

Newington Air Quality Action Plan Meeting

19th September 2018 14.00 – 16.00hrs.

Pavilion, Orchard Drive, Newington

Attendees: See Attendee List

1. Introduction & Apologies

Apologies Cllr Gerry Lewin & Cllr Nick Hampshire

SW opens meeting introducing the role of SBC and Mid Kent Partnership in air quality legislation.

2. Purpose of meeting

SW explained that the purpose of the meeting, being to discuss Air Quality, including issues in Newington, but also looking at the issues across the whole of the borough and how Newington fits into this. The meeting is specifically to help in the drafting of an Air Quality Action Plan aimed at improving Air Quality across the whole of the borough of Swale.

3. Air Quality Monitoring Background Presentation

SW Presentation outlining the legal duties of the Environment Act 1995 and Local Air Quality Management (LAQM). 5 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA's) in the borough were highlighted Newington, St Pauls, East Street, Teynham, Ospringle. An action plan would be formed combining all these areas to form one action plan for the entirety of the A2. Feedback from residents was sought with regards to measures & ideas to go into the action plan.

4. Newington Air Quality Monitoring Presentation

SW Presentation highlighting the Air Quality in Newington. The AQMA in Newington was declared in 2009. No exceedances were found with automatic data. Diffusion tubes do show exceedances. Modelling recently undertaken predicts that Newington will achieve compliance of the air quality objectives by 2020. 57% of vehicles in Newington are cars 7% petrol 50% diesel.

Question: Why was the report by Lustre written for the developers on 99 High Street accepted but SW chose not to discuss with Professor Peckham.

SW advised that the methodology employed by Professor Peckham is not in compliance with the LAQM, this is the legislation that the Local Authority is bound by.

Question: How is it that levels will reduce in Newington with a do nothing scenario?

SW advised that this is based on the DEFRA guidance that the vehicle fleet will be significantly cleaner.

Question: Had the Council considered the risk on not meeting the required levels and the potential for the EU to consider a penalty or third party action.

SW advised that the action plan was being produced to ensure that the required levels would be met & whilst the Council are aware of the potential to be fined it was not a probable scenario.

Cllr Wright highlighted that people want action taken to improve the air quality – monitoring doesn't improve air quality.

Clarification was sought as to whether single action plan would include specific AQMA's separately. SW confirmed that it would.

Question: How confident is the Council with the outcome of the recent modelling?

SW advised that the modelling had been completed by a competent independent consultant and we were confident in the findings.

Cllr Wright advised that there was a general consensus from residents that the Air Quality has been worse this year than the previous year – there was not a feeling that the Air Quality was improving. The tubes were not placed at the correct height to get the worse case scenario & the air quality station was also not in the worse case location. Particulate levels were not monitored and residents in Newington felt that this was an issue. Road dust was constantly settling on residents windows etc. Cllr Wright felt that a regular deep clean of Newington High Street would help with this.

Question – A resident was COPD asked if there was somewhere she could obtain live pollution levels.

SW advised that the tube results and automatic monitoring stations results were available on the Kent air website. www.kentair.org.uk.

5. Swale Strategic Air Quality Action Plan

SW advised that an action plan would be formulated for the A2 corridor across Swale as appose to individual action plans for each declared AQMA. Feedback welcomed on any ideas or proposals that could form part of this action plan.

6. Last year's air quality statistics and comparison to the past.

SW presented levels on Air Quality in Newington and the trends over the past few years.

Question: Was the 40ugm limit a realistic safe level?

SW advised that this was the level set by legislation & the government but it would be impossible for us to advise what the safe level was.

Question: Is the pollution level worse higher or lower? (In relation to ground level)

SW advised that this was an unknown quantity, as it would depend on a number of factors such as location, topography, seasons weather conditions, traffic flow etc.

7. 20's plenty campaign, funding for improvements, sources and application process.

20's plenty campaign was discussed and SW advised that there was no strong evidence that a decrease in the speed limit would either increase or decrease the levels of air pollution in Newington. One of the most important factors in improving air quality is ensuring a steady flow of traffic.

Cllr Wright advised better use should be made of the S106 agreements under planning to ensure that measures to improve air quality are adequately funded and resourced.

RKJ stated that the mitigation measures proposed following the development at 99 High Street, Newington could be considered inadequate. Would they actually make any difference to the air quality? The majority of measures you could not make individuals adhere to. Surely the best mitigation was to stop all development, as any development adds to vehicle movements thus increasing pollution levels.

Question: If the Council do not know the actions that are going to be taken to improve the local air quality how can it be stated that the levels will improve by 2020 & if Kent Highways are not on board what is the point.

SW advised that a do nothing scenario has been modelled to show no exceedance in 2020, primarily based on DEFRA guidance of improved pollution levels from the vehicle fleet. SBC were in the process of liaising with Kent Highways to make sure that any proposals are realistic.

Cllr Wright advised that the Kent County Councillor Mike Whiting is the cabinet member for Transport & Waste.

8. Local Plan and effect of recent planning applications on traffic projections & air quality.

SW advised that the EP Team were currently working closely with the Local Plans Team to ensure that housing allocations are made in areas where the effect on air quality would be minimal, once a site has been allocated for housing in the local plan it is difficult for the Council not to support an application if it is made. Concern was expressed that with the recent report highlighting that pollution levels would no longer exceed by 2020 it would be difficult to argue against development. SW

advised that the main aim was to reduce air pollution to the acceptable levels but mitigation measures could be included in new developments to try and ensure levels remain acceptable.

9. Feedback and suggested actions for Newington in Swale AQAP.

Proposals were made to move the monitor to a worst case location & commence particulate monitoring.

Place tubes at various heights to determine the worse case scenarios. Cllr Wright advised that funding had been provided and should be used to undertake proposed measures. SW advised that SBC were currently in the process of trying to recruit an Air Quality Projects Officer who's role would be to lead on Air Quality and move forward on action plans etc.

Increasing the size of the pedestrian crossing so it becomes a pedestrian zone thus pushing the stationary traffic back to a position where the air quality levels are lower.

Footbridges to negate the need for a pedestrian crossing.

Safer route to the primary school through the village away from the A2.

Regular deep cleaning of the A2 through Newington to help decrease levels of particulate.

10. Next Meeting

Future meeting was proposed for the next 3 to 4 months it was agreed that an evening meeting at the Village Hall would be more inclusive. January meeting date and avoiding Tuesdays if possible.