



ADUR DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Adur District Council
Air Quality Strategy 2026 - 2030

Contents

Executive Summary.....4

What is Air Pollution?.....6

 Health Impacts of Air Pollution.....7

Legislative and Policy Background..... 8

 Fine Particulate Matter - PM_{2.5}..... 8

 Environment Improvement Plan (EIP)..... 9

 Adur Local Plan.....9

 Policy 8: Shoreham Harbour Regeneration Area..... 10

 Policy 28: Transport and Connectivity..... 10

 Policy 34: Pollution and Contamination..... 10

 Shoreham Harbour Joint Area Action Plan (JAAP)..... 10

 Policy SH7: Natural Environment, Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure (Points 13-15)..... 11

 Policy CA7: Western Harbour Arm (Point 13)..... 11

 West Sussex County Council Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2030.. 11

 Creating Healthy and Sustainable Places – *A public health and sustainability framework for West Sussex*..... 12

 West Sussex County Council Climate Change Strategy 2020-2023..... 12

Air Quality in Adur..... 13

 Monitoring in Adur..... 13

 Environmental Permitting Regulations (EPR 2016)..... 14

Key Priorities..... 15

 Priority 1 – Transport (Parking, Public Transport, Procurement, Fleet)..... 15

 Priority 2 – Public Health and Wellbeing (Behaviour Change, Health Promotion, Modal Shift, Active Travel Campaigns)..... 16

 Priority 3 – Policy Guidance (Transport Plans and Air Quality Planning Guidance). 17

Air Quality Strategy Measures and Actions for Adur..... 17
Table 1 – Air Quality Strategy Measures and Actions..... 18
References.....22

Executive Summary

This Strategy has been prepared by the Environmental Health & Licensing Team of Adur District Council in consultation with the West Sussex County Council Transport and Public Health teams. It follows the draft Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) previously prepared by the Council in 2023.

The Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) rejected our 2023 draft AQAP and instructed us to revoke the Shoreham High Street Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). This was because our measurements had shown levels were consistently below the $40\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ objective for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2) and less than $36\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, or 10% below the objective, for 5 or more years. We had already decided to revoke the Southwick AQMA for the same reasons. So, both AQMA's were revoked in December 2023.

The Government's Air Quality Strategy (2023)¹ placed a new requirement on Local Authorities without AQMA's to produce a local Air Quality Strategy, outlining actions the Authority will take to improve air quality in the area.

Air quality monitoring carried out by the Council continues to show compliance with the air quality objectives for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2) and Particulate Matter (PM_{10} and $\text{PM}_{2.5}$). Therefore this air quality strategy for the District has been produced.

This document follows our draft AQAP which went out for public consultation in late 2023. It provides an overview of air quality across the Adur area and focuses on the work undertaken by the Council to support good air quality in the District, through a range of interventions.

This Strategy aims to tackle the main causes of poor air quality within Adur, namely NO_2 and $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ emissions from transport and $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ and PM_{10} emissions from the burning of solid fuels. We have developed actions that can be considered under 6 Measure Categories:

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-air-quality-strategy-for-england>

- Policy guidance and development control.
- Traffic management.
- Promoting travel alternatives.
- Public information.
- Promoting low emission transport.
- Transport planning and infrastructure.

The Council have identified a number of priorities to help achieve this aim:

- **Policy Guidance and Development Control** – Continue to implement and update existing strategies and policies such as the Air Quality Emissions Mitigation Guidance for Sussex and Adur Local Plan policies.
- **Improvements to Traffic Management** – Improvements to road and roundabout networks, traffic light and pelican crossing optimisation.
- **Active Travel, Public Transport and Low Emission Vehicles** - Encouraging the uptake of alternatives to cars through improving cycling and walking opportunities, supporting sustainable public transport, car clubs and travel plans, encouraging the uptake of electric vehicles, improving the electric vehicle charging infrastructure and other initiatives.
- **Public Information and Behavioural Change Campaigns** - Providing information on the causes and implications of poor air quality. Encouraging changing travel patterns with reduction of single occupancy car trips, promotion of clean air days, and promoting the switch to sustainable options.
- **ADC, Bus and Taxi Vehicle Fleet** – Procuring low emission vehicles for council owned fleet, collaboration with bus operators to introduce ultra-low emission vehicle into bus fleet, and introducing EV taxi hubs.

