

Equality Impact Assessment Template

Please complete this template using the [Equality Impact Assessment Guidance document](#)

Version 4: January 2019

Title of proposal (include forward plan reference if available)	Sandwell's Air Quality Action Plan
Directorate and Service Area	Public Health
Name and title of Lead Officer completing this EIA	Andy Thorpe, Healthy Urban Development Officer
Contact Details	andy_thorpe@sandwell.gov.uk
Names and titles of other officers involved in completing this EIA	None
Partners involved with the EIA where jointly completed	None
Date EIA completed	19/02/2021
Date EIA signed off or agreed by Director or Executive Director	
Name of Director or Executive Director signing off EIA	
Date EIA considered by Cabinet Member	

See [Equality Impact Assessment Guidance](#) for key prompts that must be addressed for all questions

**1. The purpose of the proposal or decision required
(Please provide as much information as possible)**

Tackling air pollution is one of Sandwell Council's health priorities and the Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) outlines the actions delivered between 2020 and 2025 to reduce concentrations of air pollutants and exposure to them.

The AQAP is produced as part of the Council's statutory duty to work towards Air Quality Strategy objectives as required by The Environment Act 1995 (Part IV) and to meet the requirements of the Local Air Quality Management statutory process. Air pollution has been a longstanding problem in Sandwell and in 2005 the Council declared a borough wide Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

The principal source of air pollution in Sandwell is vehicle exhaust emissions, particularly from diesel engines. The Council's aims are to:

- Reduce the overall health impacts and burdens of poor air quality
- Achieve the national air quality NO₂ annual mean objective across the borough in the shortest possible time frame
- Reduce concentrations of particulate matter emissions (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} inhalable particles) to protect human health.

Seven priority actions have been established to support these aims:

1. Develop specific measures with local communities to reduce NO₂ hotspots.
2. Promote public transport, walking, cycling and switching to zero emission vehicles.
3. Review the Council's impact on air quality including Council fleet and employee vehicles.
4. Support and encourage taxi drivers to switch to low emission vehicles.
5. Apply existing and adapt new planning development policies to support air quality improvements.
6. Publicity campaigns to encourage behavioural change around physical health and increasing use of low emission vehicles.
7. Partnership working with Birmingham City Council to minimise potential negative impact of the Clean Air Zone.

Once approved, the programme of work outlined in the AQAP will also help to reduce carbon emissions to a level which will meet Sandwell's 2030 and 2041 targets as set out in the recently adopted Climate Change Strategy and associated action plan. Many of the actions to reduce air pollution can also result in lower carbon emissions. The impacts of climate change are likely to be extensive and will detrimentally affect poorer people, therefore action must be taken to reduce that impact and ensure the future prosperity and equality

of Sandwell's residents.

The wide-ranging actions required to tackle the impacts of air quality and climate change will have significant resource implications for the Council, therefore funding and likely sources of income will be sought to assist.

To carry out the work outlined in the AQAP it is recommended that the Cabinet recommend the Council to approve Sandwell's Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) 2020-2025. This would authorise the Director of Public Health to address air quality according to the actions outlined in the Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP).

2. Evidence used/considered

At the time when Sandwell Council declared a borough wide Air Quality Management Area in 2005, the objective for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) was being exceeded in 22 separate locations. The Council's monitoring of NO₂ concentrations since that time shows that they continue to exceed the annual mean objective in 7 locations with no significant evidence of a downward trend during the past five years.

Screening exercises in 2018 were also utilised to validate existing hot spots for NO₂ and was also used to identify other areas where NO₂ levels might rise above annual mean objectives.

Particulate matter emissions (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} inhalable particles) are also monitored, but currently to a limited extent. Data for Sandwell from Public Health England shows that annual deaths attributable to PM_{2.5} emissions are 198, a total of 2073 life-years lost. Increased monitoring of PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ emissions will be carried out in Sandwell.

3. Consultation

A consultation on the Climate Change Strategy was carried out in parallel with the draft AQAP for six weeks from 20 January to 15 March 2020. This formed the local consultation for the AQAP. A second period of consultation for the AQAP was carried out between 7 July and 1 September 2020. This formed the statutory consultation of key stakeholders and interest groups which is required when local authorities are either preparing or revising their AQAP.

The former Air Quality Working Group has become the Climate Change Working Group enabling focus on a wider agenda. A Members' Steering Group for Climate Change also meets regularly.

4. Assess likely impact

Please give an outline of the overall impact if possible.

