Air Quality, Public Transport and Active Travel

A report prepared by a Task Group of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Regeneration Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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2. Chairperson's Foreword

2.1. As Chairperson of the Air Quality, Public Transport and Active Travel Task Group, I introduce the report of our review and findings. It has been a very interesting piece of work, looking at a topic that is so important to so many people.

2.2. We decided to undertake an ambitious but very important in-depth scrutiny review. Due to the multi-faceted approach to the topic selection, the scope of the review was ambitious, however, due to the inextricable link between the three key aspects, looking at them together enabled an opportunity for a multi-targeted approach to our recommendations. Scrutiny reviews allow us to investigate issues in-depth and in innovative ways, where we can call on a range of expert witnesses and explore best practice to learn more about an issue and then come up with recommendations for Cabinet to consider, which we hope will add real value and make a real difference to Medway.

Councillor McDonald - Chairperson

3. Introduction

3.1. On behalf of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and the Regeneration Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee we are pleased to present the review titled 'Air Quality, Public Transport and Active Travel,' with its associated recommendations, to Medway Council's Cabinet.

3.2. The work of the Task Group has considered the contributory factors to poor air quality and the significant impact it has on health in the UK and more specifically, careful consideration has been given to the impact on the residents of Medway. The Task Group hopes that the recommendations contained in the report will act as a catalyst to ensuring that tackling issues of Air Quality remains a priority for all to address the negative impact that it has on health and wellbeing.

3.3. The Task Group would like to thank all the witnesses who have been involved to date and helped it to gather evidence at its meetings, particularly those representing external organisations, for the time they have given to the Task Group and most importantly, for the invaluable information provided.

The Task Group

Councillor McDonald – Chairperson

Councillor Bowen

Councillor Brake

Councillor Crozer

Councillor Field

Councillor Jackson

4. Executive Summary

4.1. As indicated by the title of this review, air quality is of significant public health importance as it is the greatest environmental impactor on health in the UK due to the significant impact on individual and environmental health and well-being.

4.2. Air Quality and the impactors, such as poor health of children and adults are critical as exposure affects everyone's health, leading to hospitalisations, diseases and even premature deaths. There is also an environmental impact of air quality standards, which can adversely affect eco systems, reduce agricultural crop yields and damage plant and wildlife.

4.3. Due to this challenge and its importance to the people of Medway, the Council's Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to select this topic for an in-depth scrutiny review. It is clear that there is already significant work being undertaken across Medway but given the scale of the problem, it highlighted this as a priority that required more recognition and increased activity to promote the issue and that tackling the problem was everyone's duty in order to preserve our future health, wellbeing and ensure the sustainability of communities.

4.4. The Task Group hopes that its recommendations will act as a catalyst to further assist in the issue surrounding Air Quality, Public Transport and Active Travel. The full list of recommendations of the Task Group are set out in section seven of this report.

5. Background

Choosing a Review Topic

5.1. The Council's Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed on 20 June 2024 the scope for this in-depth scrutiny review, which had been chosen given that key themes of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan are Public Transport and Active Travel. At the time of this review, Medway's Air Quality Action Plans (2015 [1] , which has now been superseded by the 2025-30 AQAP) and Air Quality Communications Strategy recognise the contribution Sustainable Transport and Active Travel make to achieving the Council's Air Quality ambitions.

5.2. The review topic was chosen due to the impact and adverse effects air pollution has on quality of life, wellbeing and health. Air Quality is of significant Public Health importance as it is the greatest environmental impactor on health in the UK. Between 28,000 and 36,000 deaths per year are attributed to poor air quality. The effects of air quality are felt across the life course from birth to death and negatively impact physical and mental health of individuals. Air quality is evidenced to greatly impact on and contributes to widened health inequalities for those who reside in areas of deprivation.

[1] https://www.medway.gov.uk/downloads/file/7339/medway_air_quality_action_plan_draft

5.3. Asthma, which we know is exacerbated by poor air quality, is a concern as it affects people of any age and poorly controlled asthma and exposure to lung irritants causes an increased risk in development of other respiratory diseases, such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) in later life.

5.4. Research shows there are several benefits of low traffic neighbourhoods/traffic management tools in managing air quality and having a positive impact, as reduction in traffic volume reduces emissions from vehicles, and leads to a decrease in pollutants including nitrogen dioxide (NO_2).

