

## AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN- CONSULTATION SUMMARY AND REQUEST TO ADOPT

Cabinet - 21 April 2022

**Report of:** Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer Planning and Regulatory Services

**Status:** For Decision

**Also considered by:**

- Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee - 19 April 2022
- Council - 26 April 2022

**Key Decision:** No

This report supports the Key Aim of: Green Environment -Priority to maintain a clean local environment

**Executive Summary:** This report summarises the outcome of the public consultation of the Air Quality Action Plan 2022-2027. As a result of the consultation, a number of changes to the draft AQAP are proposed (summarised within this report).

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr. Margot McArthur

**Contact Officer:** Nick Chapman, Ext. 7167

**Recommendation to Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee**

- To note the results of the statutory consultation
- To note the proposed changes made to the draft Air Quality Action Plan following consultation.
- The decisions set out in paragraphs (a) - (c) below be recommended to Cabinet

**Recommendation to Cabinet**

- To note the results of the statutory consultation
- To note the proposed changes made to the draft Air Quality Action Plan following consultation.
- To recommend to Council to support the adoption of the Air Quality Action Plan

## Recommendation to Council

- (a) To note the results of the statutory consultation
- (b) To note the proposed changes made to the draft Air Quality Action Plan following consultation.
- (c) To support the adoption of the Air Quality Action Plan and its publication
- (d) To provide delegated authority to the Environmental Health Manager to agree future amendments and changes to the Air Quality Action Plan in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder to ensure it remains relevant and effective for its stated duration.

**Reason for recommendation:** The District Council has undertaken an appropriate consultation on the proposals within its Draft Air Quality Action Plan and has made appropriate amendments to reflect comments made by stakeholders. The District Council is required to formally adopt an Air Quality Action Plan and it is considered beneficially for this to be done as soon as practicably possible. The AQAP is a working document and consequently it is anticipated that amendments, changes and updates will be required throughout its duration to ensure it remains relevant and up to date. It is considered appropriate for these technical changes to be made by the Environmental Health Manager in conjunction with the relevant portfolio holder.

## Introduction and Background

- 1 Sevenoaks District Council is required to produce an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) which details measures it intends to take to mitigate air pollution within its designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) over the next 5 years
- 2 A draft version of the Air Quality Action Plan was brought before Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee, Cabinet and Council in January and February 2022.
- 3 Between 24 February and 24 March 2022, the District Council undertook a public consultation of the draft action plan. This consultation was hosted on the District Council's website and stakeholders were encouraged to complete an online survey, which collected their views. Offline responses were also accepted.
- 4 The District Council wrote out to following partners and stakeholders requesting that they comment on the AQAP:
  - DEFRA
  - Kent County Council
  - Environment Agency

- District Councillors
  - Parish Councils
  - Neighbouring Authorities
  - Highways England
  - Local Chambers of Commerce
- 5 Three virtual 'drop-in' sessions were held for interested stakeholders on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2021:
- 10:00 to 11:00- Businesses
  - 11:30 to 12:30- Parish Councils
  - 13:00 to 14:00- Members of the public
- 6 Throughout the consultation period, social media (Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn) was used to promote the consultation including the use of paid promotion.
- Press release issued on 24/02/2022 to all media contacts (91 total)
  - Facebook post on 24/02/2022 reached 2261 people and achieved 62 engagements
  - Twitter post on 24/02/2022 reached 433 people and achieved 9 engagements
  - LinkedIn post on 08/03/2022 reached 297 people
  - Twitter post on 10/03/2022 reached 345 people and achieved 9 engagements
  - Facebook post on 19/03/2022 reached 78 people and achieved 7 engagements (comments likes and shares)
  - Twitter post on 19/03/2022 reached 338 people and achieved 2 engagements
  - LinkedIn post by EHM on 19/03/2022 reached 515 people and achieved 14 engagements
  - Instagram post on 21/03/2022 reached 187 people
  - Facebook post on 22/03/2022 reached 436 people and achieved 4 engagements
  - Twitter post on 22/03/2022 reached 301 people and achieved 3 engagements
- 7 The District Council received 27 responses to its consultation including responses from Kent County Council, Sevenoaks Town Council, Swanley Town Council and Sevenoaks Bicycle Users Group.

8 A response was received from DEFRA on 18 March 2022 (Appendix D of the report) and the AQAP has been amended to reflect these comments.

### Outcome of consultation and finalisation of the Air Quality Action Plan

9 As a result of the consultation, and after consideration of the responses, a number of amendments are proposed to the measures within the draft Air Quality Action Plan. The updated AQAP is in Appendix 1.

10 Section 4.2 has been updated with the Consultation Outcome.

11 Section 4.3 has been updated in accordance with the comments received from DEFRA and includes more detail about the meetings that have taken place in preparation of the AQAP.

