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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>APPROVAL OF AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN FOR CONSULTATION</b>
<b>Meeting and Date:</b>	<b>Cabinet – 3 April 2023</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Louise May, Strategic Director (Corporate and Regulatory)</b>
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	<b>Councillor Martin Bates, Portfolio Holder for Transport, Licensing and Regulatory Services</b>
<b>Decision Type:</b>	<b>Key Decision</b>
<b>Classification:</b>	<b>Unrestricted</b>

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<b>Purpose of the report:</b>	To approve the draft Air Quality Action Plan for the purposes of public consultation.
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<b>Recommendation:</b>	That Cabinet approves the Draft Air Quality Action Plan for the purposes of public consultation, and authorises the Environmental Protection and Crime Manager to undertake public consultation on the draft plan.
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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 Dover District Council (DDC) has two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA's) and therefore continues to have a statutory duty to keep updated an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP). The purpose of the AQAP is to outline the actions the Council will take to reduce concentrations of the pollutant of concern in the AQMA's to enable eventual revocation.
- 1.2 The Council's last AQAP was published in October 2007. The Environment Act 1995 requires that Action Plans be periodically reviewed. Although no time limit is set by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), their guidance documents suggest a review should occur no later than every five years. Although this review falls outside of this guidance there have been considerable developments such changes to road layout in AQMAs, Covid-19 and Brexit.
- 1.3 The Council is required to consult with relevant stakeholders and the public on the measures proposed by an AQAP. It is intended that a consultation will take place over a 6-week period between June and July 2023 on our draft AQAP. Members are now asked to approve the draft plan for consultation.
- 1.4 The outcome of and comments made during this consultation will be collated and used to shape the final draft AQAP. The approval of a final AQAP is a matter for full Council and so will be brought back later in 2023.

## **2. Introduction and Background**

- 2.1 Air pollution is the single biggest environmental health risk faced and has a disproportionate impact on the vulnerable groups most impacted by poor air quality. These groups include older people, pregnant women, children, those with cardiovascular disease (CVD) or respiratory diseases, and communities with poorer air quality.

- 2.2 The Council has a statutory duty under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 to:
- Monitor air quality within its boundary,
  - Declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) where air quality exceeds the relevant standards laid down in law,
  - Where an AQMA is declared, prepare an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) to demonstrate how it intends to reduce the pollutant causing the exceedance, and;
  - Review AQMAs and AQAPs in response to ongoing monitoring
- 2.3 The AQAP is a technical document which brings together the scientific evidence and air quality monitoring data collected by the Council to justify the appropriate measures to improve air quality. Working with consultants Bureau Veritas actions have been identified which are proposed to take up until 2028 to tackle Nitrogen Dioxide, primarily within our two AQMA's, but also across the district as a whole. Table 5.1 of the draft AQAP in Appendix one outlines several measures which could be implemented to improve air quality within the Council's AQMA. These measures have been identified following internal consultation with the portfolio holder, officers, stakeholders and our consultants and are each believed to be achievable and realistic.
- 2.4 As detailed in Appendix one there have been no recordable exceedances of Nitrogen Dioxide at our AQMA monitoring sites for 3 years which is a positive trend. However, to revoke an AQMA government guidance advises that several years data should be used to evidence a sustained reduction in air pollution levels. Meteorological conditions, local factors such as impact on port traffic because of Brexit and changes in road traffic as due to the Covid 19 lockdowns can affect trends in monitoring data.
- 2.5 Some of the improvements in air quality recorded over the last three years are likely to be because of the Council's last AQAP which was introduced in 2007 and the projects associated with this. These included:
- Improved traffic management through junction improvements along the A20 Townwall Street to reduce stop/start movements of HGVs heading for the Port. Including the removal of traffic lights and the introduction of strategic barriers;
  - Improvements to Eastern Docks layout via the Traffic Management Improvement (TMI) project;
  - New Dover Eastern Docks Exit Road to A20 Townwall Street.
- 2.6 The proposed actions within the draft AQAP (Appendix one) can be considered under five broad topics;
- **Priority 1: Transport** - Technical data is showing that the main source of air pollution causing the declaration of AQMAs across the District is associated with road transport emissions. Therefore reducing transport emissions through measures contained within the Action Plan are a key priority.
  - **Priority 2: Public Health** - as highlighted in Section 3.1 of draft plan, the impact of air pollution on public health is known to be highly detrimental. Transport is a key pollutant, and aside from restricting vehicle usage through the introduction of clean air/low emission zones, the most effective way to achieve a reduction in vehicle numbers is to change the attitudes/behaviour of the population towards travel.

- **Priority 3: Strategies and Policy Guidance** - As outlined in Section 3.2 of the draft plan, there are a number of existing and emerging policy/strategy documents which are a key mechanism for reducing emissions across the District not least the Climate Change Strategy. For effective reductions to be realised, in addition to the measures outlined within the Air Quality Action Plan, all other actions within the referenced documents should be implemented.
- **Priority 4: Planning and Infrastructure** - The new Local Plan has been published in draft format and is anticipated to be adopted in 2023. This will set out the considerations to be applied when considering development proposals. Promotion of electric charging points to be integrated into the development plans in the early stages will help to support the drive towards low emission vehicles ensuring suitable planning and infrastructure is in place is a key priority.
- **Priority 5: Air Quality Monitoring** - Currently Nitrogen Dioxide is monitored through a network of 25 passive diffusions tubes. A Particulate monitor is also operating in Townwall Street in Dover. Monitoring is the best way to continually assess the extent of pollution within Dover District, as well as quantifying improvements that have been achieved through the AQAP, and acting as an evidence base for AQMAs to be amended/revoked. Monitoring will continue in its current extent, with opportunities to move tubes to new areas of concern considered at the start of each year.

2.7 All comments received during the period of public consultation will be carefully considered and the wording and contents of the AQAP adjusted accordingly as necessary. Whatever actions that are detailed in the final plan do not prevent new actions being introduced during the life of the AQAP.

### **3. Resource Implications**

3.1 Air Quality monitoring has an annual budget of £5,000. There is no budget set aside for the implementation of the Action Plan.

3.2 Each action proposed in Table 5.1 of the draft plan was put forward on the basis of a basic cost benefit analysis and the remaining actions were felt to be able to create a meaningful difference to levels of Nitrogen Dioxide both in the AQMA's cited and across the district as a whole whilst not costing the Council significant sums to set up/run.

3.3 There are regular opportunities to bid for funding from Air Quality projects from different sources including DEFRA and DDC as a member of the Kent & Medway Air Quality Partnership have been successful in securing funding for county wide projects.

### **4. Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

4.1 Air quality and climate are interconnected because the chemical species that lead to a degradation in air quality are normally co-emitted with greenhouse gases. Thus, changes in one inevitably cause changes in the other.

### **5. Corporate Implications**

5.1 Comment from the Strategic Director (Corporate Resources-Finance and Housing):  
 "Accountancy has been consulted on the report and have no further comments to add."  
 (WP)

- 5.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: “The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make”.
- 5.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer: “This report requesting the approval of the Air Quality Action Plan for consultation does not specifically highlight any equality implications, however in discharging their duties members are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>”
- 5.4 Comment from Climate Change Officer: No additional comments to make.

**6. Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Draft Air Quality Action Plan 2023-2028

Appendix 2 - AQMA A20 main trunk route into Dover

Appendix 3 - AQMA High Street/ Ladywell, Dover

Appendix 4 - Air Quality Action Plan Input Report

Appendix 5 - 2022 Air Quality Annual Status Report

Appendix 6 - National Air Quality objectives

**7. Background Papers**

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