



**A BETTER
MEDWAY**
Easier ways to be healthy

Medway Air Quality Communication Strategy

December 2017

Prepared by The National Social Marketing Centre

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1. Introduction

The Medway Air Quality Communications Strategy is a central component and essential if the desired outcomes of the Medway Air Quality Action Plan¹ are to be achieved. The strategy was developed by analysing: existing best practice, campaigns and consulting with Medway residents and other stakeholders.

This strategy details a series of recommended communications activities to increase the awareness of the health impacts of air pollution amongst key stakeholders and specific local groups affected by air pollution. It also aims to stimulate changes in the way in people and organisations view air pollution and empower them to take action to address this complex challenge.

2. Current situation and context

Medway Council has a statutory duty to protect the health of its residents. The Council has a duty is obliged to work towards achieving the national air quality standards. The Medway Air Quality Action Plan has been established to ensure the Council is able to monitor progress and address any issues that have a bearing on the air quality locally.

While the quality of air across Medway is generally good and well within the limits set by Government for the protection of human health, four areas across Medway have been identified where levels of pollution give rise for concern. These have been designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAS). These are:

- Pier Road Gillingham²;
- High Street, Rainham;
- Central Medway; and
- Four Elms Hill, Chattenden.

There is a potential public health risk to residents who live close to, and travel regularly through, these areas. We have identified a number of properties within the designated AQMAS where we need to work with residents to protect their health and wellbeing from vehicle related emissions.

In addition to the existing AQMAS there is a risk that, with the expected growth in population of 28,300 over the next ten years and subsequent ongoing housing developments, an increased number of cars could contribute to the rise in air pollution across other areas in Medway.

¹ Medway Air Quality Action Plan <http://www.medway.gov.uk/pdf/%20Medway%20AQAP%20December%202015.pdf>

² The Pier Road AQMA is under review as the recorded concentrations of nitrogen dioxide are below the air quality objectives

The Medway Vision 2035³ outlines the vision for regeneration in Medway. The document notes local concerns about the impact of growth on local services and quality of life and aims to promote a low carbon economy. This Vision seeks to address and mitigate climate change, as well as reduce inequalities in health by promoting opportunities for increasing physical activity through walking, cycling and using parks and other recreation facilities.

2.1 Health impact of poor air quality

All levels of air pollution have an impact on people's health and there is growing evidence of the link between the inhalation of air particles and certain types of cancer. However, there are residents whose health is more at risk than others; these include⁴:

- Residents that live in the 919 residential properties within 10 metres of the roads in the Central AQMA, 22 properties in Pier Road, 66 in Rainham High Street and 24 at Four Elms Hill.
- Residents over 65: 41,781 residents of Medway are over 65 years old³ - (predicted to rise to 54,500 by 2025)⁵
- Children under 5: 18,700 children under 5 years old live in Medway - (predicted to rise to 19,825 by 2025);
- People with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD): there are 5,052 patients registered with COPD in Medway with the highest COPD mortality rates in the wards closest to the 4 AQMAs – River, Gillingham North, Four Elms Hill and Chatham Central⁶; (there is a 0.15% increase in COPD patients predicted by 2025)
- People with asthma: there are 15,800 patients with asthma³ living in Medway (predicted rise currently unknown);
- People with Cardio Vascular Disease (CVD): there are 21,409 patients with CVD living in Medway (there is a predicted 33% increase in the number of people affected by a stroke by 2030) and
- People who drive regularly including taxi drivers, couriers and lorry drivers: (numbers unknown).

³ Medway 2025 is Medway's regeneration vision <http://www.medway.gov.uk/businessandinvestment/medwayregeneration.aspx>

⁴ Of greatest concern to public health are particles measuring less than 2.5 micrometres in diameter (PM_{2.5}), small enough to be inhaled into the deepest parts of the lung. Studies link this fine particulate matter with asthma, bronchitis, acute and chronic respiratory symptoms such as shortness of breath and painful breathing, and premature deaths. The young and elderly are most at risk, the former because their lungs and respiratory systems are still developing, and the latter because of comorbidities and declining immune systems. Michael Marmot Fair Society Healthy Lives

⁵ <http://www.medwayjsna.info/jsna-summary.html>

⁶ Medway JSNA

The health impacts of air pollution in the UK are almost twice those of physical inactivity and are estimated to amount to just under £11 billion per annum⁷.

This is comparable to the health impact cost of alcohol misuse to society which is estimated to be around £12 billion per annum⁸. However, the effects of poor air quality on health do not receive anywhere near the same level of attention in the media or, most importantly, from policy makers.

It has been estimated that 40,000 deaths per year can be attributed to poor air quality in the UK⁹, and probably causes more mortality and morbidity than passive smoking, road traffic accidents or obesity. Particulate air pollution alone in the UK has been estimated to reduce the life expectancy of every person by an average of 7-8 months¹⁰.

Local authorities' statutory responsibilities for public health services are set out in the Health and Social Care Act 2012. The Act conferred new duties on local authorities to improve public health. It abolished primary care trusts and transferred much of their responsibility for public health to local authorities from 1 April 2013. From this date, local authorities have had a new duty to take such steps as they consider appropriate for improving the health of the people in their areas.

One area of concern is the health of those residents whose health conditions are likely to be exacerbated by air pollution. The Public Health Outcome Framework Indicator 3.01 highlights that the Medway measurement of air pollution fine particle matter is worse at 9.7 ug/m³ than the national average which is 8.3 ug/m³.

