

## **Topic Paper 1 – Air Quality**

*This document is one of the supporting topic papers of Suffolk’s supplementary guidance “Section 106 Developers Guide to Infrastructure Contributions in Suffolk”. It is intended as a guide for landowners, developers and residents and sets out how Suffolk County Council will deal with planning applications where contributions towards air quality may be sought.*

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### **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Local authorities have a duty to review and assess local air quality under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 and to declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) where they consider that one or more of the pollutant objectives are unlikely to be met and there is relevant public exposure. Following declaration, an Air Quality Action Plan must be prepared detailing measures to address the problems and to try to improve local air quality for affected residents.
- 1.2 New developments proposed within or adjacent to an AQMA may directly lead to deterioration in air quality depending on the size and nature of development, which could either worsen pollution within the AQMA or lead to it being extended in area. New residential development within an AQMA will require special consideration at the design stage, to ensure that appropriate mitigation measures are provided. The designation of an AQMA does not mean that there will be no development allowed within the Area, but that greater weight must be given to the consideration and removal of the impacts of any proposed development on air quality.

### **2 AIR QUALITY AS A MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATION**

- 2.1 Air quality may be a material consideration and Developers should ensure that they have access to all relevant documents published by the Suffolk Local Authorities. These include Air Quality Review and Assessment Reports, AQMA designations and Air Quality Action Plans which are all available on the Local Authority websites. Reference should also be made to the Suffolk Supplementary Planning Guidance, “Air Quality Management and New Development 2011”, which provides detailed guidance on:
  - 2.1.1 When an air quality assessment is likely to be required,
  - 2.1.2 How to carry out an air quality assessment; and,
  - 2.1.3 Identifying the significance of impacts and mitigating and offsetting impacts.

### **3 THRESHOLDS**

- 3.1 The Local Authorities will seek to mitigate impacts from new developments that are detrimental to air quality and are in or adjacent to an AQMA or have a quantifiable impact on air quality in an AQMA by seeking contributions for measures to offset pollution effects. Please contact the relevant Local Authority for their threshold requirements. An example of the scale of development requiring mitigation consideration that is widely used is where schemes are greater than 10 dwellings or commercial schemes of more than 500m<sup>2</sup>.

#### **4 NEED ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

- 4.1 Contributions will only be sought where there is a demonstrable deterioration in air quality brought about by the new development. In assessing the need for developer contributions the Local Authority will take into account any development already permitted but not yet constructed that contributes to deterioration in air quality. Cumulative effects of phased development will also be taken into account with, wherever possible, the combined total impact of all phases taken considered, even if this is projected to be well into the future. Contributions would then be distributed across each phase.

#### **5 EXAMPLES OF MEASURES TO WHICH CONTRIBUTIONS MAY BE REQUESTED**

- 5.1 Development of Travel Plans.
- 5.2 Improvements in public transport, pedestrian and cycle routes.
- 5.3 Secure cycle parking.
- 5.4 New or improved traffic management measures and/or road infrastructure.
- 5.5 Measures to reduce congestion.
- 5.6 Management of car parking.
- 5.7 Contribution to Air Quality Action Plan or Strategy.
- 5.8 Contribution to Monitoring of Air Quality.
- 5.9 Measures during the construction of new development including dust control, site monitoring and plant emissions.
- 5.10 Woodland creation.