5.5. **Headline statistics:**

- In 2010, three Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) were declared: Central Medway AQMA, Pier Road Gillingham AQMA and High Street, Rainham AQMA, In 2017, Four Elms Hill AQMA was declared. These four areas were declared due to exceeding the annual mean NO_2 air quality objective set by Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs DEFRA).

- Air pollution is associated with a number of adverse health impacts. It is recognised as a contributing factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer. Additionally, air pollution particularly affects the most vulnerable in society: children and older people, and those with heart and lung conditions.

- There is also often a strong correlation with equalities issues because areas with poor air quality are also often the less affluent areas.

- The annual health cost to society of the impacts of particulate matter alone in the UK is estimated to be around £16 billion [2].

5.6. Medway has implemented several traffic calming measures such as School Street initiatives, and speed cushions and whilst these were introduced to make streets safer for pedestrians, one of the positive consequences was a reduction in emissions pollution which would result in a reduction emissions and exposure at peak times.

Annual Mean NO_2 Concentrations at traffic point of declaration for AQMAs in Medway

AQMA and year of declaration	NO_2 concentration at point of declaration (μgm^{-3})
Central Medway (2010)	58.4 [3]

[2] Defra. Abatement cost guidance for valuing changes in air quality, May 2013

[3] Value presented is the maximum concentration measured within the AQMA as presented in Medway Council's 'Further Assessment of Air Quality for Central, Rainham and Gillingham AQMAs, 2011' document (i.e. based on 2009 data). It should be noted that these values have not been distance corrected.

AQMA and year of declaration	NO_2 concentration at point of declaration (μgm^{-3})
High Street, Rainham (2010)	52.9 [7]
Pier Road, Gillingham (2010)	52.7 [7]
Four Elms Hill (2017)	52.0 [4]

5.7. Significant improvements have been made since declaration, and the monitoring results show that air quality is improving, and Medway is now compliant with respect to all NO_2.

Annual Mean NO2 Concentration at traffic level of exceedance 2025

AQMA	NO_2 concentration current year[5] ($\mu gm-3$)
Central Medway	37.9
High Street, Rainham	28.8
Pier Road, Gillingham	25.3
Four Elms Hill	38.7

6. Setting the Context

Definition of Air Quality

6.1. Air quality describes how polluted the air we breathe is. Poor air quality affects our health, the quality of life we lead and is even more detrimental to those with heath issues such as heart and lung conditions. Whilst there have been many steps taken since the middle of the 20th century to tackle the worst impacts of air pollution through regulatory framework, air pollution is still present and is

[4] Value presented is the maximum concentration measured within the AQMA as presented in Air Quality Consultants Ltd. 'Detailed Assessment of Air Quality at Four Elms Hill, Chattenden' for Medway Council (2016) (i.e. based on 2015 data). It should be noted that these values have not been distance corrected.
[7] Value presented is the maximum concentration measured within the AQMA as presented in Medway Council's 'Further Assessment of Air Quality for Central, Rainham and Gillingham AQMAs, 2011' document (i.e. based on 2009 data). It should be noted that these values have not been distance corrected.
[5] https://www.kentair.org.uk/reports

one of the biggest health challenges, shortening lifespans and damaging quality of life for many people.

6.2. There are many parts of the country with unacceptable levels of air pollution. Information is available on the quality of air in each area at Kent Air where a detailed view of air pollution forecast can be found. A daily air quality index is also available which notifies you about the levels of pollution and provides recommended actions and health advice, in particular for children and adults at risk.

Definition of Asthma

6.3. Asthma is a chronic long term lung disease affecting children, young people and adults. It is an inflammation and narrowing of the airways and tubes that carry air in and out of the lungs and makes it harder for air to flow out of the airways when breathing out. Asthma symptoms occur in response to a wide range of triggers, such as allergens (i.e. pollen, dust), infections (i.e. colds, flu), irritants (i.e. smoke, air pollution. fumes), exercise, medication and weather (i.e. changes in temperature, humidity).