In this strategy we (Adur District Council including working in partnership with West Sussex County Council) outline how we plan to effectively tackle air quality issues within our control. However, we recognise that there are a large number of air quality policy areas that are outside of our influence (such as vehicle emissions standards agreed in Europe), but for which we may have useful evidence, and so we will continue to work with regional and central government on policies and issues beyond Adur District Council's direct influence.

We will continue to regulate polluting industries and businesses in our District, via the environmental permitting regime, which includes regular inspections and risk assessments of those premises.

The council will continue to monitor air pollution within the District, produce its Annual Status Report (ASR) on air quality and work collaboratively with all partners to raise awareness and encourage behaviour change with our residents.

What is Air Pollution?

Air pollution is the contamination of the air around us, caused when natural and manmade particles and gases are released into the atmosphere which can impact our health and the natural environment. Air pollution is primarily caused by the combustion of fossil fuels, for example in power generation, industrial processes, shipping, domestic heating and road vehicles.

Air quality in the UK has improved significantly in recent decades with a decrease in all major air pollutants. Pollution levels in Adur have remained stable over the last five years with only small fluctuations and a general downwards trend. However, air pollution continues to be the biggest environmental risk to human health, disproportionately affecting those who are already vulnerable. The main pollutants of concern in Adur are nitrogen dioxide and particulates. The main local source of pollution is traffic. Once pollution is released into the air it is mainly the weather and local topography that dictate the extent to which it will cause an impact. During wet or windy conditions pollution concentrations usually remain low, either blown away or removed from the air by rain. During still weather pollution can build up to harmful levels.

Another contributor to poor local air quality is the burning of domestic solid fuels in open fires and wood burners, particularly in urban areas. Domestic burning of solid fuels accounted for 20% of PM_{2.5} in 2023. In recent years, most emissions from domestic combustion came from households burning wood indoors.²

² Defra, Emissions of air pollutants in the UK – Particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}). Updated March 2025

Health Impacts of Air Pollution

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. Additionally, air pollution particularly affects the most vulnerable in society: children and older people, and those with heart and lung conditions. There is also often a strong correlation with equalities issues, because areas with poor air quality are also often the less affluent areas^{3,4}.

There are significant healthcare and social care costs for diseases which have a strong association with air pollution such as coronary heart disease, stroke, lung cancer and childhood asthma.

- Potential short-term impacts: relatively mild symptoms such as irritation of the airways, sore throat, and headaches, to severe impacts such as asthma and heart attacks.
- Potential long-term impacts: reduced lung function in children, cardiovascular disease, cancer, stroke, respiratory illness such as asthma, and early death

The mortality burden of the air pollution mixture (based on both particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂)) in the UK, is equivalent to 29,000 to 43,000 deaths at typical ages⁵. Between 2017 and 2025, the total cost to the NHS and social care of air pollution for where there is more robust evidence for an association, is estimated to be £1.60 billion for PM_{2.5} and NO₂ combined increasing to £5.56 billion if we include other diseases for which there is currently less robust evidence for an association.⁶

Adur District Council is committed to reducing the exposure of people in Adur to poor air quality in order to improve health.

³ Environmental equity, air quality, socioeconomic status and respiratory health, 2010

⁴ Air quality and social deprivation in the UK: an environmental inequalities analysis, 2006

⁵ Defra. Air quality appraisal: damage cost guidance. Updated 2 March 2023

⁶ Public Health England: Estimation of costs to the NHS and social care due to the health impacts of air pollution. May 2018

Legislative and Policy Background

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) is responsible for ensuring that national health-based objective limits are not exceeded. DEFRA published an Air Quality Strategy: framework for local authority delivery in 2023, aimed at achieving long-term air quality goals, including new targets for fine particulate matter PM_{2.5} and to reduce levels of roadside Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂). The framework enables and supports local authorities to deliver for their communities and contribute to the statutory requirements of the Environment Act 1995 (as amended by the Environment Act 2021), which requires local authorities to assess and report annually on air quality in their area. The reports must assess whether the statutory health-based objectives are being met. Where the objectives are not being met a Local Authority must declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and produce an Air Quality Action Plan to improve local air quality. If the objectives are being met, then a local Air Quality Strategy must be produced. Adur does not currently have any AQMA's and is therefore required to produce this Air Quality Strategy.

