

Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board

Sandwell's Air Quality Action Plan Progress Report March 2022

Recommendations

We asking for your consideration and comment on the following recommendations:

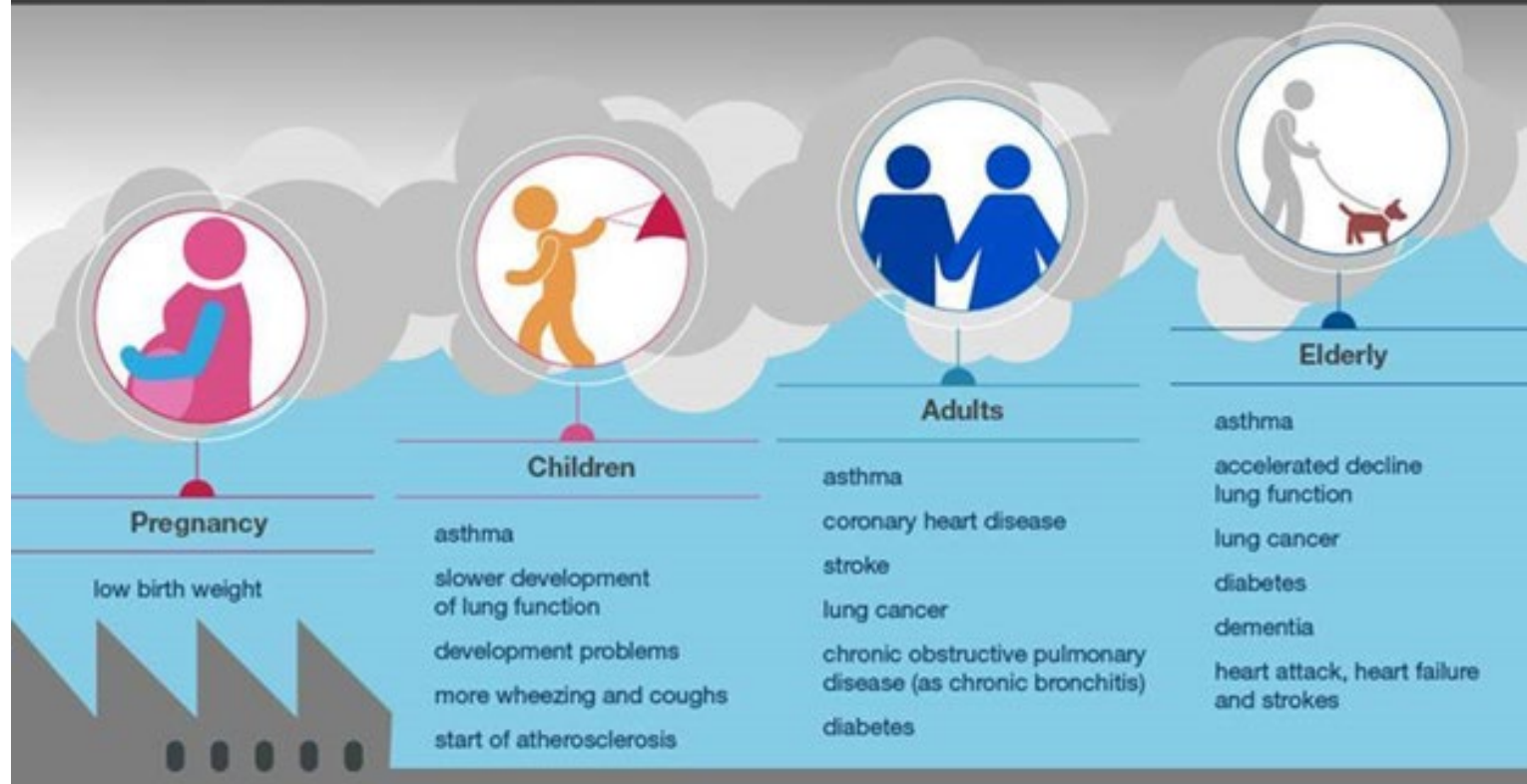
- That the Board notes the progress made regarding Sandwell Council's approved Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) 2020-2025 since the previous report to the Board on 29 March 2021.
- To suggest further courses of action that the Director of Public Health could explore to further support and strengthen the ambitions of our current AQAP.