The main source of air pollution in Medway is road traffic emissions from major roads, notably the M2, A2, A228, A229, A230, A231, A278 and A289. Medway suffers from significant congestion, particularly in its town centres. Slow moving vehicles during congested periods give rise to a high proportion of emissions relative to moving traffic. Congestion is a known issue in the Medway AQMAs. Consequently, measures to reduce traffic queues are likely to reduce emissions and are a significant part of Medway's Air Quality Action Plan¹¹.

The role of air pollution due to traffic is clear and we will focus the communications strategy on interventions that protect from and reduce vehicle emissions especially in the designated AQMA.

2.2 Medway Council's existing air quality improvement plan

The Air Quality Action Plan outlines 12 key measures that will reduce transport emissions in the AQMAs declared in 2010 by an estimated 10% to improve air quality, with a further 10% reduction achieved by traffic management schemes.

⁷ Medway 2015 Air Quality Action Plan

⁸ RCPCH 'Every breath we take'

⁹ RCPCH 'Every breath we take'

¹⁰ Medway 2015 Air Quality Action Plan

¹¹ 2016 Air Quality Annual Status Report - Medway

Where possible, the communications strategy will support these key measures and inform residents about how the Council is currently working to improve the air quality in the area.

The 12 key measures in the action plan are:

- Improve freight management;
- Encourage the increased use of public transport;
- Improvement in taxi emissions;
- Traffic management;
- Promotion of cycling and walking;
- Eco driving;
- Procurement;
- Travel planning;
- Development planning;
- Promote health awareness and air quality issues; and
- Feasibility studies and funding.

There are a number of awareness and behaviour change campaigns currently being implemented by the Council and other organisations which support the Air Quality Action Plan's objectives.

We have included these initiatives within this communications strategy. We will show how the separate interventions could be brought together under one umbrella brand/programme to increase awareness and achieve more behaviour change within our target groups.

Existing interventions include:

- National Clean Air Day – 21 June 2018;
- Walk to School week – 21-25 May 2018;
- Bike Week 9-17th June including Medway Big Ride on 9th June 2018,
- Cycle to Work Day – 13th September 2017 (no 2018 date yet);
- Medway Car-share scheme;
- Car Free Day - 22 September 2017;
- Medway Cycle Action Plan; and
- Medway's Air Quality Planning Guidance (April 2016).

3. Strategy development

This strategy details a series of recommended communications activities to increase the awareness of the health impacts of air pollution amongst key stakeholders and specific local groups affected by air pollution. It also aims to stimulate changes in the way in people and organisations view air pollution and empower them to take action to address this complex challenge. The activities that we recommend can be implemented from early 2018.

The development of this strategy is based on:

- A review of existing campaigns and assets, research and best practice into communicating with the public about air quality (Appendix 1 shows our review);
- Online residents' air quality survey;
- A resident engagement day held on 16th November 2017; and
- Discussions with Medway Council's Public Health and Environmental Protection Team.

The analysis highlighted that there is a general lack of awareness amongst residents about the impact that raised air pollution levels can have on their health and that of their families. However, there is a high level of agreement that air pollution is primarily caused by traffic and that traffic and therefore air pollution has got worse as a result of the increased volumes of cars using the roads. People are also unclear about what they can personally do to mitigate the situation.

The communications strategy therefore aims to move the issue on so that Medway residents and in particular six primary audiences understand that they can make a personal impact on air pollution, either through taking action to avoid it, or actually contributing personally to reducing air pollution levels.

The strategy's target audiences are:

1. Medway residents with a focus on those who live in or near the 4 Air Quality Management Areas (Pier Road, High Street Rainham, Central Medway, Four Elms Hill);
2. People with an existing health condition which is affected by poor air quality;
3. The parents or carers of a child under 5-years old;
4. Residents who are over 65-years old;
5. Residents who drive as part of their occupation and could be impacted by poor air quality; and
6. Councillors and Council officers

The communication objectives are:

1. To increase awareness about air pollution and how our target audiences can safeguard themselves from the harm it causes;
2. To motivate people to improve the air quality in Medway; and
3. To include air quality planning in future developments and strategies planned by Medway Council.

For each communication objective, the strategy outlines a number of key awareness and behavioural objectives, together with a range of communication activities for each objective

These communication activities for each objective are shown below:

Objective 1. To increase awareness about air pollution and how our target audiences can safeguard themselves from the harm it causes;

1. Increase the number of people signing up for the KentAir email forecast service;
2. Increase the use of weather forecast alerts on local media (print, social media, broadcast);
3. Implementation of a Clean Air Day Campaign in Medway;
4. Work in partnership with health professionals to help raise awareness of air pollution to vulnerable people;
5. An Idling Campaign aimed at targeted drivers in the Medway area;
6. Using interactive toolkits in schools to reduce impact of air pollution to children; and
7. Introduce travel planning to local business to promote sustainable travel use.

Objective 2 - To empower people to protect the environment

1. Work in partnership with key organisations to raise awareness on vehicle emissions (for example: new car buyers, when children start a new school, and when people develop chronic condition);
2. Raise awareness of eco-driving courses for targeted groups;
3. Increasing the number of people using public transport in the Medway area; and
4. Providing council leadership in taking an active role in reducing emissions in all operations.

Objective 3 - Including air quality in all future policies and developments

1. Presentations to council directorates includes development of materials;
2. Presentation to key councillors includes development of materials;
3. Staff newsletters produced and distributed; and
4. Developer engagement to promote developments that are “eco-friendly”.