Definition of Low Traffic Neighbourhood

6.4. Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) are schemes where motor vehicle traffic in residential streets is greatly reduced using different means such as restrictions at different times of day, in particular around schools where there are schemes such as safer streets to make streets safer for children through reduction of through traffic, or total road closures in some streets. The scheme is modelled on the concept from the Netherlands where neighbourhoods are designed to discourage through traffic. LTNs have evolved and encompass the development of new technologies such as the use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras and there is still ongoing research into various traffic calming measures. LTNs were introduced as part of the government's efforts to tackle air pollution caused by vehicles, reduce noise pollution where some streets are used as rat runs, reduce road accidents and to create safer spaces for people to walk and live and encourage more walking and cycling which could assist in living healthier lives. There are various products that can be utilised to create a low traffic neighbourhood. These include speed ramps, use of temporary or permanent barriers, ANPRs, 20mph roads, speed cameras, and restriction on roads at certain times of the day.

7. National Policies, Strategies, Guidance and Research

Air Quality

7.1. The UK's Air Quality Standards Regulations (2010) and the Environment Act (2021) require annual reporting on compliance and progress. Data is available on the UK-AIR website. The 2023 DEFRA report on Air Pollution in the UK details the importance of Clean Air which is crucial for health, the environment, and the prosperity of cities. The UK monitors air pollution to fulfil statutory reporting requirements, develop cost-effective control policies, provide reliable

information to the public, evaluate impacts on health and the environment and test and validate models. The report summarises measurements from national air pollution monitoring networks, operated on behalf of DEFRA and the devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

7.2. In addition, the UK's Air Quality Standards Regulations (2010) and the Environmental Targets (Fine Particulate Matter) (England) Regulations (2023) require annual air quality assessments and reporting to be made available to the public. The UK has statutory monitoring networks to meet regulatory requirements, supplemented by air quality modelling. The Environmental Targets(Fine Particulate Matter) (England) Regulations (2023) report highlights the ongoing efforts to monitor and improve air quality in the UK. It covers nitrogen oxides (NOx), PM10 and PM2.5 particles, ozone (O3), sulphur dioxide (SO2), carbon monoxide (CO), benzene, 1,3-butadiene, metals (lead, cadmium, nickel, mercury), arsenic, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH). The report highlights the UK's progress in meeting air quality standards and the ongoing efforts to reduce pollution levels.

Low Traffic Neighbourhoods

7.3. In 2023, the Department for Transport (DfT) commissioned a review on low traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs) and found they can be effective if implemented in the right places and with local support. In some cases, any local residents and businesses feel they have not been adequately informed or involved in the decision-making process for LTNs. Some councils have proposed large LTN schemes despite opposition, leading to frustration and, in some cases, the removal of these schemes. In response, the DfT issued statutory guidance in 2024 on implementing LTNs. The guidance emphasises the need for councils to regularly review LTNs to ensure they meet objectives, do not negatively impact other areas, and maintain local support. A consultation will be launched to discuss the use of DVLA data by councils to enforce LTNs and other traffic schemes. The government may change the legal framework if councils do not follow the guidance, although cooperation with local councils is preferred. The focus is on ensuring LTNs are locally supported and effective, with regular reviews and community involvement.

Asthma

7.4. The Public Health England Health Matters: air pollution report notes that poor air quality is the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK, causing chronic conditions like cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, and lung cancer, leading to reduced life expectancy.

7.5. The report focuses on the health impacts of air pollution across a person's lifetime, health inequalities, and the future outlook in terms of disease cases and NHS/social care costs. In its 2010 Air Quality report, the Environment Audit Committee estimated the cost of health impacts from air pollution to be between £8 to £20 billion. Long-term exposure to air pollution reduces life expectancy, mainly due to cardiovascular and respiratory diseases and lung

cancer. Short-term exposure can exacerbate asthma and increase hospital admissions and mortality. Air pollutants come from both man-made and natural sources, including transport, industrial processes, farming, energy generation, and domestic heating. A reduction of 1 μg/m³ in fine particulate air pollution in England could prevent around 50,900 cases of coronary heart disease, 16,500 strokes, 9,300 cases of asthma, and 4,200 lung cancers over 18 years. The government is committed to improving air quality and reducing harmful emissions, as outlined in the draft Clean Air Strategy published in May 2018. Particulate matter (PM) and nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) are major components of urban air pollution. Reducing their concentrations below air quality standards is likely to bring additional health benefits.