Fine Particulate Matter - PM_{2.5}

Besides NO₂, there is an increasing focus on fine particulate matter. PM_{2.5} is a pollutant of concern meaning particulate matter which is 2.5 microns or less in diameter. The UK has a national emission reduction commitment for PM_{2.5}. The Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) Policy Guidance suggests that 'Local Authorities are expected to work towards reducing emissions and concentrations of PM_{2.5} in their area as practicable.'

The Environment Act 2021 established a legally binding duty on government to bring forward two new air quality targets. The Environmental Targets (Fine Particulate Matter) (England) Regulations 2023 set the two PM_{2.5} targets into law. The targets are:

- Annual mean concentration target ('concentration target') – a target of 10 micrograms per cubic metre (µg m⁻³) or less to be met across England by December 2040.

- Population exposure reduction target ('exposure reduction target') – a 35% reduction in population exposure by December 2040 compared to a base year of 2018.

Environment Improvement Plan (EIP)

The revised Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) was published in December 2025 and sets out an ambitious five-year roadmap to tackle the nature and climate crisis, improve public health and support sustainable growth. The EIP sets new interim targets to keep the government on track to meet the long-term statutory Environment Act 2021 targets above.

Under new interim targets:

- By December 2030, the highest annual mean concentration for PM_{2.5} in the most recent calendar year must not exceed 10 µg m⁻³. The previous target was 12 µg m⁻³ by January 2028.
- A population exposure reduction target to PM_{2.5} of 30% compared to 2018, by December 2030. This compares to the previous target of 22% by 2028.

Adur Local Plan

The Adur Local Plan⁷ details the vision and strategy for the future of Adur. The local plan provides clear guidance on how new developments can address the challenges faced, opportunities for new development and seeks a balance between safeguarding natural assets and meeting needs for development.

Two of the key issues for the local plan includes “The need to address road congestion and related pollution – air and noise – whilst improving the existing transport network and facilitating the development of sustainable transport measures” and “The need to improve health and wellbeing”.

The policies below from the Adur Local Plan are all relevant to air quality.

⁷ <https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/planning-policy/adur/>

Policy 8: Shoreham Harbour Regeneration Area

"All new development proposals must take into account contaminated land, local noise and air quality impacts and improvements should be sought wherever possible."

Policy 28: Transport and Connectivity

In order to secure significant improvements to transport and mobility in Adur, new development should:

- *"Ensure new development contributes to the mitigation of air pollution, particularly in Air Quality Management Areas. Air quality assessments may be required. Where practical, new development should be located and designed to incorporate facilities for electric vehicle charging points, thereby extending the current network."*

Policy 34: Pollution and Contamination

"Development should not result in pollution or hazards which prejudice the health and safety of the local community and the environment, including nature conservation interests and the water environment."

New development in Adur will be located in areas most suitable to the use of that development to avoid risks from noise, air, odour or light pollution. Mitigation measures will need to be implemented for developments that could increase levels of pollution or have a negative impact on drinking water supplies in Adur. Where there are significant levels of increased pollution that cannot be mitigated, development will be refused. Where appropriate, air quality assessments and/or noise assessments will be required in conjunction with development proposals."

Shoreham Harbour Joint Area Action Plan (JAAP)

The JAAP was adopted by three local authorities in October 2019. The JAAP sets the strategic development and land-use priorities for the Shoreham Harbour Regeneration Area up to 2032 and contains the policies against which development management decisions within that area will be made.

The policies below from the JAAP are all relevant to air quality.

Policy SH7: Natural Environment, Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure (Points 13-15)

13 - *“Air quality impacts should be considered at an early stage in the design process to ensure that creating new exposure to poor air quality is avoided. Development proposals must be accompanied by an assessment of the air quality impacts for existing and future occupants. This assessment must have regard to the cumulative impacts of committed and planned development on air quality.*

14 - *Development within or adjacent to an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), or that is likely to have an impact on an AQMA, will be required to provide a contribution towards implementing Air Quality Action Plan objectives, such as sustainable transport improvements.*

15 - *Proposals will be required to demonstrate that appropriate mitigation measures are introduced to ensure that new and existing residents are not exposed to poor air quality.”*

Policy CA7: Western Harbour Arm (Point 13)

“Developments should be set back sufficiently from the A259 corridor in agreement with the highways and planning authorities, to provide space for a high-quality segregated cycle route which provides stepped separation from road vehicles and pedestrian facilities, to deliver green infrastructure improvements, and to prevent a canyoning effect to ensure that residents are protected from noise and air quality impacts.”