Poor Air Quality and the Implications for Health and Wellbeing

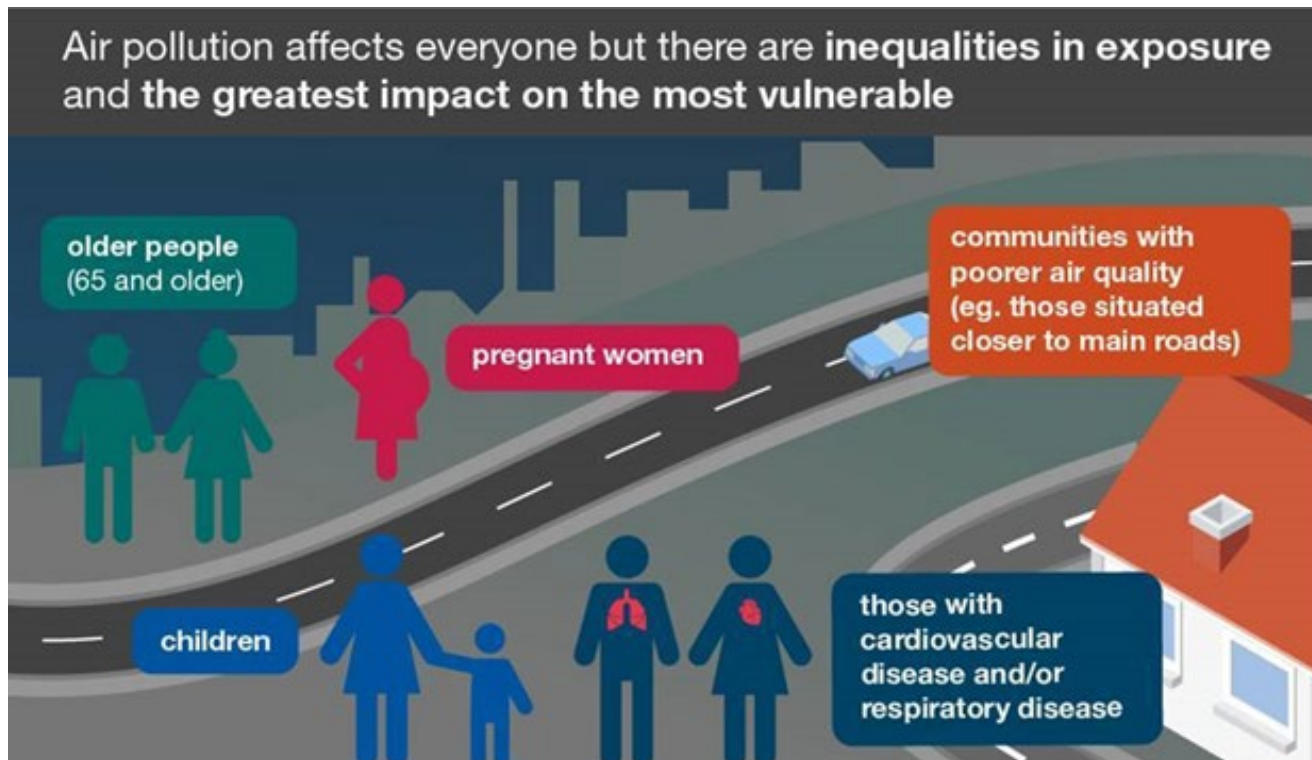
Why does it matter?

- Air pollution is associated with a number of adverse health impacts.
- Contributing factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer, plus cognitive function and sight health.
- Most vulnerable in society affected: children and older people, and those with heart and lung conditions.

Air pollution affects people throughout their lifetime



- Strong correlation with equality issues - areas with poor air quality are often the less affluent areas.



- Annual health cost to society of the impacts of particulate matter in the UK estimated to be around £16 billion.
- Sandwell Council is committed to reducing the exposure of people to poor air quality in order to improve health.
- Improved AQ reduces the burden on NHS.

What is an Air Quality Action Plan?

The AQAP summarises how the Council will meet its statutory in trying to achieve Air Quality Strategy objectives as required by The Environment Act 1995 (Part IV).

What are Sandwell's Air Quality Aims?

- **Reduce** the overall health impacts and burdens of poor air quality
- **Achieve** the national air quality NO₂ annual mean objective in the shortest possible time frame (main source is exhaust emissions)
- **Reduce** concentrations of particulate matter emissions (PM10 and PM2.5 ultrafine particles) to protect human health.