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, plus recent research has suggested links between air quality and both cognitive and sight health. Additionally, air pollution particularly affects the most vulnerable in society: children and older people, and those with heart and lung conditions. There is also a strong correlation with equality issues, because areas with poor air quality are also often the less affluent areas.

The annual health cost to society of the impacts of particulate matter alone in the UK is estimated to be around £16 billion. Through the Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP), with assistance from the Climate Change Strategy, Sandwell Council is committed to reducing the exposure of people to poor air quality in order to improve health. In the long term, proactive intervention taken now to improve air quality should reduce the burden on the NHS and local health care services and help ensure health equality.

Please complete the table below at 4a to identify the likely impact on specific protected characteristics

4a. Use the table to show:

- Where you think that the strategy, project or policy could have a negative impact on any of the equality strands (protected characteristics), that is it could disadvantage them or if there is no impact, please note the evidence and/or reasons for this.
- Where you think that the strategy, project or policy could have a positive impact on any of the groups or contribute to promoting equality, equal opportunities or improving relationships within equality characteristics.

Protected Characteristic	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	No Impact	Reason and evidence (Provide details of specific groups affected even for no impact and where negative impact has been identified what mitigating actions can we take?)
	✓	✓	✓	
Age	✓			<p>Various health effects and conditions can come about at different stages of life. The Royal College of Physicians' report, Every breath we take: The lifelong impact of air pollution, presents the findings of multiple international studies regarding each of these health effects, therefore the measures in the AQAP will collectively have a positive impact on the health of all people in Sandwell.</p> <p>Young children are at particular risk of emissions, both short-term (air quality) and longer-term (climate change). The Health Matters: Air Pollution page of the Gov.uk website provides links to evidence about the effects of air pollution on children. Studies have shown associations of NO₂ in outdoor air with reduced lung development, and respiratory infections in early childhood and effects on lung function in adulthood.</p>

Disability			✓	
Gender reassignment			✓	
Marriage and civil partnership			✓	
Pregnancy and maternity	✓			<p>Exposure to air pollution has various different health effects, which come about at every stage of life, from a foetus' first weeks in the womb all the way through to old age. As well as potential effects on foetal growth, air pollution exposure is associated with low birth weight and premature birth.</p> <p>Pregnancy and early childhood are critical times for the formation and maturation of body systems, and the time during which the most rapid changes take place, therefore the measures in the AQAP will collectively have a positive impact on health during pregnancy. (Refer to web links in the section on Age above.)</p>
Race			✓	
Religion or belief			✓	
Sex			✓	
Sexual orientation			✓	

<p>Other</p>	<p>✓</p>		<p>Air pollution and climate change are key threats to the health of our population and a driver of health inequalities. Addressing air pollution and climate change will reduce health inequalities and increase the perception of Sandwell as a clean, safe borough. For example, actions in the AQAP for cleaner public transport and the development of more walkable and cyclable places will reduce air pollution and carbon emissions, resulting in more desirable places to live.</p> <p>Reduced emissions from Sandwell’s new and existing housing stock will help to address air pollution, climate change and fuel poverty problems, thereby reducing deprivation and narrowing the current equality gap.</p> <p>Sandwell’s reputation will be increasingly linked to its action on climate change and clean air, which will be important for attracting investment in green jobs which will help to reduce deprivation.</p>
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Does this EIA require a full impact assessment? Yes No

If there are no adverse impacts or any issues of concern or you can adequately explain or justify them, then you do not need to go any further. You have completed the screening stage. You must, however, complete sections 7 and 9 and publish the EIA as it stands.

If you have answered yes to the above, please complete the questions below referring to the guidance document.

5. What actions can be taken to mitigate any adverse impacts?

Not applicable.

6. As a result of the EIA what decision or actions are being proposed in relation to the original proposals?

Not applicable.

7. Monitoring arrangements

Not applicable.

8. Action planning

Not applicable.

9. Publish the EIA

The Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) will be published on Sandwell Council's website on the pages specific to "Air Quality". This EIA will be made available as part of the documentation published on the page. The EIA will also accompany reports to Cabinet, Scrutiny Boards and the Council in relation to the adoption of the AQAP and any subsequent associated work.

Where can I get additional information, advice and guidance?

In the first instance, please consult the accompanying guide "Equality Impact Assessment Guidance"

Practical advice, guidance and support

Help and advice on undertaking an EIA or receiving training related to equalities legislation and EIAs is available to **all managers** across the council from officers within Service Improvement. The officers within Service Improvement will also provide overview quality assurance checks on completed EIA documents.

Please contact:

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