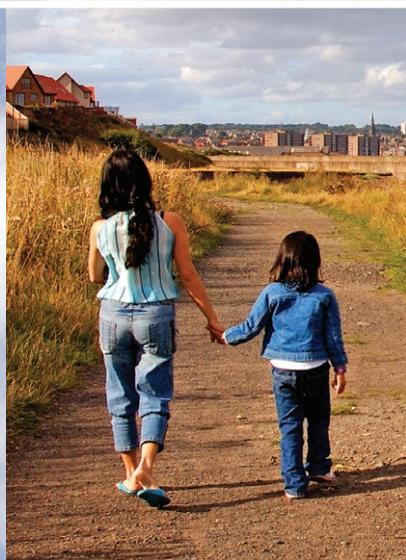
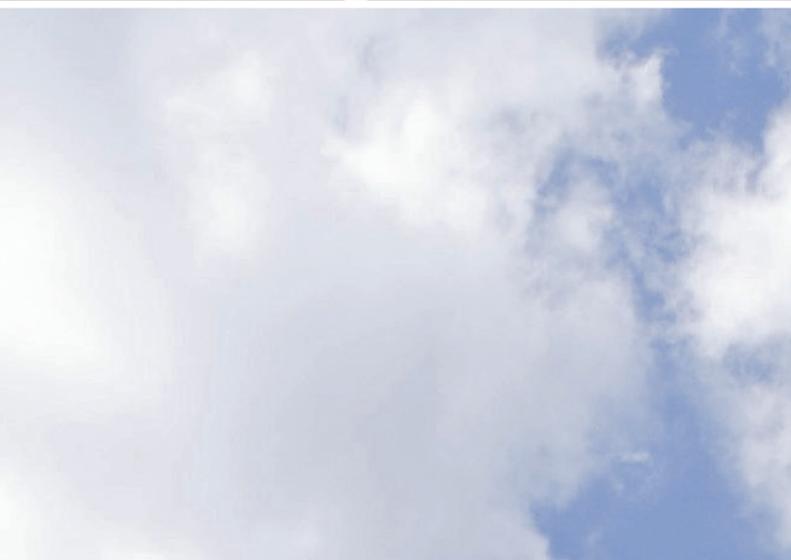


Fife Air Quality Development Guidelines



1. Introduction

Good air quality is essential for our health. People have a right to expect that the air they breathe will not harm them.

Fife's air quality is generally good and it is important to keep it that way.

Many factors can affect air quality, for example road traffic, industrial emissions, mining and quarrying (including opencast), energy production and agricultural activities. In Fife, the biggest impact on local air quality is caused by emissions from road traffic.

Part IV of the Environmental Act 1995: Local Air Quality Management requires local authorities to manage local air quality. As part of this management the planning process can be used to deliver necessary improvements to the local air quality – through planning applications, the Development Management process can help make sure a development does not lead to an unacceptable decline in air quality.

This guide provides examples where Air Quality Impact Assessments would be required to support a development and offers advice on how they should be undertaken.

It is the responsibility of the developer to provide the appropriate air quality information to allow Fife Council to make a planning decision. The purpose of this guidance is to assist developers in providing the necessary information where air quality is a material planning decision.

2. Air quality and the planning process

Air quality becomes a material planning consideration in assessing applications for planning permission when the new land use may result in air quality issues. For example, this can be through

- direct impact, i.e. as a result of the particular business or land use proposed, for example mining or quarrying activities.
- cumulative impact, i.e. as a result of a number of developments which when added together would have a significant effect on air quality.
- indirect impacts, e.g. as a result of traffic generated by the proposed land use.

It will also be a material consideration when the proposed land use would:

- be affected by existing or potential sources of air pollution
- conflict with any objectives of an approved Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) Action Plan which has a land use aspect. Such objectives can be compromised when proposals would cause significant levels of traffic, parking provision or servicing which would impact upon a local area already sensitive to air quality issues.
- result in pollutant levels rising to a level where it is necessary to designate a new AQMA.