3. Formative research

The strategy is based on the following research on communicating with the public on air quality:

- A review of existing campaigns and assets, research and best practice into communicating with the public about air quality (Appendix 1);
- An online stakeholder air quality survey;
- A resident engagement day held on 16th November 2017.

The sections below summarise the key conclusions of the research phase - detailed findings are shown in Appendix 2.

3.1 Review of existing research and campaigns

The review of existing campaigns demonstrated the following key insights into how to communicate with the public on air quality in order to get them to take action:

- Use information about what particulate matter is made of and where it goes, to make people aware of the health impact of air pollution. Don't use statistics about health consequences.
- Don't raise public concern about air pollution unless you can, at the same time, satisfy people's desire to do something to reduce their exposure.
- Talk about air pollution as a problem linked to specific places – and not as a general problem of the atmosphere.
- Keep the focus on practical improvements – not long-term solutions.
- Demonstrate leadership and empower communities, rather than just expecting individuals to change their behaviours.
- Participants frequently held a mistaken belief that one is safe (or largely safe) from air pollution *inside* vehicles.
- 90% of parents didn't realise that driving exposes people to more pollution than cycling or walking.

3.2 Online resident air quality survey

The survey was developed by the NSMC and agreed by Medway Council. It was launched on 11th November and closed on Friday 1st December. It was promoted by Medway Council's Communication's team and publicised online by social media and at the residents' engagement day. It was also promoted through over 40 pharmacies, as well by the Apex medical practice to their COPD and Asthma patients.

The key insights from this survey are shown below:

- 65% of participants thought that air quality was OK or better. However, when they were asked if they thought air pollution is a problem in Medway, over 70% thought it was
- When asked why they thought air pollution was a problem, most respondents talked about the issues of traffic volume and older, polluting cars. They blame increasing traffic volumes on development, particularly the increased numbers of houses that have been built.
- When prompted on how air pollution can affect people's health, they generally thought all the provided disease types were made worse by air pollution.
- When asked about who could make an impact, most participants thought that it was the roles of Government and Medway Council that could have the largest impact. Less than 50% thought that Medway residents could have an impact on the problem.
- Participants thought that vehicle usage has the biggest impact on air pollution in Medway.
- Nearly 80% thought that they were not well informed about air pollution in Medway.
- When asked how they would like to be informed, 50% of participants thought that the Council should take a key role and that the best format was through using a website. Over 40% thought the weather forecast was a means of communicating air pollution levels.
- 50% of participants thought air pollution had got worse around major towns and roads.
- Only 33% thought that pollution affected their families; most people thought that it impacted on breathing the most.
- Most participants thought that taking action to avoid air pollution was about knowing about air pollution levels, rather than taking action to reduce the pollution that they breathe in.
- The key actions that they thought would reduce air pollution levels were walking rather than using the car, using less energy at home and measuring the level of air pollution.
- 50% said they would consider buying an electric car; however, there were some real barriers to this including cost and the availability of charging points.
- 92% did not recognise the Kent Air logo.
- 95% have not used the Kent Air email forecast service. However, when asked if they would use it, 50% said they would.

Some of the more relevant quotes from the online survey are outlined below:

- *‘Stand on the Great Lines and you can see the pollution haze below’.*
- *‘We live in Rainham and I walk my 6-year old to school. Because the A2 runs straight through town, and general congestion in major side streets, it is not a pleasant nor healthy walk to St Margaret’s. I try to avoid the peak of fumes as best we can by taking the long way, but we have to walk along the High Street at some point’.*
- *‘Black soot-like particles constantly accumulating around windows and sills and frequency of window cleaning required compared to previous addresses’.*

3.3 Resident engagement day

The NSMC and three representatives from Medway Council used four libraries (Rainham, Chatham, Hoo and Strood) in Medway as a base for engaging with Medway residents on air quality.

During the day, we engaged with 29 people and encouraged 13 people to complete the resident survey.

Key insights from the day included:

- We held in depth discussions with Medway Asthma Self Help group (MASH) on the lack of publicity on the Air Quality Action Plan.
- Around half of the people we talked to believed that air quality was not a big issue in the Medway area.
- A number of people we spoke to commented that they thought there were many other important issues to be tackled including the pressure on public services in the area.
- People were most surprised that air pollution inside cars was the same or worse than as on-street.
- Most people thought that the best way to improve air quality was to get people out of their cars and onto public transport. However, they stated that public transport in the Medway towns was expensive.
- We visited the Apex Medical Centre and discussed the Patient Text Service, I-Plato as a way of reaching people with Asthma, COPD and CVD.

3.4 *Summary of insights from the research*

There appears to be a difference between people understanding of the relationship between the issue of air pollution and poor health outcomes in Medway. When questioned about the quality of air, most people thought it was OK (or better). However, when asked whether they consider air pollution to be a problem, most people in the survey thought that it was.

There seems to be very little knowledge about the role of Medway Council or the air quality service. For example, only 10% of people recognised the KentAir logo.

Most people believe that air pollution is primarily caused by traffic and has got worse because of increased volumes of cars using the roads. This they believe is a result of development pressures.

When asked about how they would protect themselves against air pollution they responded that they would find out more about the air quality in their area. They did not perceive that they could take action to protect themselves, or change air quality. This was further emphasised when they were asked who was responsible for alleviating the situation. They clearly thought that it was the role of central and local government to take action.

In conclusion, there is a general lack of knowledge about the personal impact that raised air pollution levels can have on their health and that of their families. They are also unclear about what they can personally do to mitigate the situation. The communications strategy needs to move the issue on so that residents in Medway feel that they can make a personal impact on air pollution, either through taking action to avoid it, or contributing personally to reducing air pollution levels.

