

## **LOCAL AIR QUALITY AND ITS LINKS TO ROAD TRAFFIC AND THE POTENTIAL HEALTH IMPLICATIONS - REPORT UPDATE WITH FURTHER INFORMATION AND COSTINGS**

**Sevenoaks Joint Transportation Board - 6 December 2016**

Report of                   Chief Officer Environmental & Operational Services

Status:                   For Information

Key Decision:           No

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**Executive Summary:** This report provides Members with further details and the costs of four previously identified schemes aimed at improving local air quality.

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**This report supports the Key Aim of Green and Healthy Environment**

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**Recommendation to Joint Transportation Board:**

To note this report

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**Reason for recommendation:** Further information and costings has been provided to enable members to consider four previously identified schemes in more detail.

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### **Introduction and Background**

1. A report was presented to the Joint Transport Board on the 13 September 2016 outlining local air quality and its links to road traffic and the potential health implications. The following ten schemes were suggested within the report which could be explored to help improve local air quality.
  - i) The purchase of portable air quality monitoring equipment to assist in raising local awareness;
  - ii) The provision of electric vehicle charging points;

- iii) The review of traffic signals at the junction of the High Street and Dartford Road, Sevenoaks, to “puffin” crossings so dispensing with the pedestrian phase if no pedestrians were present
  - iv) Continuing to promote and expand the Air Alert scheme working with schools and community groups
  - v) Sign and publicity campaigns to include car sharing and turning off engines
  - vi) Dialogue with satnav companies over routes through Sevenoaks Town and other hotspots;
  - vii) Declassification of certain roads through Sevenoaks;
  - viii) Developing partnership working with neighbouring authorities to seek transboundary improvements to air quality along the A25 corridor;
  - ix) Working with local transport operators; and
  - x) Working in conjunction with KCC to promote active travel and other air quality initiatives.
2. It was proposed that further information and costings for achieving these schemes be provided over the next two JTB meeting. The following four schemes were initially identified to be discussed first.
- i. The purchase of portable air quality monitoring equipment to assist in raising local awareness;
  - ii. The provision of electric vehicle charging points;
  - iii. The review of traffic signals at the junction of the High Street and Dartford Road, Sevenoaks, to “puffin” crossings so dispensing with the pedestrian phase if no pedestrians were present; and
  - iv. Continuing to promote and expand the Air Alert scheme working with schools and community groups

#### 2.1 The purchase of portable air quality monitoring equipment to assist in raising local awareness

Portable continuous monitoring equipment would be procured for installation on lampposts and other street furniture. The monitors are battery powered and are easily movable to enable multiple locations to be assessed.

This would allow for real time monitoring to be carried out in and around particular areas. The real time data would be used to identify patterns of pollution, and to measure the success of associated initiatives to improve air quality.

There is existing specific “air quality monitoring” funding from previous s106 agreement contributions.

**The cost of a monitor with a one year service fee ranges from between £5,000 - £8,000 depending on the number of pollutants monitored.**

An annual service fee of approximately £500 is then payable.

## 2.2 The provision of electric vehicle charging points

Policy T3 in the Council’s Allocations and Development Management Plan, which was adopted by the Council in February 2015, encourages any new development to take into account and adapt to climate change and ensure that the development contributes to an improvement in the District’s air quality. To do this, the Council encourages the shift to low emission electrical vehicles by promoting charging points in appropriate locations throughout the District.

The Council through the planning process seeks provision in places where they will be well used and will not interfere with the safe movement of traffic.

The specific planning policy requires the following:

*“For major non-residential development proposals the applicant should set out within their Transport Assessment a scheme for the inclusion of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.*

*In considering whether a publically accessible charging point is appropriate the Council will have regard to:*

- a) *The accessibility of the location;*
- b) *The suitability of the site as a long stay destination during charging;*
- c) *The number of existing and proposed publically accessible charging points in the surrounding area;*
- d) *The potential impact of providing electric vehicle charging points on development viability.*

*Within new residential developments all new houses with a garage or vehicular accesses should include an electrical socket with suitable voltage and wiring for the safe charging of electric vehicles.*

*Schemes for new apartments and houses with separate parking areas should include a scheme for at least one vehicle charging point.*

*In non-residential developments where it is not appropriate to provide electric vehicle charging points, new development should be designated to include the electrical infrastructure in order to minimise cost and disturbance of retrofitting at a later date”.*

The council currently asks developers to provide travel plans to include the provision of electrical charging points and are also ensuring through the use of conditions that developers consider how the above policy can be met.