West Sussex County Council Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2030

This strategy sets out West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board’s overarching plan for improving health and wellbeing for residents and communities and reducing health inequalities in the county. More information can be found at:

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/publications-policies-and-reports/social-care-and-health-policy-and-reports/joint-local-health-and-wellbeing-strategy-2025-to-2030/>

Creating Healthy and Sustainable Places – *A public health and sustainability framework for West Sussex*

This framework provides public health guidance to decision makers about creating healthy and sustainable places and communities in West Sussex. The vision includes six fundamental characteristics of a healthy and sustainable place in West Sussex.

- Social cohesion and participation
- Healthy Housing
- Resilient built public infrastructure and services
- Safe and sustainable travel options
- Prosperous and sustainable economy and
- Thriving and accessible natural environments

Section 3 of this framework focuses on air quality as a consideration for a healthy development. A healthy development should deliver improvements to air quality by:

- Implementing measures to improve air quality
- Facilitating sustainable modes of transport, use of low emission vehicles e.g. electric vehicles and enable active travel
- Reducing the need to travel, especially by car
- Locating key facilities, services and vulnerable communities away from traffic hotspots
- Addressing mitigation from the outset, with a focus on design-led solutions.

West Sussex County Council Climate Change Strategy 2020-2023

The vision for this strategy is: *“In 2030, West Sussex County Council is carbon neutral and climate resilient, using our limited resources wisely. West Sussex County Council has enabled positive actions and behaviours across our county to mitigate and adapt to climate change.”*

Page 7 of this strategy lists benefits of embracing the challenge that climate change poses. Two of which mention improved air quality:

- Increased health and wellbeing – ... with fewer cars on the roads, and more opportunities to walk or cycle, communities may see cleaner air, reduced noise pollution and experience improved health and wellbeing.
- Improved air quality - reducing carbon emissions from transport will require us to think differently about how we interact and travel. Reducing transport by petrol and diesel vehicles will not only contribute to carbon reductions but will also reduce the amount of harmful nitrogen oxide emissions, the main source of which is vehicle emissions.

Air Quality in Adur

Monitoring in Adur

The national air quality objectives apply at locations outside buildings where members of the public are regularly present and might reasonably be expected to be exposed to pollutant concentrations over the relevant averaging period. Usually, this means residential properties, schools, care homes etc. for long-term pollutant objectives and high streets for short-term objectives.

Our monitoring has shown concentrations of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) have been decreasing over recent years, with all sites meeting the national objectives. As a result, in late 2023, we revoked both our Air Quality Management Areas. Further

details can be found in our Annual Status Reports for air quality on the Council's website⁸.

Measured concentrations of Particulate Matter PM_{2.5} in Shoreham are currently below the limit value and also the 10µg/m³ long term National Air Quality Strategy Objective.

Monitoring takes place using both real-time and low cost monitoring techniques. Our real time monitoring station is in Shoreham High Street and we have a monitoring network of diffusion tubes located throughout the District. The locations of these tubes are reviewed annually to ensure the network is up to date and targeted in relevant locations. We also have a low cost sensor collocated with the continuous analyser in Shoreham High Street, part of the Brighton & Hove and Sussex Real time Sensor Network.⁹

It is noted that there is a significant amount of development taking place within the District, particularly to the west of the Airport and to the east along Shoreham Harbour. Balancing the demand for development with the need to improve air quality brings challenges and the impact on air quality of any new development will be addressed through the planning system.

It is recognised that the burning of domestic solid fuels in open fires and wood burners impacts local air quality. The increase in popularity of wood burners as a secondary source of heating in urban areas is exacerbating this.

Adur District Council are looking to improve PM_{2.5} concentrations within Adur. This includes the consideration of Smoke Control Areas, which could not only help improve PM_{2.5} concentrations, but also raise awareness about the health effects of emissions.

