

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

17th July 2025

**REPORT OF SENIOR
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

**Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Norma Stephenson OBE
Cabinet Member for Access, Communities & Community Safety**

Adoption of The Stockton-on-Tees Air Quality Strategy 2025-2030

SUMMARY

Poor air quality is one of the largest risks to public health and DEFRA now required all Local Authorities to produce an Air Quality Strategy. The purpose of this is to ensure air quality is at the forefront of Council decision making whilst also protecting the health and well-being of those who live and visit our borough.

Within Stockton-on-Tees, Environmental Health are responsible for monitoring the levels of air quality using two automatic sites and 15 diffusion tubes strategically placed throughout the Borough in areas of high volumes of traffic or in locations where concern about the air quality has been raised. The Air Quality levels within Stockton-on-Tees are better than the national standard which means we that we do not need more stringent measures seen in other areas of the country such as Air Quality Management Areas. In fact, over the past five years, since 2019, there has been continuous improvement in air quality levels each of our monitoring locations.

Even though we are seeing improvements locally, we know there is more to do to protect our communities. The purpose of this report is for Cabinet to approval of the draft Air Quality Strategy for Stockton-on-Tees which will be in place from 2025 until 2030. The strategy contains 42 measures which aims to improve our air quality levels further, whilst encouraging behavioural changes from Council operations, residents, businesses and visitors to the Borough.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)/DECISION(S)

The production of the Stockton-on-Tees Air Quality Strategy was mandatorily brought forward by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to coincide with the requirement to report in to central government annually for local air quality standards. This reporting is issued via the Annual Status Report (ASR) and are a key part of Local Air Quality Management (LAQM). This annual report is submitted to the government each year at the end of May.

The production of the Air Quality Strategy aims to improve local air quality standards and as such continue to make Stockton-on-Tees a great place to live, work and visit - a Borough that residents can be proud of. It will be a vibrant and diverse place with an environment that is well looked after and outdoor spaces to enjoy.

The adoption of the Air Quality Strategy will improve local air quality for the benefit of all residents, businesses and visitors of the borough alike.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To approve the draft Air Quality Strategy for Stockton-on-Tees 2025-2030

DETAIL

1. Following the introduction of *The Environment Act 2021*, Local Authorities are required to produce an Air Quality Strategy.
2. The Environmental Health Service have developed an Air Quality Strategy for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council following extensive internal consultation and collaboration with many internal departments. A public consultation on the draft Air Quality Strategy also took place in April 2025 which was accessible both online and via paper copies within Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council libraries. A summary table regarding the key themes identified from the external consultation is available on the air quality page of our website.
3. The Air Quality Strategy will have no impact on the Councils property portfolio, capital programme or asset management plan.
4. Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council will continue to undertake continuous monitoring at its two fixed sites and through the deployment of diffusion tubes; whilst the priorities for the Strategy will focus upon:
 - **Monitoring, reporting and increasing awareness of air quality** to enable us to expand our air quality network whilst ensuring residents and businesses have access to information about air quality which can lead to behavioural changes.
 - **Strategic measures** will be implemented within Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council to ensure we are able to improve air quality levels throughout the Borough, leading by example.
 - **Reduce emissions from vehicles** is a key priority as the main source of air pollution within Stockton-on-Tees is from vehicles travelling throughout the Borough.
 - **Reduce emissions from domestic, industrial and agricultural sources** as these sources are known to significantly contribute to air pollution levels with domestic wood burning being the UKs largest source of particulate matter air pollution.
 - **New Developments, Construction and Planning** will be prioritised to ensure the design, construction, demolition of new developments can improve our levels of air pollution.

COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

5. A community impact assessment has not been undertaken for the Air Quality Strategy. The purpose of the Air Quality Strategy is to improve the levels of air quality across the Borough to protect the health of residents. An Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment was complete for the draft Strategy and this was approved ahead of public consultation.

CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

6. The adoption of the Air Quality Strategy will impact on the entire borough as it aims to improve local air quality. It has however no specific impact on corporate parenting as any incremental improvements in local air quality will benefit everyone.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7. There is no additional capital or revenue spend associated with approval of this strategy as the key aims and objectives can be met through existing resources.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8. The adoption of the Air Quality Strategy 2025-2030 will allow Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council to continue to comply with its legal requirements for reporting on local air quality management and delivery of improvements via a local strategy.
9. Local Air Quality Management requirements are set out under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995. This act requires local authorities to regularly review and assess air quality within their areas and take action to improve it.

RISK ASSESSMENT

10. The approval of the Air Quality Strategy is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk

WARDS AFFECTED AND CONSULTATION WITH WARD/COUNCILLORS

11. As this strategy impacts on the entire borough no specific ward is disproportionately impacted over another.
12. A Members briefing paper has been produced which is to be issued subject to Cabinet approval.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Equality & Poverty Impact Assessment:

13. An EPIA was prepared and submitted 30th January 2025 and approved 5th March 2025.

Appendices / Embedded Documents:

14. Appendix One – Draft Air Quality Strategy 2025 - 2030



Stockton-on-Tees
Borough Council Air

Name of Contact Officer: Marc Stephenson
Post Title: Assistant Director Regulated Services & Transformation
Telephone No. 01642 526203
Email Address: Marc.Stephenson@stockton.gov.uk