A number of schemes, such as the large residential developments in Rossiter Close and United House are providing electrical charging points which have been made accessible for individual properties. Some charging points have also been provided near visitor parking areas.

Provision is also being made for non-residential proposals visited by the public, for example the Brethren Meeting Hall, where charging points are being provided within the car park.

The Council's development of its Buckhurst car park by Sevenoaks Station into a multi decked car park includes provision of two "rapid" electric charging points, with the ability to expand this to up to ten points, if there be demand for this in the future.

Officers are currently investigating the installation of two additional Electric Vehicle charging points in public car parks in Sevenoaks town.

**The cost of installing each Electrical Vehicle charging point is estimated to be in the region of £10,000.**

**2.3 The review of automatic traffic signals at the junction of the High Street and Dartford Road, Sevenoaks, to "puffin" crossings so dispensing with the pedestrian phase if not pedestrians were present**

The automatic traffic signals (ATS) at this location currently has five phases; four vehicle phases, along with a "mandatory" pedestrian phase, when all traffic lights are red to allow pedestrians to cross.

The ATS could be converted to "detect" a pedestrian presence, so avoiding an "all on red" situation that currently arises, whether pedestrians are present or not.

**This upgrade would cost in the region of between £1,000 - £4,000.**

**2.4 Continuing to promote and expand the Air Alert scheme working with schools and community groups:**

Officers are currently meeting with Kings College London, who undertake the air quality analysis and forecasting necessary to run the airAlert scheme. New ways to expand and promote the scheme will be explored. Since the scheme's initial launch, new methods of communication have evolved with the development of a new airAlert app for Android and iOS phones. It is proposed that promotion of the airAlert scheme will focus on two specific aims.

- Continuing to target the free direct messaging service to those vulnerable people with respiratory and heart related problems

- Promote the airAlert app to the general public, not only to provide advice and actions when air quality is poor in order to protect health, but to also raise awareness of general air quality issues and measures that can be taken to reduce air quality.

Officers will focus on promoting the airAlert scheme in schools, care homes, charities and businesses as well as continuing to promote it via NHS partners as before.

### **The current scheme costs approximately £5,700 pa to run**

These costs together with any additional costs associated with new markets will continue to be met from specific airAlert targeted S106 funding and Defra air quality grants.

### **Key Implications**

#### Financial

Any actions taken as a result to explore and pursue the ‘quick win options’ can be met from remaining S106 (£96k approx.) and Defra Air Quality Grant (£30k approx.) funding.

#### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

Part IV of the Environment act 1995 requires local authorities in the UK to review air quality in their area and designate Air Quality Management Areas if improvements are necessary. Where an Air Quality Management Area is designated, local authorities are also required to work towards the Strategy’s objectives prescribed in regulations for that purpose. An air quality action plan describing the pollution reduction measures must then be put in place. These plans contribute to the achievement of air quality limit values at local level.

Risk assessment - Local Air Quality Management is a statutory service. If submissions are not made to DEFRA at required intervals, the Council may be subject to external scrutiny and possible intervention from DEFRA (with costs recharged to Council).

#### 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.

### **Conclusions**

This report is for Members’ information

**Background Papers:** Local air quality and its links to road traffic and the potential health implications - Joint - Transport Board

- 13 September 2016

<http://cds.sevenoaks.gov.uk/documents/g2095/Public%20reports%20pack%2013th-Sep-2016%2019.00%20Sevenoaks%20Joint%20Transportation%20Board.pdf?T=10>

**Richard Wilson**  
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