Adur District Council is partnered with the Sussex Air Quality Partnership. Sussex Air is made up of all Local Authorities within Sussex providing a wide monitoring network, helping Local Authorities meet statutory obligations to assess and report on

⁸ <https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/environmental-health/pollution/air-quality-and-pollution/what-is-air-pollution/>

⁹ <https://portal.earthsense.co.uk/BrightonHoveandSussexPublic/>

local air quality, providing advice on reducing air pollutants and minimising exposure to pollutants, as well as developing and delivering projects to improve local air quality.

Environmental Permitting Regulations (EPR 2016)

Certain industrial processes and businesses are required to apply to the Council for a permit under this legislation. The Council currently permits a number of installations across the District. All the permits are for Part B activities and are deemed low risk. The installations are inspected periodically by the Environmental Protection Team to ensure that they are complying with the conditions set out in their permit. These conditions set out appropriate steps to mitigate or control their pollution emissions.

Details of installations in Adur can be found at:

<https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/environmental-health/pollution/air-quality-and-pollution/environmental-permits/>

In addition, the Environment Agency permits two installations in Adur. Details of these can be found using their Public Registers Online search at:

<https://environment.data.gov.uk/public-register/view/index>

Key Priorities

Overall, the main priority of this Air Quality Strategy is to improve concentrations of NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} to ensure they are below their respective Air Quality Objectives. We have defined the following areas for action.

Priority 1 – Transport (Parking, Public Transport, Procurement, Fleet)

- The Council is able to influence this via areas of direct control, such as taxi licensing, the composition of its own fleet, encouraging the use of and facilitating electric charging points to encourage electric vehicle uptake and improvements of cycle parking and facilities.
- Working with WSCC and other local authority partners to progress the roll out of EV charging infrastructure across the District.

- The Council will look to improve our own vehicle fleet and operations in order to reduce harmful emissions, whilst increasing efficiency.
- We will collaborate with bus operators to introduce ultra-low emission vehicles into the bus fleet.
- Working with WSCC on matters of traffic management and public transport.
- Working with WSCC to install/review anti-idling signs at known hotspots such as at level crossings and the introduction of anti-idling signage at taxi ranks and delivery drop off points.
- We will work with relevant partners to develop car clubs in Adur, particularly in new developments through the planning system.

Priority 2 – Public Health and Wellbeing (Behaviour Change, Health Promotion, Modal Shift, Active Travel Campaigns)

- The Council will work with WSCC and other partners and community groups to develop designs, consultations and business cases for investment in walking and cycling infrastructure on key routes across the District, in line with the priorities identified within the Adur and Worthing Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.
- Consider maximising the co-benefits for residents by aligning to wider public health priorities for the population – [West Sussex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2026-2030](#) & [Creating Healthy and Sustainable Places: A Framework for West Sussex](#).
- Consider the contribution of air pollution to health inequalities and consider the linkages to available evidence bases.
- The Council will look at undertaking behavioural change campaigns to reduce single occupancy car trips and switch to more sustainable options. Social Media campaigns at schools, workplaces and communities.

- The Council will promote clean air days via its website and social media channels.

Priority 3 – Policy Guidance (Transport Plans and Air Quality Planning Guidance)

- Adur will continue to update and keep the local plan policies and the Air Quality Emissions Mitigation Guidance for Sussex documents live and embedded into the planning process.
- Environmental Health will work closely with Planners and other parties to ensure that new developments do not exacerbate any areas of existing poor air quality and provide appropriate mitigation measures where this is unavoidable.
- The Council will continue to ensure that where required, air quality assessments, emissions mitigation assessments, travel plans, and strategic routing of HGV's is undertaken.
- The Council will respond to complaints of odour, smoke or dust nuisance using investigation and enforcement powers through Environmental Protection legislation.
- The Council will ensure those aspects of the Adur & Worthing Sustainability Framework that align with these actions assist in the delivery of this strategy.

Air Quality Strategy Measures and Actions for Adur

The table below lists the measures for Adur. The Council can deliver some of these measures on their own, but others require involvement from multiple agencies and the Council will use its influence to bring about change.

