The Environment Act 1995 continues to provide the framework for local air quality management in England and Wales, Part IV of the Act prescribes those duties required to be carried out by Local Authorities including periodic review, declaration of AQMA's and production of Action Plans for those areas. The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland 2000 and associated legislation prescribe air quality objectives and deadlines for meeting them, which are broadly in line with EU requirements.
Staffing	None. Staff will have to be made aware of its contents.
Risk Management	Failure to improve air quality to meet National Air Quality Objectives will present a risk to public health and may incur penalties through the EU.
Equal Opportunities	Poor air quality particularly affects those individuals who already suffer with asthma or associated bronchial ailments and are more susceptible to pollutants in the atmosphere. Improving air quality gives everyone an equal chance of enjoying the outdoor environment and the associated benefits to health that this facilitates.

## Consultations

11. Internal consultation has taken place with the following relevant Officers within the Council:
  - Planning Policy Manager
  - Corporate Manager – Planning and Sustainable Communities
  - Growth Area Project Manager
  - Strategic Sustainability Officer and
  - Strategic Partnerships officer

Comments received back from this initial consultation were positive, in support of the Local Air Quality Strategy and previously assimilated into the strategy prior to the November Portfolio Holder meeting.

12. Further, external consultation ended on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2008, which included the following organisations:
  - i. Highways Agency
  - ii. Environment Agency

- iii. English Nature
- iv. English Heritage
- v. Cambridgeshire County Council
- vi. Cambridge City Council
- vii. East Cambridgeshire District Council
- viii. Forest Heath District Council
- ix. North Herts District Council
- x. Mid Beds DC
- xi. 1<sup>st</sup> Capital Connect
- xii. University of Cambridge
- xiii. Cambridgeshire Business Forum

No negative comments were received from this external consultation exercise. Cambridgeshire County Council responded in support of the document with suggestions for the review procedure. The Strategy will be reviewed after 5 years. English Nature also indicated their support of the document.

### **Effect on Corporate Objectives and Service Priorities**

13.	<p><b>Work in partnership to manage growth to benefit everyone in South Cambridgeshire now and in the future</b></p> <p>Air pollution and its causes do not respect boundaries, therefore partnership working is essential in reducing emissions to improve air quality. Work is currently ongoing with Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridge City Council, Environment and Transport Planning, South Cambridgeshire District Council Planning Policy and Development Control, Highways Agency.</p>
	<p><b>Deliver high quality services that represent best value and are accessible to all our community</b></p> <p>The air quality framework requires a risk-based approach which when followed ensures best value allocation of resources to those areas at risk of exceeding the air quality objectives.</p>
	<p><b>Enhance quality of life and build a sustainable South Cambridgeshire where everyone is proud to live and work</b></p> <p>The overarching aim of the LAQS is to bring together all areas of work that have an impact on air quality or decision making processes that have an impact on air quality to reach a common goal and give the Council direction towards improving air quality within the District, and therefore improving health, inequalities and quality of life.</p>

### **Conclusions/Summary**

- 14. The Local Air Quality Strategy has been produced in order to give a platform upon which the local air quality within the District can be improved, bringing together all those with an interest or responsibility for air quality.
- 15. People are keen to see action on air quality issues, driven by the perceived benefits and the general improvement to local environments and quality of life. The National Air Quality Strategy states that all authorities are capable of improving air quality. Therefore, all authorities should seek to draw up an air quality strategy, whether an AQMA has been declared or not.

## **Recommendation**

16. It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder approves and adopts the Local Air Quality Strategy for the District.

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Air Quality Review and Assessment – Cambridgeshire Local Authorities Updating and Screening Assessment 2008.

Detailed Assessment of PM<sub>10</sub> Along the A14 Corridor, South Cambridgeshire District Council. December 2007.

Detailed Assessment of Nitrogen Dioxide Along the A14 Corridor, South Cambridgeshire District Council, November 2006

The Further Assessment of Nitrogen Dioxide and PM<sub>10</sub> Along The A14 Corridor, 2008

The Role of the Highways Agency in Local Air Quality Management, January 2005.

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