8. Medway Specific Plans & Strategies

Medway's One Medway Council Plan 2024 – 2028

8.1. The One Medway Council Plan is Medway Council's Strategic Plan which sets out its vision and ambition for the residents of Medway and how it will ensure that the best services are provided for residents. In correlation to this Task and Finish Group review, there are two priorities that are of relevance which are priority 3: Enjoying clean, green, safe and connected communities and Priority 5: Improving health and wellbeing for all. The desired outcomes associated with these priorities are to enable increased cycling and walking networks and to work with partners to ensure an integrated, accessible, safe and sustainable public transport site across Medway. To accomplish this, the Council wants to expand opportunities for walking, cycling, public transport, and electric vehicle use, which will help reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality. The Council is focused on working in partnership with health services and key health partners to tackle challenges that prevent its residents from leading healthy lives for longer and to achieve this the Council is committed to work collaboratively with communities, and organisations to tackle health and wellbeing challenges, ensuing everyone has the opportunity to lead long healthy lives.

Air Quality Action Plan 2025 - 2030

8.2. The Air Quality Action Plan sets out the actions needed to be taken to improve air quality within the four Air Quality Managements Areas declared across Medway (referenced above at paragraph 4.7).

8.3. Actions have been developed that can be considered under the following Broad Topics:

- Freight and delivery management
- Policy guidance and development control
- Promoting low emission transport

- Promoting travel alternatives
- Public information
- Transport planning infrastructure
- Traffic management

In development of the Air Quality Action Plan 2025 -2029, key priorities were determined by the Council and the AQAP Steering Group, which included the following:

Priority 1 – Bring about compliance with the Air Quality Strategy objectives across Medway, focusing on NO2 concentrations within the Central Medway, Gillingham and Rainham AQMAs (as well as the Four Elms Hill AQMA, which is addressed in a separate AQAP). We are also working on building evidence to demonstrate this to enable the AQMAs to be revoked in the future.

Priority 2 – Reduce NOx emissions from diesel (and petrol) cars in the Central Medway, Gillingham and Rainham AQMAs, by encouraging use of alternative modes of transport such as active travel and public transport, and by delivering the vision in our Electric Vehicle Strategy.

Priority 3 – Reduce NOx emissions from buses, by assessing the potential to upgrade a proportion of the bus fleet to electric.

Priority 4 – Reduce NOx emissions from HGVs, by exploring opportunities to set up a freight recognition scheme in Medway.

Priority 5 – Reduce NOx emissions from taxis, using the evidence from the study currently being delivered, and working towards upgrading a proportion of the taxi fleet to ultra-low/zero emission vehicles.

Priority 6 – Reducing emissions of PM2.5 particulate matter across the borough.

These priorities would be managed through the AQAP. This has a series of measures which contain all the actions, details the responsible officer and department, timescales, cost, benefits and monitoring of progress.

Kent and Medway Integrated Care System – Safer Asthma

8.4. Kent and Medway Integrated Care System's strategy on asthma provides information on how to meet the health and wellbeing needs of the population. Information can be found on what asthma is, the symptoms, and factors that affect people with asthma and make it harder for them to breathe.

8.5. Detailed guidance can be found on treatments and lifestyle changes that can help to manage the conditions for adults and children and includes:

- Asthma Review - A child should have an asthma review with a doctor or asthma nurse once a year.

- Medication check – An inhaler check should be conducted at the review to ensure that the right techniques are used to ensure full benefit of the medication is received.

- Asthma Action Plan – A personalised asthma action plan should be completed with the help of a doctor or asthma nurse which should be shared with anyone looking after or in contact with the child such as school or extended family.

- Air pollution - how it affects people with asthma and how to reduce children's and adults' exposure to air pollution both indoors and outside of the home.

8.6. Detailed information is available for:

Parents and Carers - such as support for people to stop smoking and/or vaping, due to the effects of second hand smoke on the lungs of babies and children.

Children and Young People - Useful resources, such as the My Asthma App to help track symptoms and control asthma, information on vaping, smoking and peer pressure and videos on how to use inhalers and manage symptoms. There is also information on being active and the benefits to keeping lungs healthy.

Primary and Secondary Schools – Awareness and management of asthma in schools and across Medway through the Asthma Friendly School Scheme. All schools are encouraged to sign up to the Scheme. It requires schools to be proactive and have various things in place, such as a school inhaler for emergency use, management plan for each child, an asthma policy, staff training, an asthma register and a named responsible member of staff for asthma.