AQAP Identified Seven Priority Actions Support These Aims:

1. Community work to reduce NO₂
2. Promoting and enabling sustainable and low emission transport
3. Council fleet emissions
4. Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle emissions
5. Planning policies to support AQ improvements
6. Publicity campaigns and engagement
7. Impact of Birmingham Clean Air Zone

Progress since March 2021

- AQAP adopted by the Council on 23 March 2021
- Accepted by DEFRA's Local Air Quality Management team
- Update on the following areas:
 - **Monitoring and reporting of air pollution**
 - **Specific projects**
 - **Promotional activities and campaigns**
 - **Changes in future local air quality management**
 - **Briefing for elected members support**

Monitoring and Reporting

- Maintained annual monitoring of nitrogen dioxide levels at 123 sites across the borough
- Maintained 5 continuous monitoring stations. 4 upgraded in 2021 to allow monitoring of particulate matter (PM1, PM2.5 and PM10)

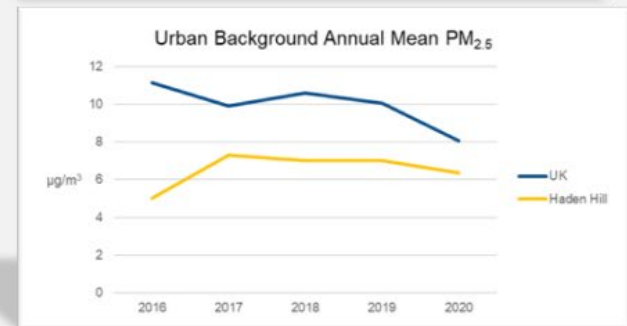




- Annual Status Report (ASR) of air pollution data monitoring submitted to DEFRA .

Headlines 2020 Data

- 2020 – First time since 2005 no exceedances in annual mean objectives for Nitrogen Dioxide
- Nitrogen dioxide levels fell by 20%+ across all sites
- Greatest reduction in NO₂ in Spring and again in December 2020.
- PM2.5 was slightly reduced
- Planning applications – conditioned for EV chargers doubled in 3 years



Year	Planning Apps Conditioned to provide Electric Vehicle Charging Points
2017	35
2018	32
2019	64
2020	79

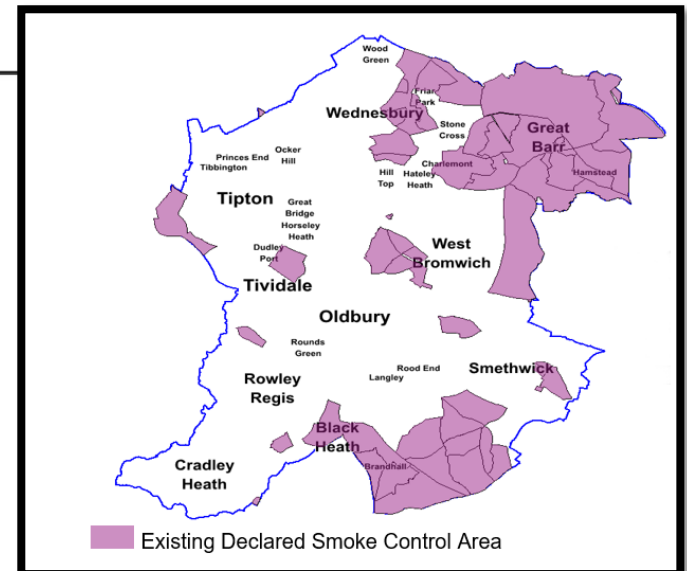
Air Quality Projects in 2022

- Establish a single boroughwide Smoke Control Area (SCA) for Sandwell. Formal consultation planned for March with a view to declaring this year.



What do you think about Sandwell Council's proposal to create a boroughwide smoke control area?

A smoke control area could help improve local air quality by reducing the amount of smoke that can be emitted from wood and coal burning stoves and fireplaces in homes and businesses.



- AQ Grant from DEFRA to improve and increase awareness of air quality and motivate behaviour change at 8 Sandwell faith centres.


COMMUNITY WORK TO REDUCE NO₂ FAITH CENTRE DEFRA GRANT PROJECT



For more information, view our [webpage](#)

December 2021 Newsletter

AIR POLLUTION THEME OF THE MONTH: WOOD BURNING STOVES




SANDWELL'S FAITH COMMUNITIES FOR CLEAN AIR

In this issue:

- > What is the guidance around wood burning stoves? What are the health risks?
- > Bespoke dashboard showing air quality data from outside the faith centres is live
- > How to consider the environment over this festive season

What is the guidance around wood burning stoves?