Table 1 – Air Quality Strategy Measures and Actions

Measure No.	Measure	Organisations Involved	Measure Status	Action
1	Air Quality Planning Guidance	ADC, Sussex Air/WSCC	Implementation	Continue to implement Local Plan and Air Quality Emissions Mitigation Guidance. Including requiring air quality assessments, emissions mitigation assessments where appropriate mitigation measures are provided by developers, support Council's monitoring, strategic routing of HGVs, improving transport network infrastructure surrounding new developments. Installation and use of low carbon energy options/boilers
2	Traffic Management/Road/Junction improvements and Anti Idling	WSCC/ADC/WBC	Planning	Work with WSCC on road improvements Install/Review anti-idling signs at Level crossings in the District Review of bus stops within Adur, traffic signage, routing and car park signposting. Anti-idling campaigns particularly targeted at commercial businesses, taxi ranks and delivery drop off points within Adur
3	Active Travel Campaign	ADC/WSCC/Sussex-air	Planning	Improve cycle parking facilities, cycle and scooter rental schemes, signage and providing new cycle and pedestrianised routes in line with Adur and Worthing Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

Measure No.	Measure	Organisations Involved	Measure Status	Action
				<p>Work with WSCC to promote sustainable transport through employer-based / school travel plans to encourage active travel including walking to school incentives</p> <p>Continuation of School streets</p> <p>Encourage Council staff to use active travel modes</p>
4	Public Health Information based campaigns and ongoing monitoring	ADC/WSCC/Sussex-air	Implementation	Promote good practices and participate in national campaigns such as Clean Air Day/Night, good indoor air quality, etc
5	Behavioural Change Campaign	ADC//WSCC/Sussex-air	Planning	Work with WSCC on educational behaviour change campaigns at schools and workplaces to reduce single occupancy car trips and promote the switch to sustainable alternatives. Continue to promote District wide clean air days and staff homeworking where possible
6	Adur Car Club	ADC/WSCC	Implementation	Encouragement of Car Clubs as well as Car Sharing schemes
7	Domestic emissions reduction campaigns focused on PM_{2.5}	ADC//Sussex-air	Implementation	<p>Investigate the introduction of Smoke Control Areas in Adur.</p> <p>Raise awareness of the health and environmental impacts of burning solid fuels</p>
8	Ultra Low/Zero Emission Vehicle Encouragement	ADC//WSCC	Implementation	Continue to support the procurement of ultra-low or zero emission vehicles for council owned fleets.

Measure No.	Measure	Organisations Involved	Measure Status	Action
				Work with WSCC and other District and Boroughs to continue the rollout of installing EV charge points on council land.
9	Bus and Taxi fleet improvements	ADC/ /WSCC/Sussex-air/bus operators	Implementation	Collaborate with bus operators to introduce ultra-low emission vehicles into the bus fleet. Investigate licence fees to encourage EV uptake
10	Public Transport Encouragement	WSCC/ADC/public transport operators	Planning	Work with WSCC, bus and rail industry partners in the improvement and promotion of services, as well as access to rail stations and bus stops, with the aim to improve to public transport infrastructure, frequency of buses, routes and ways to incentivise usage, including rail travel. The Council will look to provide information to tourists using public transport to travel to the District. This also links to the West Sussex Bus Service Improvement Plan
11	Address Poor Air Quality	ADC	Implementation	Respond and investigate complaints relating to poor air quality such as odour, smoke and dust. Continue to permit and inspect industrial installations in accordance with the Environmental Permitting Regulations.
12	Monitor and report on air quality	ADC	Implementation	Commitment to ongoing measurements of AQ pollutants within Adur and review the instrumentation and sites annually.

Measure No.	Measure	Organisations Involved	Measure Status	Action
				Submit the Annual Status Report to Defra for their approval and once approved, publish it on the Council's website.

References

- Air Quality Strategy - Framework for local authority delivery. Available at:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1180706/Air_Quality_Strategy_Web.pdf
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- West Sussex Bus Service Improvement Plan
https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/16701/ws_bus_service_improvement_plan.pdf
- Adur and Worthing Councils Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan
<https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/media/Media.158651.smxx.pdf>
- Air Quality and Emission Mitigation Guidance for Sussex (2021)
<https://www.sussex-air.net/>