

Mr R Mellor  
C/o Programme Officer  
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By Email.

21<sup>st</sup> July 2017

Dear Mr Mellor

**Air Quality DPD; Air Quality Guidance; draft Low Emissions Strategy**

Thank you for your letter of 14th July asking specific questions about the forthcoming Air Quality DPD and the Air Quality Planning Guidance. My responses are set out below and I have also added some clarification about the content of the emerging Low Emissions Strategy (LES).

1. Would the Council please clarify its intended approach to the preparation of the DPD?

The Council is committed to completing the Air Quality DPD in advance of the Local Plan Review. Work will commence once the current Local Plan is adopted (in September 2017) and the timetable thereafter will be confirmed in the updated Local Development Scheme to be considered by the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport Committee on 5th December 2017 and is expected to be as follows;

Evidence gathering	Sept 17 – March 18
Scoping/options consultation (Reg 18)	April 18 – May 18
Draft DPD (Reg 19) – Full Council agreement for consultation	September 18
Draft DPD (Reg 19) consultation	Oct 18 – Nov 18
Submission	January 19
Examination	April 19
Modifications consultation (if required)	June 19 – July 19
Adoption – Full Council	September 19

This timetable will ensure that the DPD is adopted at least 18 months before the adoption of the Local Plan Review. In addition to expediting the preparation of the DPD, this timetable will enable the DPD's approach, and the evidence which underpins it, to inform the wider planning policies contained in the Local Plan Review.

The total timescale for the preparation of the DPD is some 2 years. The draft LES Action Plan wrongly states the timescale to be '3-5 years'; this will be corrected to the '1-3 years' category in the finalised version of the LES.

2. Would the Council also please clarify when it intends to adopt the Kent & Medway Planning Guidance and whether this would be as a Supplementary Planning Document or in another form?

The Kent & Medway Air Quality Planning Guidance will be reported to Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee on 26th September 2017 with the recommendation that it be approved as a material consideration for development management purposes. Amendments to make the guidance more Maidstone-specific will be proposed, in particular additional text to help illustrate the circumstances when the criteria in emerging Local Plan Policy DM6(1) – Air Quality will apply. This approach means that the guidance can be put in place promptly and will be applied for the duration of the Air Quality DPD's preparation.

### **Draft Low Emissions Strategy**

Whilst the draft LES does not explicitly address the relationship between modal shift and improving air quality, in my opinion this does not mean that the LES contradicts the Local Plan. The draft LES has been written with the intention that it will complement but not duplicate the content of other Plans and Strategies of the Council including the emerging Local Plan, the current Infrastructure Delivery Plan, the approved Integrated Transport Strategy and the approved Walking and Cycling Strategy. The explicit support these documents give to modal shift measures is unchanged by the publication of the draft LES. Indeed, the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee is responsible for the implementation of this suite of strategies, as well as the draft LES, ensuring that there is full and consistent oversight of the entirety of measures which will impact on air quality in the borough.

Yours sincerely



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