

**Committee: Cabinet**

**Agenda Item**

**Date: 18<sup>th</sup> October 2017**

**9**

**Title: Air Quality Action Plan**

**Portfolio holder : Cllr Susan Barker, Cabinet member of Environmental Services**

Key decision: Yes

## Summary

1. There is a legal requirement to produce an Air Quality Action Plan further to the declaration of the Saffron Walden Air Quality Management Area. A decision was made to adopt the Action Plan at Cabinet on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2016. The Action plan was then called in for discussion at the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2016. The Scrutiny Committee resolved to refer the Action Plan back to Cabinet with recommendations for improvements. Amendments to the Action Plan have been made incorporating the recommendations by the Committee. The matter was heard at Scrutiny on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2017 where the recommendation was made for the plan to be approved by Cabinet.

## Recommendations

2. The Cabinet is requested to approve the Air Quality Action Plan as a working document over the 5 year life of the plan.

## Financial Implications

3. None, from existing resources

## Background Papers

4. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

Draft Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) October 2017

## Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	A consultation exercise was carried out during the development of the AQAP with public and key stakeholders in 2016.
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None

Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	Having designated an Air Quality Management Area the council is required to prepare an Action Plan in accordance with the Environment Act 1995. Under the same Act, ECC is obliged to submit measures related to their functions to help meet Air Quality Objectives in their area, and may make recommendations to UDC in relation to amendment of the AQAP.
Sustainability	The AQAP aims to encourage alternative and sustainable transport
Ward-specific impacts	Saffron Walden wards: Audley, Castle and Shire.
Workforce/Workplace	Environmental Health Service

## Situation

6. Air quality monitoring and modelling carried out by the Council has shown that air quality is generally good in the district but at some junctions within Saffron Walden, the national objective for nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) has not been met in recent years, or has been very slightly below the objective.
7. The junctions of concern are:
  - Thaxted Road/East St /Radwinter Road/Chaters Hill
  - High Street/ George St/Abbey Lane
  - Debden Road/London Road
  - Bridge Street/Castle St
8. Where objectives are not likely to be achieved, the Council is obliged under the Environment Act 1995 to designate the affected area as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)
9. The Act then requires an Action Plan to be produced for these designated areas, setting out the actions that the Council intends to take to meet the objectives and to maintain levels below the objective for the life of the plan.
10. The Council last produced an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) in 2009 following declaration of three small Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) centred on the most congested road junctions in the centre of Saffron Walden.
11. Further monitoring of air quality was subsequently undertaken which revealed a wider area of concern where air quality objectives were not being met, and in 2012 a larger AQMA was declared by the Council covering the central area of the town.

12. An updated AQAP was prepared following a lengthy consultation exercise and put to Cabinet on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2016. A decision was made to adopt the plan, subject to a minor amendment.
13. Following the Cabinet decision, the matter was called in by Councillor Dean, the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee. During Scrutiny Committee discussions it was suggested that the action plan should include the following additional information:
- A position statement
  - Prioritise the actions.
  - Quantification of costs
  - Confirmation that the plan meets DEFRA guidelines
14. It was resolved at the meeting to refer the decision back to Cabinet, with a recommendation that improvements be made to the Saffron Walden AQAP before it was approved and submitted to DEFRA.
15. In response to the recommendations made by the committee, an amended AQAP has been prepared and was presented to Scrutiny on 26<sup>th</sup> September. Scrutiny resolved to recommend that the Action Plan should now be adopted by Cabinet. The Action Plan is attached to this report as Appendix 1.
16. It should be noted that advice received from Defra Local Air Quality Unit is to publish the plan as soon as possible and amend as when necessary and when new land allocations become available.
17. In accordance with Defra Guidance, the Action Plan is to act as a live document which is to be continually reviewed and developed, to ensure current measures are progressing and new measures are adopted and brought forward. A commitment to review annually is included at the start of the Plan.

## Risk Analysis

18.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Air pollution levels are not reduced within the 5 year life of the action plan	Some risk from availability of budget over the 5 year term	Impact will be subject to on-going monitoring	The action plan will be kept under review as a working document

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.