4. SWOT Analysis

The secondary evidence review, resident engagement day, online survey and ongoing discussions with the Public Health and Environmental Protection teams helped develop a SWOT analysis to guide the formulation of the communications strategy. This is shown below in Table 1.

Table 1: SWOT analysis

Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agreed air quality action plan.• Engagement from local health organisations (Breathe Easy Group, Pharmacies and GP Practices).• Existing Kent Air website and email forecast service.• There are areas of Medway with good air quality
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low level of knowledge about where the worst air pollution areas are in Medway.• Low level of recognition of KentAir logo.• Low level of knowledge about the actions Medway Council are taking to improve air quality.• Low priority level within the council when developing policies and subsequent resources allocated• KentAir only provides an email alert rather than a text alert service.• 77% of residents feel that they are not very well or not informed at all about the state of air quality in the area.
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasing number of national stories about the impact of poor air quality.• Air Quality Planning Guidance, PHOF indicator and a new AQMA.• Existing campaigns and the Medway Air Quality Action Plan.• Resident interest in monitoring air quality.• 52% of residents believe that the air quality in Medway is getting worse.• People's mistaken belief that one is safe (or largely safe) from air pollution <i>inside</i> vehicles.

<i>Threats/Challenges</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making national and international news stories about air pollution relevant to Medway. • Reducing car use is a difficult behaviour to change. • Residents, particularly those not directly impacted by poor air quality, believe there are other priorities for the council. • Increasing level of development and predicted car use in Medway. • The disproportionate level of HGV traffic that passes through Medway and its contribution to air pollution.
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5 The Communication Strategy - objectives

Based on the research, it became evident that the primary aim of the strategy is to raise awareness of the impact of poor air quality on residents' health and to encourage behaviour change to protect against, and improve the air quality in Medway.

The communication objectives are therefore:

1. *To improve knowledge about air pollution and how our target audiences can protect themselves from the harm it causes.*
2. *To motivate people to improve the air quality in Medway.*
3. *To include air quality in future developments and strategies planned by Medway Council.*

5.1 Target audience

There are six primary audiences for the Communications Strategy. We have chosen these audiences as they are at potentially high risk from poor air quality and are therefore most likely to be more responsive to take action. The NSMC has developed a number of communication strategies that have delivered measureable behaviour change on similar issues. Our evidence proves that, by identifying those parts of the community at most risk, we are likely to get early action which will then be diffused throughout the wider community.

Our target audiences are:

1. Medway residents with a focus on those who live in or near the 4 AQMAs (Pier Road, High Street Rainham, Central Medway, Four Elms Hill);
2. People with an existing health condition which is affected by poor air quality;
3. The parents and carers of a child under 5-years old;
4. Residents who are over 65-years old;
5. Residents who drive as part of their occupation and whose health could be impacted by poor air quality; and
6. Councillors and Council officers to understand how their work impacts on air quality, in particular those responsible for development, transport policy, licensing, procurement, HR and regeneration.

Secondary audiences who we believe will influence our target audiences include:

- Health professionals;
- Relatives and friends of those whose health is affected by air pollution;
- Local environmental and health groups; and
- Local businesses and their staff.

6 Communication strategy - methodology

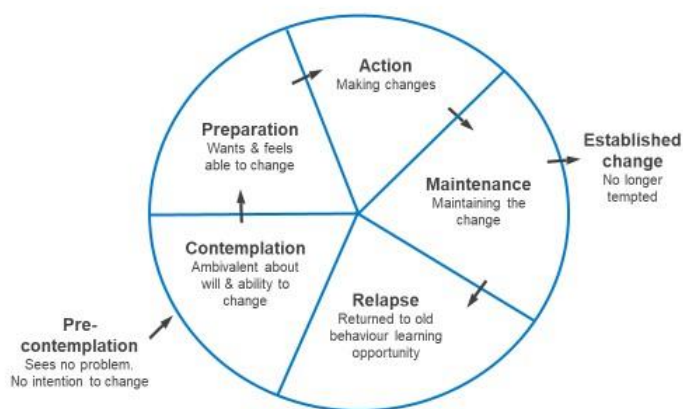
6.1 The Stages of Change model of behaviour change

The Stages of Change model assesses an audience's readiness to act on a new behaviour, and enables planners to plan strategies, communications and interventions to guide people through the different stages.

Traditionally, behaviour change was construed as an event; however, this model recognizes change as a process that unfolds over time. It also acknowledges that different target audiences move through the stages at different times, with those audiences with the capability, opportunity and motivation to change moving quicker.

The six stages of the model are shown below in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Stages of Change model



Our secondary evidence reviews, resident engagement day and online survey show that most of our target audiences are in the contemplation stage. They know air pollution is a problem but they don't know how it is impacting on them and their health. Importantly they don't know what they can do to change their personal situation.

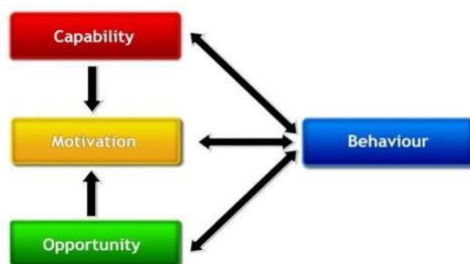
We therefore need to ensure that our target audiences know how their health is being impacted and to what extent. We believe this will then drive them to the preparation stage and then on to action and maintenance.

