



Air quality strategy 2024

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The Strategy

DEFRA

Local authorities (district councils in two-tier areas) are expected to take preventative action to improve air quality through a local Air Quality Strategy.

Air pollution damages lives with harmful effects on human health, the economy and the environment. It is the largest environmental risk to the public's health, contributing to cardiovascular disease, lung cancer and respiratory diseases. It increases the chances of hospital admissions, as well as respiratory and cardiovascular symptoms which interfere with everyday life.



Annual Status Report 2024

Current air quality levels

The council must submit an annual report to DEFRA which presents the results of our air quality monitoring – the difference between the reporting and the strategy.

The Environmental Health Team regularly monitor levels of air quality across the borough, this is for both particulate matter (PM2.5) and nitrogen dioxide.

The council do not currently breach any of the air quality limit values and pollution levels are reducing every year.

The latest air quality annual status report is currently being reviewed by senior management.



New air quality targets

Actions within our air quality strategy

- We must meet the following targets:
- 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ annual mean concentration PM2.5 nationwide by 2040, with an interim target of 12 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ by January 2028 (we already meet this legal requirement).
- 35% reduction in average population exposure by 2040, with an interim target of a 22% reduction by January 2028, both compared to a 2018 baseline.
- Our 2018 baseline is 11 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ – the 2028 target will be 9 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ - the 2040 target will be 7 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.
- The 2023 monitoring data recorded a level of 7 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ – so we are already meeting the 2040 target – but we must continue to improve.



Smoke Control Areas

Proposed action within our air quality strategy

- Evaluate if it is beneficial to implement smoke control areas across the borough or parts of the borough.
- Requirements – resources for the evaluation, implementation (including grants for expenditure incurred in adaptation of fireplaces on old dwellings) and enforcement.
- Consideration of enforcement action in relation to the current energy crisis.



Next steps

- The review and approval of the air quality strategy and proposals that have been put forward.
- The implementation of proposed air quality reduction measures – these mainly consist of reduction of traffic emissions and congestion – reduction of burning.
- The Herts and Beds air quality network and collaboration with Hertfordshire County Council – Public Health Team – working together on our air quality strategies.



Questions?