12 Table 5.1 has been amended to reflect comments received through the consultation process. Several additional measures have been added to the draft document. These are:

- Measure 25- To provide information and education in respect of personal emissions and how they may be reduced.-
- Measure 26- To work with businesses to identify ways to reduce emissions from their activities.
- Measure 27- To discourage the use of bonfires as a means of waste disposal.
- Measure 28- To reduce emissions from activities with Environmental Permits
- Measure 29- To work with Highways England to identify measures which will reduce the need for HGV and LGV vehicles to use the A25
- Measure 30- To review the effectiveness of introducing 20mph zones within areas where AQS objective levels are highest (Sevenoaks High Street, A25 Seal, Bat & Ball Junction, Riverhead, Westerham)
- Measure 31- To work with business operators to increase the % composition of LEV within private fleets
- Measure 32- To increase the number of Taxi operators using LEV and EV vehicles

13 For convenience the table below lists all of the measures now proposed within the AQAP.

No.	Measure
1	Local Plan policy and guidance -

	<p>Ensure that developers take account of onsite and offsite air quality when assessing the environmental impact of their proposals.</p> <p>That suitable onsite and offsite air quality mitigation measures are included (including financial contributions to strategic air quality improvement measures) as part of a proposal such that future air quality is either improved or sustained at a level that would be achieved without the development.</p>
2	Junction improvements at Bat & Ball Junction (A25/ A225 Junction)
3	Junction improvements at A224/A25 in Riverhead
4	Road/ Junction improvements along A225 Sevenoaks High Street
5	Road improvements along the A25 in Seal, and the A25 in Brasted
6	Bike rental schemes
7	Promotion of active travel schemes
8	Development of new walking and cycle routes
9	District wide promotion of active travel
10	Behavioural change campaigns to reduce single use occupancy car journeys
11	Reducing vehicle idling
12	Educational campaigns for schools
13	Collaboration with bus operators to introduce ultra-low emission vehicles into the fleets
14	Transitioning the Council's fleet to low emission vehicles

15	Improving and developing the EV infrastructure within the district
16	Installing EV charging points within all Council owned carparks
17	Improving public transport infrastructure
18	Promote the use of public transport
19	On and off-street parking charges linked to vehicle emissions standards
20	Car Club / Sharing schemes
21	Exploring flexible working and home working
22	Walking to school incentives/ encouragement
23	Complete a detailed modelling assessment of the Swanley Area to quantify the local air quality
24	Hire an Air Quality Promotions Officer
25	To provide information and education in respect of personal emissions and how they may be reduced
26	To work with businesses to identify ways to reduce emissions from their activities
27	To discourage the use of bonfires as a means of waste disposal.
28	To reduce emissions from activities with Environmental Permits
29	To work with National Highways to identify measures which will reduce the need for HGV and LGV vehicles to use the A25
30	To review the effectiveness of introducing 20mph zones within areas where AQS objective levels are highest (Sevenoaks High Street, A25

	Seal, Bat & Ball Junction, Riverhead, Westerham)
31	To work with business operators to increase the % composition of LEV within private fleets
32	To increase the number of Taxi operators using LEV and EV vehicles

- 14 Appendix A of the AQAP has been populated with comments received through the consultation process.
- 15 Appendix C of the AQAP - Provides details of the questions asked during the consultation.
- 16 Appendix D of the AQAP - Is the response received from DEFRA.
- 17 Appendix E of the AQAP - Is the response received from Kent County Council.

### Recommendations

- 18 Councillors are asked to review the proposed changes and agree to their inclusion within the final published version of the Air Quality Action Plan.
- 19 Councillors are to note that the Air Quality Action Plan is a working document and that it will be subject to regular revision and update.
- 20 Councillors are asked to agree for delegated authority to be provided to the Environmental Health Manager in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder to sign off future updates, amendments and revisions of the Air Quality Action Plan to ensure it remains relevant and effective.

### Key Implications

#### Financial

The costs of implementing the measures within the Air Quality Action Plan vary significantly. The costs associated with investigating measures will be from existing budgets within Environmental Health however the implementation of measures is in some cases dependent on as yet unidentified funding. The AQAP provides potential levers and mechanisms to allow the District Council access to additional funding streams and grants.

#### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

It is a legal requirement for the District Council to adopt an Air Quality Action Plan where it has declared Air Quality Management Areas (4 within Sevenoaks District).

## Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users

## Net Zero Implications

Members are reminded of the Council's stated ambition to be Net Zero with regards to carbon emissions by 2030. The decisions recommended in this paper directly impact on this ambition. The impact has been reviewed and there will be a decrease in carbon emissions produced in the District as a result of this decision.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1- Final Version of the Air Quality Action Plan

### **Background Papers**

**Richard Morris**

**Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Planning and Regulatory Services**