

Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

BRIEFING NOTE – No.03/22

Date: 14 June 2022

Briefing paper to: All Members of the Regeneration, Culture and Environment
Overview & Scrutiny Committee

**Purpose: Four Elms Hill Draft Air Quality Action Plan Consultation -
Update**

This information is provided in response to a request made by the Committee on 22 March 2022 (minute number 775/2022)

- 1.1. All councils must regularly assess the air quality within their area for key pollutants, comparing their findings against the relevant air quality objectives.
- 1.2. If the air quality objectives are not met the local authority is required to declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and then develop and implement an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP), which sets out the action that will be taken to improve air quality in the AQMA.
- 1.3. In 2010 Medway Council designated three AQMAs, as a result of annual mean concentrations of nitrogen dioxide exceeding the air quality objectives (Central Medway; Pier Road, Gillingham; High Street Rainham). Having identified and designated the AQMAs the council produced an AQAP that details the steps to be taken to reduce nitrogen dioxide to below the objective levels in the AQMAs.
- 1.4. Medway declared its fourth AQMA, at Four Elms Hill, Chattenden in 2017. This was also due to nitrogen dioxide levels exceeding the annual mean objective. A map of the AQMA, including monitoring locations is shown below.

Map showing Four Elms Hill AQMA and diffusion tube monitoring locations



- 1.5. A draft AQAP has been produced as part of our statutory duties required by the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) framework. It outlines the actions we propose to pursue to improve air quality within the Four Elms Hill AQMA.
- 1.6. The draft AQAP identifies three key priority areas:
 - Emissions from cars
 - Emissions from Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) and Light Goods Vehicles (LGVs)
 - Emissions from buses
- 1.7. 16 measures have been identified to improve air quality within the Four Elms Hill AQMA. The measures can be considered under the following broad topics:
 - Alternatives to private vehicle use
 - Freight and delivery management
 - Policy guidance and development control
 - Promoting low emission transport
 - Promoting travel alternatives

- Public information
 - Transport planning and infrastructure
 - Traffic management
 - Vehicle fleet efficiency
- 1.8. Having produced a draft action plan, the Council is required to carry out a statutory consultation process to seek the views of stakeholders. The consultation went live on 7 March and will close on 24 April 2022. We have raised awareness of the consultation by writing to local residents and other stakeholders (including businesses) as well as alerting people using our social media channels.
- 1.9. Once the consultation closes on the 24 April 2022, the comments will be reviewed and considered by the Council's Environmental Protection team and any amendments will be made to the Action Plan. The Action Plan is due to be considered by the Departmental Management Team in early July, and if agreed will then proceed to Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet in August. A request to move the Cabinet date had been made to ensure that there is adequate time for the team to review the consultation comments and feedback.
- 1.10. Defra have provided positive feedback on the draft action plan, but have asked for some changes and amendments to be made, which will require additional work to be undertaken by our consultations and this has been factored into the timeline. The public consultation period has also been extended from 4 weeks to 6 weeks, which was requested by the Parish Councils.

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