

Air Quality

As previously highlighted in the Accessibility chapter of this Plan, the whole of Coventry is designated as an Air Quality Management Area and has been since 2009. Emissions from road transport are the major source of pollution in Coventry, with emissions from industry also contributing. It must be recognised that transport requirements associated with the construction phase itself has a negative impact upon air quality. Under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995, the Council carries out annual review and assessment of air quality in the city, within the context of national air quality standards and objectives.

As a partner of the Low Emissions Towns and Cities programme (LETCP), the Council is working together with its West Midlands neighbours to improve air quality and reduce emissions from road transport. This is alongside the emerging 'West Midlands Metropolitan Transport Emissions Framework' which sets out transports role in tackling air quality issues and has proposed a range of policies. The intention is to do this by promoting the uptake of low emission fuels and technologies, establishing and sharing best practice policies, and developing various tools and resources. The objectives of the programme are to investigate and produce various regional strategies designed to improve air quality, with a view to meeting national air quality objectives.

Funded through the DEFRA Air Quality Grant, the aims of the LETCP and West Midlands Transport Emissions Framework are to:

- Improve air quality through the reductions in road transport emissions, and simultaneously reductions in carbon emissions;
- Establish best practice policies and measures for the West Midlands, creating transferable models for other towns and cities;
- Improve health; and
- Maximise opportunities for economic development through the transition to a green economy

Policy EM7: Air Quality

1. Major development schemes should promote a shift to the use of sustainable low emission transport (electric vehicles and vehicles that use biofuels) to minimise the impact of vehicle emissions on air quality. Development will be located where it is accessible to support the use of public transport, walking and cycling. All major development proposals should be suitably planned to design out any adverse impact on air quality and be in accordance with the West Midlands Transport Emissions Framework and associated policies.
2. Major Development proposals will require the submission of an air quality assessment, as they may lead to a significant deterioration in local air quality resulting in unacceptable effects on human health, local amenity or the natural environment. The air quality assessment should address:
 - a) The existing background levels of air quality;

- b) The cumulative background levels of air quality (related to the cumulative impact of developments in an area);
- c) The feasibility of any measures of mitigation that would prevent the national air quality objectives being exceeded or would reduce the extent of the air quality deterioration.

3. A Supplementary Planning Document will be developed to support this Policy.

To support the improvement in the city's air quality this policy should be applied in conjunction with the Low Emissions Strategy and Good Practice Guidance on Planning and Procurement for the West Midlands (2014) developed by the LETCP. All major developments will therefore be required to undertake full air quality assessments. Where appropriate exposure assessments will also apply to smaller developments in accordance with this guidance.

Exposure assessments will need to include an understanding of potential exposure to pollutants, as well as a proposal for mitigation measures such as:

- designing buildings to ensure local people are less exposed;
- green areas are incorporated into development to help create barriers to pollutants;
- that building layout and design prevents the creation of wind tunnels and canyons to help the dispersal of pollutants.
- This policy should be applied in conjunction with the Low Emissions Strategy and Good Practice Guidance on Planning and Procurement for the West Midlands.

Specific attention should be paid to location of sensitive developments, e.g. schools, hospitals, residential areas.

Detailed methodology for full air quality and exposure assessments should however be agreed with the Council. Mitigation and compensation measures, ensuring that all developments are sustainable from an air quality perspective, should be submitted with all proposals. Where appropriate, such measures may be secured through a legal agreement. Recommended measures for all types of developments can be found in the LETCP Air Quality Planning Guidance.