If you think that your proposals may have an impact on air quality you are advised to contact Fife Council as soon as possible. We can help you to identify and mitigate or compensate for any impacts your proposal may have on air quality.

Please note: for applications subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (listed in Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations 2011), air quality impacts need to be addressed in all cases. Some industrial and commercial activities will also need a permit to operate – you should apply to the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) for these permits.

Planning applications for proposals which are considered to impact on or be affected by air quality issues need to be supported by a statement which details:

- what actions have been considered to reduce the impact of the proposal on air quality, and
- what modifications have been made to the proposal to address air quality issues.

It may be necessary for you to arrange for an Air Quality Impact Assessment to be undertaken to support your application. This part of the process normally only applies to applications for major developments.

The application will be assessed taking into account the above statement and all other relevant information. A review of all aspects of your proposal will result in one of the following outcomes:

1. further information required – you will be provided with details of the additional information that is required to process your application.
2. approval of application – recommendations for approval may include the use of planning conditions or occasionally entering into a planning agreement under Section 75 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.
3. refusal of application.

3. When is an air quality impact assessment needed?

The list below provides examples of when an air quality impact assessment may be required. It should be noted that this list is not exhaustive.

- Proposals that will cause or increase traffic congestion.
- Proposals that will give rise to a significant increase in traffic volumes and/or decrease in

traffic flow. Typically a significant increase in traffic volume is 10% or greater (for AQMAs 5%). This will usually only apply to a road with more than 10,000 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) (5,000 if the road is narrow and congested).

- Proposals that may significantly change the composition of traffic (e.g. increase the number of HDVs by 200 movements or more per day or a proposed bus station which will increase the proportion of buses).
- Proposals that include new parking (e.g. this could be >100 spaces outside an AQMA or 50 inside). Whether the parking is short or long-term should also be considered, this may affect traffic flow in and out of the car park. This should include proposals for new bus and lorry parks.
- Introduction of new exposure close to existing sources of air pollutants, including road traffic, industrial operations, agricultural operations etc. (e.g. building new houses next to a busy road).
- Proposals that include biomass boilers or biomass-fuelled CHP plant.
- Potential impacts from construction on nearby receptors (e.g. residential areas which may be exposed to dust emissions).
- Large, long-term construction sites with large HGV flows (>200 movements per day) over a year or more.

Please note: Professional judgement is needed when deciding if an air quality assessment is necessary – it is not possible to apply an exact and precise set of standard criteria to all development control situations. For this reason, you should contact the Council before commissioning an Air Quality Impact Assessment.

4. What should an air quality impact assessment contain?

While there is no set method for undertaking an air quality impact assessment, there are several key pieces of information that must be included and criteria met:

- The methods used must be appropriate to the location, scale and type of development.
- The baseline (current or background level) should be compared to the projected situation of when the development is complete.
- The air quality assessment must take account of any cumulative impacts the development will have on local air quality.
- The assessment should include a comparison of the total levels of the relevant pollutants, both with and without the proposed development. Those findings should then be compared with the relevant statutory air quality objectives.

Reports that fail to include this information will be returned. This will

result in a delay to your application being processed.

When considering air quality issues associated with your proposals, you may wish to employ a specialist Air Quality Consultancy service. Care should be taken when appointing a consultant – you should be satisfied that your consultant fully understands and can meet the requirements of an appropriate air quality assessment. While Fife Council cannot recommend consultants, reference can be made to the relevant trade directories of the Ends Directory www.endsdirectory.com

Further information about air quality impact assessments and planning issues can be found in DEFRA's Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance LAQM.TG (09) and EPUK's Development Control: Planning for Air Quality (2010 Update).

Information relating to local air quality management matters can also be found on our website www.fifedirect.org.uk/airquality

Useful contacts

Enterprise & Protective Services
Development Management
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Enterprise & Protective Services
Environmental Strategy Team
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Glenrothes
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The Castle Business Park
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