Health Care Professionals - there is information on training and guidance including free training from NHS England to improve knowledge and awareness. There are asthma pathways, referrals and guides to support asthma diagnosis. There is also management review and a referral to secondary care when appropriate.

9. Methodology and Approach

9.1. On 31 January and 23 April 2024, the Task Group met to discuss the background, the review scope and agree its Terms of Reference. Due to the breadth of the topic, it was proposed that the Task Group identify three particular strands, one in relation to air quality, one in relation to public transport and active travel and one in relation to public health as this was a significant driver in identifying this topic in the first instance. Focusing on these specific

areas enabled the Task Group to be more effective and add the most value from the review.

9.2. At this point, the group also considered the methodology for the review. It was agreed that due to the breadth of the topics it would be prudent to proceed with a stakeholder event encompassing all the three strands of the review. This would provide an opportunity to have all stakeholders to examine and identify the links between their services and how they could contribute to tangible suggestions and ideas as to how collectively the issues of air quality could be addressed. External consultants with expertise in particular areas were brought in to support and facilitate discussions and ideas around the topics of the review.

9.3. In addition to the stakeholder event, it was agreed that several round table discussions would take place for each of the three strands to gather evidence, this involved Council officers as well as external stakeholders.

9.4. The Task Group also agreed a visit to Camdem Council to discuss the extensive work that they had undertaken in tackling air quality to further understand the steps they had taken, including the involvement of the community in all aspects of development of the strategy. Unfortunately, Camden was unable to facilitate a visit due to resource constraint and upon agreement a roundtable virtual session took place instead which proved invaluable to the review.

Terms of reference

9.5. The Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed the following terms of reference:

Air Quality – To review how the wider Council services contribute to air quality ambitions and reporting.

Public Transport and Active Travel – To review the principles of low traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) and the potential benefits to communities across Medway.

Public Health – Asthma (which we know is exacerbated by poor air quality).

9.6. The Task Group also agreed a number of key lines of enquiry to inform its evidence gathering and recommendations:

Air Quality – how the wider Council services contribute to air quality ambitions and reporting:

i. Explore the effectiveness of internal reporting on progress against the Council's air quality action plans.

ii. How the environmental protection team are consulted and engaged on projects and policies across the Council which may have an impact on air quality.

Public Transport and Active Travel – the principles of low traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) and the potential benefits to communities across Medway:

i. To consult with expert witnesses including other authorities that have implemented LTNs.

ii. To explore evidence relating to the impact of LTNs on air quality and sustainable transport, emergency services, local businesses and other key stakeholders.

iii. To consider the data required to support any implementation of LTN principles, links to wider local policy objectives and the requirements for consultation and engagement.

Public Health – Asthma (which we know is exacerbated by poor air quality):

i. Exploration of the impact of air quality in relation to asthma.

ii. To consult with expert witnesses such as primary care and nursing staff.

iii. To identify examples of best practice or work done to support improved health outcomes in relation to asthma.

9.7. The approach, methodology and programme for the review is set out below:

Date	Task Group Members in Attendance	Attendees	Purpose
31 January 2024	Councillors Bowen, Brake, Crozer, Field, Mcdonald and Prenter	Officers: Alex Constantides- Strategic Head of Public Realm Michael Edwards- Head of Transport and Parking James Flower- Senior Public Health Manager Aeilish Geldenhuys- Health Principal and Strategic Head of Public Health Programmes Ian Gilmore- Head of Regulatory Services Jon Pitt- Democratic Services Officer Stuart Steed- Environmental Protection Officer	Review scoping document, setting the scene, presenting best practice from other regions.