Wood burning stoves are becoming increasingly popular as people enjoy the aesthetics of them. However, what most people don't realise, is the health risks that are associated with the air pollution they produce. The infographic below shows just how much air pollution particulate matter (PM2.5) they produce. Even Defra approved stoves emit high levels of air pollution.



Relative PM_{2.5} emissions in your home from domestic heating methods

Very Dirty | Dirty | Clean

Relative emissions from different solid fuels

Coal	Wood	Woodchip	Wood pellet
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Very Dirty | Dirty | Clean

Relative emissions from different solid fuels

Oil	LPG	Electric	Biomass
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Very Dirty | Dirty | Clean

Monitors are installed

Monitors are installed at various faith centres to provide real-time air quality data. The dashboard shows the results of these monitors, which are part of a broader initiative to improve air quality in Sandwell.



The dashboard is available on the webpage showing this dashboard will be as soon as it is live. Meetings are currently being held to discuss their first steps in community engagement. An information Toolkit is also available on our Air Quality

The first stage of this project is the installation of monitors at the following locations:

- Oldbury
- Smethwick Jamia Masjid
- The Wesley Centre for All, Wednesbury

February 2022 Newsletter

AIR POLLUTION THEME OF THE MONTH: TREES & AIR POLLUTION



SANDWELL'S FAITH COMMUNITIES FOR CLEAN AIR

In this issue:

- > Invitation to plant trees at the Balaji Temple
- > Trees and air pollution- how do they help?
- > How to find the dashboard to view the data yourself!

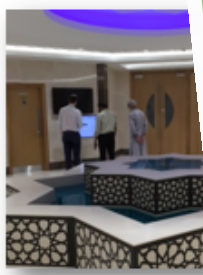
Join us in planting trees at the Balaji Temple

The [Shri Venkateswara](#) Balaji Temple in Tividale, Oldbury, have over 500 trees ready to plant that they received from the Woodland Trust community planting scheme. They would really welcome your help on **Wednesday 9th March 2022**, from 10am to 3pm to start planting them.

Trees are an integral part of reducing both air pollution and adapting to the effects of climate change.

Trees and Air Pollution FAQs

Q: Do trees help remove air pollution?
A: Yes, trees help remove air pollutants from the air, although some are better than others. Particles, odours and pollutant gases such as nitrogen oxides, ammonia and Sulphur dioxide will all settle on the leaves of a tree. Trees absorb some of these toxic chemicals through their stomata, or 'pores' effectively filtering these chemicals from the air or trap particles in their canopy. In general, the trees with bigger canopies whose leaves are large, rough, rugged and hairy are the best filters for particulate matter. This is because the hairs on their leaves act like



- Implementing the Black Country Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) Strategy

ON STREET RESIDENTIAL CHARGING SCHEME

- Successful £400,000 bid to 'Office for Zero Emission Vehicles' to deliver 37 'On-Street' public charge points.
- Delivery focussed in areas without off-street parking.
- Consultation with residents affected by installation completed in February 2022.
- Procurement for charge point operator to be completed by end of March.
- Installation complete by March 2023.
- Residents can suggest a charge point location



PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES AND CAMPAIGNS

- Net Zero Innovation Programme Community Climate Champions
 - Partnership with University of Birmingham, funded by LGA
- Working with the NHS Acute Trust and CCG
 - Go [Jauntly](#) app
 - Greener Clinical Care
- Wood burning stove [campaign](#)
- Clean Air Day, Great Big Green Week, Earth Day etc
- Healthy Sandwell



Impact of New Legislation on Local Authority AQ Management

The Environment Act 2021

- **New national objective levels for PM_{2.5}** will be set in the autumn 2022 – short and long term (15 year) targets.
- Councils and other relevant public bodies (e.g. NHS,) will be required to **work together** to tackle air quality issues.
- **Enforcement** of illegal smoke emissions from domestic burning which pollutes towns and cities will be easier.
- Council policies will be subject to more **regular review** as central government will be required to regularly updates its National Air Quality Strategy

How We Shape the Future Management of Local Air Quality in Sandwell

- Clear and effective communication strategies are required to initiate behaviour change in a variety of contexts: travel, infrastructure, home heating, business energy use.
- Promotional activities can assist with behaviour change but require leadership and positive views on walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing/car clubs.
- Duty under the Environment Act 2021 to collaborate with other designated public bodies including neighbouring authorities to tackle poor air quality
- Greater consideration to be given on the impact of planting schemes
- 3 Monthly AQAP steering group meetings - interested Members welcome to attend.