6.2 COM-B behaviour change theory

The NSMC utilises the COM-B model developed by University College London's Behaviour Change Unit to identify the key communication interventions that will achieve behaviour change in our target audiences.

The model proposes that given capability (knowledge and self-efficacy) and opportunity, people are more likely to change their behaviours. For all our proposed communication activities, we will therefore ensure that our target audiences have both the capability and opportunity to take action.

Figure: 2 COM-B behaviour change theory - UCL.



7. Communication activities

7.1 Key messages

In this section, we list the key messages that we recommend using for each of our target audiences. We then describe possible engagement/communication strategies that could be used to achieve our three key communication objectives:

- 1. To increase awareness about air pollution and how our target audiences can safeguard themselves from the harm it causes.*
- 2. To empower people to improve the air quality in Medway.*
- 3. To include air quality in future developments and strategies planned by Medway Council.*

7.1.1 Key messages for residents

- Air pollution is caused by a number of factors, including small particles in the air emitted by car exhaust emissions and brake and tyre wear which can be inhaled into the lungs.
- One of the worst places for particulate matter is inside vehicles on busy roads. Levels inside the car are typically as high as those outside. There's nothing you can do to prevent the tiniest nanoparticles coming into the car.
- The health benefits of physical activity such as walking or cycling outweigh the risks from air pollution. If you're in a vehicle, you get the risks with none of the benefits.
- Medway Council is working to reduce air pollution and vehicle emissions and you can do your part by taking action.

7.1.2 Key messages for residents living near AQMAs and people with health conditions

- Know what you breathe: Air pollution can cause coughs and phlegm and make existing health conditions worse. Stay informed about when air pollution is likely to be worse in your area and sign up to the free Kent Air email forecast service.¹²
- Use quieter streets when walking or cycling and avoid morning rush hour if possible. These actions can reduce your exposure to air pollution by up to 20%¹³
- One of the worst places for particulate matter is inside vehicles on busy roads. The health benefits of physical activity such as walking or cycling outweigh the risks from air pollution. If you're in a vehicle, you get the risks with none of the benefits.
- Help us improve the air quality in your area by taking action.

¹² Other campaigns run with stronger messages regarding air pollution increasing the risk of cancer and early deaths. We have recommended a less direct message in order not to scare people, however the Council may prefer to run with a stronger message, particularly if targeting specific groups with medical conditions

¹³ Clean Air Day website

7.1.3 Key messages for parents of children under 5

- Keep your child safe: Air pollution is caused by a number of factors, including gases and small particles in the air emitted by car exhaust emissions and brake and tyre wear. These particulates, which can affect breathing, are of greatest risk to young children who are closer to the road level than adults.
- Use quieter streets when walking or cycling and avoid morning rush hour if possible. These actions can reduce your exposure to air pollution by up to 20%.

7.1.4 Key messages for people over 65

- Air pollution is caused by many things including gases and small particles in the air emitted by car exhaust emissions and brake and tyre wear which can be inhaled and make existing health conditions worse.
- Stay informed about when air pollution is likely to be worse in your area and sign up to the free Kent Air email forecast service.

7.1.5 Key messages for councillors and council staff including the, Kent Planning Policy Forum, Kent Planning Officers Group and Developers

- **Keep Medway clean** - More than 50,000 deaths per year can be attributed to poor air quality in the UK, and probably causes more mortality and morbidity than passive smoking, road traffic accidents or obesity.
- Air pollution is caused by many things including gases and small particles in the air emitted by car exhaust emissions and brake and tyre wear which can be inhaled into the lungs
- Be part of Medway's future and its Local Plan and keep Medway's air clean by using the Medway Air Quality Planning Guidance

7.2 Objective 1: To increase awareness about air pollution and how our target audiences can safeguard themselves from the harm it causes

The objective is to move our target audiences who live near the four AQMAs, and those with a health condition, to increase their knowledge of air pollution and take action to protect themselves.

7.2.1 Key awareness objectives

- Increase understanding of how air pollution can impact on residents' health.
- Increase awareness of the local hotspots.
- Increase the number of people who feel they are well informed about air quality.
- Increase recognition of the KentAir logo.

7.2.2 Key behavioural objectives:

- Sign up to Kent Air email forecast service.
- Avoid hotspots especially on high pollution days.
- Increase the number of visitors to the Kent Air and Care For Kent Air websites.

7.2.3 Communication activities:

Kent Air logo becomes the sole brand for all public facing engagement



Very few residents who completed our survey knew about the Kent Air logo. We need this to be the one single recognised brand for all public facing engagement and the entrance portal for all information and materials on air pollution in the area.

This logo needs to appear in as many places as possible so that when people search for Kent Air on their computers/laptops or smart phones it takes them to the Kent Air website, where they can access information on health impact and activities that are operating in Medway to improve air quality in the area.

This means that we recommend that Medway Air is discontinued as a logo and brand to avoid duplication and confusion.

We want to create resident's recognition that the logo stands for the Council's commitment through action to improve air quality. The logo should appear on all relevant public-facing documents on the Council's transport and development improvements and used in press releases about air pollution type issues, policies and planning.

Increase sign up to Kent Air email forecast service

The resident survey stated that most people prefer to get information on air pollution via email. The Kent Air forecast provides this service. Our target audience are not likely to search electronically for the service, so we therefore recommend that hard-copy leaflets and electronic messages are distributed to target audiences to inform them about the service. They should be distributed to:

- Residents living near the four 4 AQMAs.
- Health centres via I-Plato near the 4 AQMAs.
- Pharmacies close to the 4 AQMAs.
- Council website promotion.
- Leaflets in school bags in schools located close to AQMAs.

