

Shropshire Health and Wellbeing Board meeting 03.03.22
Agenda item 5. Public Question

Question received from Shrewsbury Friends of the Earth

1) Would the Health and Wellbeing Board adopt a proactive stance and push Shropshire Council to do more on air quality improvements and ask for regular updates and review on progress?

In order for the reasons we are asking a question to be understood, it is necessary to include some background information.

As far as we can tell, in the last 3 years there are only two mentions of air quality in the agendas available for the board, dating back to January 2019. This is despite the recognition that air quality has an impact on health and wellbeing and that the HWBB strategy at the time recognised this.

The first is this extract from the minutes of the Health and Wellbeing Board 16th Jan 2020 Healthy Lives Update RESOLVED: B. That the ongoing **prioritisation** and work happening which includes; Smoking in Pregnancy, Social Prescribing, Domestic Abuse, Dementia, Alcohol, Mental Health - wellbeing support, suicide prevention, County Lines and **Air Quality**, be recognised. The second mention was in the agenda item from Sept 2021 where the SC officer was proposing action at the Shrewsbury Station AQMA.

The latest HWBB strategy 2022-27, page 11, notes the impact of air quality on health and yet there is no mention of it in the report on it produced for this meeting, it was therefore not deemed to require 'greater specific reference'.

Air Quality has been illegally high in Shrewsbury and Bridgnorth since 2010. All the annual reports on air quality have recognised the effect on health and that **any** pollution is bad for health outcomes, even when it is below legal limits. SC Air Quality Reports since 2017 have proposed consultation. The one SC proposed action in the September meeting said that consultation had taken place, yet the action was not endorsed and deferred for more consultation without a deadline.

We are now into March, there is no item on the agenda and seemingly no action or report is available.

Response from Les Purglove, Assistant Director of Health, Environmental Protection & Healthy Place and Rachel Robinson, Director of Public Health

It is correct to say that there are two very localised areas in Shrewsbury and Bridgnorth that have been affected by levels of Nitrogen Dioxide above the nationally set "objective" levels for some years.

The regulations in force during this period state that Councils should be "working towards" taking measures to reduce levels. It is also true to say that there is no completely safe level of this pollutant, but its presence is unfortunately a by-product of modern society with all of the activities such as the use of motor vehicles that is accepted.

The action you are referring to as being consulted upon was the idea of a trial lane closure within the AQMA (Air Quality Management Areas) in Shrewsbury. The latest position with this is that this potential intervention along with various other ideas will be looked at through the development of an options appraisal as part of the creation of new Air Quality Action Plans (AQAPs) covering both AQMA's. If the intervention of a lane closure is modelled as potentially being worthwhile and appears in the AQAP, then consultation could then take place.

The main purpose of the report for the 2022-27 Joint Shropshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy which is referred to, is to highlight key changes/additions to the final strategy following the consultation process. As air quality remained, this is why it was not specifically referenced. It certainly merits significance and the report which came to the 8 July Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) meeting stated; *Other focus priorities remain as agreed at the 2019 workshop: Social Prescribing, Domestic Abuse, County Lines, Alcohol, Smoking in Pregnancy, Food Insecurity, Suicide Prevention, Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) on Roads and Air Quality. Although these are listed, they should not be considered as 'separate' priorities and will form part of the key and strategic priorities above.*

The next stage for the Strategy is implementation. HWBB forward agenda planning will ensure papers relating to the different priorities, which includes air quality, will be brought to the meetings to provide updates and review progress.

Response from Shropshire Health & Wellbeing Board

The Board agrees it will adopt a more proactive stance, and Air Quality will be on the agenda for the next meeting which will be in May or July.