The leaflet should include the following messages:

- Explanation of what air pollution is and what it does.
- Air pollution can cause existing health problems to worsen.
- Stay informed about when the air pollution is bad in your area.
- Sign up to Kent Air email forecast service (web address).
- Things that you can do to alleviate the impact of air pollution.
- Things that Medway are doing to help you.

Our recommendation is that this is piloted in the 4 AQMAs, evaluated and then rolled out to other areas of Medway.

At the moment Kent Air has limited possibilities for interaction with subscribers. We recommend that subscribers be given the opportunity to sign-up so that they can be contacted when there are opportunities for them to take part in activities that are happening in their local areas.

An evaluation of the service should also be carried out to understand what people think of the service and what changes they make after receiving a message from the service.

Maximise use of the Kent Air website

The Kent Air website hosts the sign up for the Kent Air email forecast service and is therefore the first site residents engage with on air quality. It also provides information on the latest levels of air quality in the area and the impact that poor air quality can have on residents' health. To ensure consistency, the website should be the main site residents are directed to for information on air quality and which all communication channels signpost to. However, there are a number of recommendations we would make to improve the information held on the site and its accessibility for residents.

- The Care for Kent home page (<http://kentair.org.uk/Information/infohome/index>) provides more resident relevant information and should be used as the landing page communication activities signpost to, rather than the KentAir home page which is aimed more for stakeholders. (<http://kentair.org.uk>).
- Any air quality information and key messages used on other websites (e.g. Medway Council) and in other communication activities need to be consistent with the Kent Air website content.
- The Care for Kent Air home page should include the Care for KentAir logo
- The Kent Air sign up should also capture the first part of people's post codes in order to analyse where people sign up from and where to target any future promotional campaigns.
- The home page should include more information on why air quality is an issue for everybody and call to actions that can be changed to link in with campaigns run by Councils in the area (e.g. Clean Air Day). This information should include videos of the impact on air quality that can also be shared on social media.
- Include more call to actions on the website linked to the facts provided on the site.
- The site should be kept up to date with what local councils are doing to improve air quality in the area.
- Include local air quality news stories on the website and a social media feed for people to comment on local news stories and report poor air quality episodes.
- The information provided is in long paragraphs rather than short easy to read sections.
- Depending on the budget available, further user research testing should be carried out to understand how users are using the website and what information they are searching for.

Local Weather forecast updates

We recommend that Medway Council and the other Kent district councils work with Kent County Council to organise a meeting with key local media organisations operating in Kent. These are:

- Local BBC and commercial radio stations
- Local BBC and ITV television news
- Local newspapers
- Local news websites

The KentAir alert system should be developed to broadcast and raise the awareness of the brand together with information on pollution levels in the county. This system of public broadcast is used in other English cities and Counties to notify populations of dangerous levels of pollution. By promoting KentAir and the website it will also give people the ability to become more aware of the issues and how to take action. In America they also include actions that need to be taken.

Figure 3 – An air quality alert with actions that need to be taken



Bad Air Day campaign

The objective of this intervention is to:

- Raise awareness of the issue.
- Ensure vulnerable groups are ready to take action when pollution levels are high.

If a particularly “bad air” day is predicted, we recommend setting up an emergency “communication chain” ready to warn people of how to take action. This form of action is used extensively for emergency preparedness in locations that frequently have either man-made or environmental events. It is particularly effective at galvanising local groups to action as it provides a means where they can take action to protect their communities in a tangible way.

We would recommend communication chains to be formed using neighbourhood groups, GP practices and hospitals, schools, council and county offices, police and fire stations and local businesses.

The broadcasting of “bad air” days has also had important impacts on traffic levels. For example, ‘Spare the Air’ in California showed that by broadcasting a “bad air” day, the day before it happens, led to a decrease of traffic levels of between 3% and 10%.

Briefings to health professionals to inform patients

We recommend that engagement with local NHS providers is stepped up. Almost all GP practices have signed up to public information systems in waiting rooms and these provide effective outlets for key messages to our target audiences across the Medway region.

Leaflets and posters are read by people waiting for doctors and nurse appointments and opportunities for distributing materials to surgeries should be utilised whenever possible to

promote the messages on how to take action to protect yourselves against air pollution. This information could also be sent to targeted patient groups through the I-Plato service.

Action should also be taken to provide information for GPs on air quality and its impact upon asthma and existing COPD and CVD conditions, particularly those closest to the four AQMAs.

Work with local health groups to get messages to members – Medway Breathe Easy Group, MASH, British Heart Foundation

All charities in the lung and CVD sectors have local groups that help support people with chronic conditions. These groups are useful conduits to our target audiences and should be used to promote the KentAir website and act as distribution points for leaflets and posters that promote awareness and action.

Idling campaign #noidling

Working with local supporters and health and environmental groups, we recommend, following the success of the Chatham Bus Station idling campaign, conducting an idling campaign around the schools and children's centre close to the 4 AQMAs to raise awareness of how car idling is affecting the air their children breathe and how air pollution can affect people in cars more than outside. This could form part of Clean Air Day which has developed the hashtag #noidling or held during another time during the year. The idling campaign can be extended to other schools and other Medway locations such as taxi ranks and hospitals in subsequent years.

National news preparation

There are many news stories that are currently broadcast and written about air quality in other parts of the UK and other countries on the impact air pollution on people's health. These should be used by the Council's Communications team and, wherever possible, be localised to engage and affect a change in attitudes and awareness.

School Toolkits

We recommend that the Council promotes the school resources available on the Kent Air website initially to schools in at risk areas of high pollution. The resources could form part of the Council's Clean Air day promotion:

The resources on the website provide schools with:

- Tools to identify areas of poor air quality around the school.
- Activities that promotes pupil understanding of air pollution.
- Ideas for engaging staff, pupils and parents/carers in improving air quality
- Tips to maximise the air quality benefits of school travel plans and energy efficiency programmes.
- A timeline of activities to maximise its benefits.

- Help to reduce children's exposure to air pollutants, within the school and during their travel.

Travel Plans for Businesses

The business travel planning forum should encourage/help local businesses who work near and in the 4 AQMAs and that have significant numbers of their employees who walk to work, to develop and implement travel plans that provide alternative routes to work that avoid pollution hot spots.

A simple toolkit could be developed that supports businesses to identify these alternative routes and also provide them with suggested ways to promote these alternative routes to their staff in an engaging way. The toolkit should also highlight how businesses can protect their staff from the health impact of poor air quality and show how businesses can reduce their air quality impact by:

- using low carbon delivery methods
- using electronic route maps when planning deliveries
- promoting a switch to ULEVs.

The toolkit should be promoted by a successful local business person who can evidence how reducing an organisation's air quality impact can also improve the organisation's efficiency and form part of the Council's workplace health programme.

Clean Air Day

Clean Air Day (CAD) is an awareness and action day co-ordinated by Global Action Plan on improving air quality. Medway Council should use the Day to localise the campaign's key messages to improve resident's understanding of air quality and how they can improve it. Recommendations for engaging with Clean Air Day include:

- Reviewing the Council's promotion of Clean Air Day in 2017.
- Undertaking a community air quality measurement programme, either by asking residents to measure the air quality in their area and releasing the results on CAD (similar to a project conducted by the Love London mapping project in Lambeth) or by asking different residents to conduct a journey across the four main AQMAs using different transport methods.
- Ask residents to make a pledge to give their car a holiday and reduce the amount of pollution they create which can be measured by the emissions calculator on KentAir website.
- Set local businesses a target for reducing the amount of air pollution their staff create when travelling to, from, and during work.
- Use Clean Air Day to promote the role of all council directorates in protecting the health of Medway residents and improving the air quality in the area.

7.3 *Objective 2: To empower people to protect the air quality in Medway by changing their behaviours*

This objective promotes behaviours that reduce the impact of air pollution on themselves and others in the community by reducing use of cars wherever possible and increasing walking/cycling/public transport usage (particularly for short journeys). The objective also aims to move people away from buying the most polluting vehicles and towards energy efficient fuel and electric cars.

7.3.1 Awareness objectives

- Increased knowledge of what differences individual changes can make.
- How to make changes to your own behaviours that can have positive changes on other people's lives.

7.3.2 Behavioural objective

- Using the car less and using non-pollution alternatives more.
- More drivers choosing to “eco-drive”.
- More residents choose a less polluting car.
- Increasing the use of sustainable transport

7.3.2 Communication activities

Maximising teachable moments

In everyone's lives there are “moments” where people are more open to messages to change their behaviours. These usually occur at significant points in people's lives such as births, marriage, illness. However, they can also occur when people start a new job or buy a new car. The Communication strategy must be able to utilise these moments to promote positive behaviours to promote behaviours that contribute to reducing air pollution. These moments could be:

- **Buying a car** - Central government are already providing “carrot and stick” policies to dissuade people from buying more polluting cars and persuade them to purchase more environmentally friendly vehicles. However, much could be done locally to promote eco-friendly vehicles such as providing information on vehicle emissions on the KentAir Website so that residents could identify vehicles that have low emissions and are low polluting. Our survey showed that people are looking for impartial advice from local and central government.
- **Starting a new school** - Open days for new pupils (primary and secondary) are opportunities where new behaviours could be started. All schools should be encouraged to work with Medway's safer journey teams to promote environmentally friendly ways to get to school, particularly for new students. These

include initiating “walking buses”, schools discouraging inappropriate car drop offs, giving out maps of suitable walk routes that avoid busy roads.

- **People diagnosed with chronic health conditions** – people are much more open to changing their behaviours when they are faced with a life-changing health condition. In the previous section, we stated that primary healthcare professionals should utilise all opportunities to promote behaviours that ensure people are aware of air pollution and how to take action. This should also include hospital units specialising in lung, CVD, asthma treatment.
- **Moving jobs** – people starting new jobs are often in a position where they can make a change in the way they get to work. In the previous section, we encouraged the promotion of travel plans for local businesses. We recommend also that as part of the introduction to the new job, people are given information on alternatives to driving.

Encouraging eco-driving

The Energy Saving Trust (EST) has approved a number eco-driving courses that are available to businesses. These courses have resulted in a 10%-15% reduction in fuel costs to businesses that have taken part, as well as lowering emissions. We recommend that the Council utilise a training course recommended by the EST to train a number of their drivers and then publicise the benefits to other businesses in the area through the council website and KentAir.

The promotion should also reference the fleet review service offered by the EST and/or other schemes such as ECOSTARS and FORS and promote the two ULEV vehicle lease schemes, Tuskers Salary Sacrifice Lease Scheme and the Green Car Salary Sacrifice Scheme. Medway Council should show leadership and provide a role model for other organisations by undergoing an EST fleet assessment and publishing the results and actions taken.

We suggest that publicity material promotes the decrease in expected fuel costs to attract taxi companies, road haulage companies and public transport operators to take part in the scheme. A list of companies that take part should be published to show and promote their green credentials.

Encouraging people to utilise public transport

We understand that promoting public transport will be difficult without the input of the public transport operators, particularly Arriva. We recommend that the Council develop and set-up a co-design workshop with the main transport operators, the council and members of our target audience in the area to:

- Review the reason for the increase in the total number of bus passengers in the last three years and how this can be increased further.

- Share communication materials that have been utilised elsewhere to promote greater use of public transport. *(The NSMC can source these materials from previous projects and our own research database).*
- Help support the development of joint promotion schemes to encourage people to take public transport.
- Discuss commercial incentives (joint ticketing) that can encourage people to take public transport.
- Utilise the Council's engagement channels to promote public transport throughout the area.

There are a number of local and national days, programmes and events that have been, and should continue to be, publicised by public health and the Road Safety and Safer Journeys Team to promote eco-friendly transport these are:

- Cycling and walking – joint branding with KentAir logo
- Walk to School week – 21-25 May 2018
- Walking Buses/Green Footsteps
- Bike Week 9-17th June including Medway Big Ride on 9th June
- Sustrans The Big Pedal
- Cycle to Work Day – 13th September 2017 (no 2018 date yet)
- Bikeability Balance and Bikeability Summer Courses
- Car Free Day - 22 September 2017 and Cars off the Road initiative

The Council's Leadership Role

The Council has a large role to play in setting an example by promoting the concept of reducing air pollution in all its policies, projects and programmes. It is clear that the participants in our survey considered that local government should play an active role by being an 'early adopter' of:

- Only procuring eco-friendly vehicles for their publicly funded services.
- Procurement of services from the private sector that include provisions that reduce pollution.
- Offices and other council properties must reduce emissions and publish them to ensure people are aware of what action has been taken.
- Promote car-sharing and alternatives to driving to work.

However, it will not be enough to be just an early adopter; the message needs to get out to residents that the council is 'serious' about changing its own behaviours and actions. This needs to be communicated through:

- Headlines/news items on the council website showing how its actions are contributing to reduced pollution levels in the area
- Opportunities for promoting each action/new service on local media should be found. This means that a news story be created that shows how:
 - The council is changing its “operations”;
 - What impact it will have on the environment;
 - What impact the new “operation” will have on residents; and
 - What residents can do themselves to change their own behaviours.

7.4 *Objective 3: To include air quality in future Medway Council plans and strategies*

7.4.1 Key awareness objectives

- Increase the understanding of Councillors and Council Officers on how air pollution is caused, how it impacts on residents’ health and how their work impacts on air quality.
- Increase the awareness of Air Quality Planning Guidance and support available from the Environmental Protection team.
- Increased awareness in developers of the Air Quality Planning Guidance and requirements and their use by the Council.

7.4.2 Behavioural objectives

- Use of the Air quality planning guidance by Planning Officers.
- Increase the number of templates completed and reviewed by the Environmental Protection team.
- Increased number of references to air quality in Council Directorate plans and in Medway’s Annual Plan Update.

7.4.3 Communication activities

Increase awareness of and the use of the Kent Air logo.

The KentAir logo should be used on all guidance documents, presentations and briefing documents relating to air quality and should represent the Council’s commitment to improving air quality in the area.

Increase awareness of air pollution’s impact on resident’s health

Air quality is not mentioned in the Council’s Business Plan or on the different department’s website pages despite a number of the objectives having a direct link to resident’s health or potentially affecting air quality in the area. The Environmental Protection Team need to provide local evidence of the impact of poor air quality in Medway through:

- Annual (or bi-annual) presentations to different council directorates updating directorates on air quality progress and its impact on residents. The presentations should be tailored to the different council plan objectives.
 - Improving everyone's health and reducing health inequalities.
 - Increasing the number of visitors to Medway without making air quality worse.
 - Traffic congestion schemes and how they can improve air quality.
 - Helping older people live independently.
 - Improving Medway through the regeneration strategy without making its air quality worse.
- Ongoing communication to the Policy Forum and Planning Officers Group.
- Engage support from councillors whose wards contain the 4 AQMAs to engage directorates and encourage them to raise air quality issues in council meetings and scrutiny committees.
- Offer guidance in supporting Directorate implementation plans and conducting air quality reviews.
- Staff newsletter air quality updates including driving sign up to KentAir Alert and warning people of Bad Air Days.

Work with Medway developers and building companies seeking a S106 contribution to increase awareness of the air quality planning guidance and its use by Medway Council

- Provide air quality information, including hotspot monitoring information on the Council's planning application website pages.
- Supporting developers to use the key air quality messages from the KentAir on their website, information leaflets and promotional materials)

8. Implementation and Evaluation Plan

The appendix provides an outline implementation and evaluation framework for the communication strategy. It will be necessary to include further details on specific dates as the various interventions are further developed towards implementation.

The plan includes:

- The key interventions that are outlined in the report together with the main steps required for implementation over the first 12 months. We recommend that, as this is the Council's first air quality communications strategy, the implementation plan is reviewed after the first 12 months before a longer-term plan (24-36 months) is developed.
- The prioritisation of how we believe the interventions should be implemented. From 1 – those interventions that should be implemented first, to 3 – those that can be implemented last.
- A series of indicators to measure the success of the separate interventions. These include output measures (testing whether the interventions have reached their target audiences) and outcome measures (testing whether there has been actual behaviour change).

This strategy was prepared by The National Social Marketing Centre in December 2017