Date	Task Group Members in Attendance	Attendees	Purpose
23 April 2024	Councillors Wildey, Bowen, Brake, Crozer, Field, Mcdonald and Prenter	Officers: Alex Constantides- Strategic Head of Public Realm Ruth Delieu Michael Edwards- Head of Transport and Parking James Flower- Senior Public Health Manager Aeilish Geldenhuys- Health Principal and Strategic Head of Public Health Programmes Ian Gilmore- Head of Regulatory Services Stuart Steed- Environmental Protection Officer Stephanie Davis- Democratic Services Office Teri Reynolds- Principal Democratic Services Officer	Review of scope and agree a revised version including terms of reference and key lines of enquiry.
20 June 2024			Report to Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee to agree the Scope of the Review.
27 September 2024	Councillors Bowen, Brake, Crozer, Field, Jackson and McDonald	Witnesses: Stephanie Bortolli- Project Centre, part of Marston Holdings Chris Harrison- Project Centre, part of Marston Holdings Samantha Whybrow- Clinical Lead for Children and Young people's Asthma, MCH Nikki Teesdale- Director of Health and	Stakeholder workshop event to gather intelligence on the identified strands of the review

Date	Task Group Members in Attendance	Attendees	Purpose
		Integration Medway and Swale HCP Jim Loftus- Senior Programme Manager NHS Kent and Medway ICB Dr Helen Ramsey- Clinical lead for Respiratory Network NHS Kent and Medway Officers: Gemma Beckwith- Senior Partnership Commissioner, Public Health Julia Cox- Head of Child Health Commissioning Michael Edwards- Head of Transport and Parking Vicky Emrit- Climate Response Officer James Flower- Senior Public Health Manager Aeilish Geldenhuys- Public Health Principal and Strategic Head of Public Health Programmes Stuart Steed- Environmental Protection Officer James Sutton (Sustainable Transport Manager) Stephanie Davis- Democratic Services Teri Reynolds – Democratic Services	
22 November 2024	Councillors Brake, Bowen, Crozer, Field,	Officers: Ian Gilmore- Head of Regulatory Services Paul Wood- Streetworks Manager	To discuss the three key lines of enquiry from the Air Quality Strand

Date	Task Group Members in Attendance	Attendees	Purpose
	Jackson, McDonald	Alison Hughes- Performance and Intelligence Officer Matthew Pinder- Smart City Project Officer James Flower- Senior Public Health Manager Stephanie Davis – Democratic Services Teri Reynolds – Democratic Services	
24 January 2025	Councillors Brake, Bowen, Crozer, Field, Jackson McDonald	Officers: Andrew Bull- Principal Planner Stuart Steed- Environmental Protection Officer Stephanie Davis- Democratic Services Teri Reynolds- Democratic Services	To discuss how the emerging Local Plan aligns with the Air Quality agenda and action plans.
25 February 2025	Councillors Crozer, Field, Jackson, McDonald	Officers: Michael Edwards- Head of Transport and Parking David Warner- Transport Engineering Manager James Sutton- Sustainable Transport Manager Stephanie Davis- Democratic Services Teri Reynolds- Democratic Services	This session focused on the key lines of enquiry of the Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) element of the review. To explore what aspects of the traffic management tool may be suitable for Medway.
25 March 2025	Councillors Brake, Field, Jackson, McDonald	Officers: Michael Edwards- Head of Transport and Parking Stephanie Davis- Democratic Services Teri Reynolds- Democratic Services	To provide Members of the Group with further information and evidence on the line of enquiry relating to Low Traffic

Date	Task Group Members in Attendance	Attendees	Purpose
			Neighbourhoods (LTNs)
11 March 2025	Councillors Bowen, Crozer, Field, Jackson	Witnesses: Tom Parkes- Air Quality Programme Manager, Camden Council Officers: Gemma Beckwith-Senior Partnership Commissioner, Public Health Julia Cox- Head of Child Health Commissioning Stephanie Davis-Democratic Services Teri Reynolds-Democratic Services	Exploration and discussion on the Air Quality Strategy review in Camden
29 April 2025	Councillors Brake, Bowen, Crozer, Jackson, McDonald	Witnesses: Samantha Whybrow Nichole Tregenna Sophie Wheeldon Officers: James Flower- Senior Public Health Manager Aeilish Geldenhuys-Public Health Principal and Strategic Head of Public Health Stephanie Davis-Democratic Services Teri Reynolds-Democratic Services	This session focused on the Asthma strand and discussions took place on the communication theme, how to raise awareness and support on going work
18 August 2025	Councillors Brake, Bowen, Crozer, Field Jackson, McDonald	Officers: James Flower - Senior Public Health Manager Aeilish Geldenhuys - Public Health Principal and Strategic Head of Public Health	To agree recommendations and the draft report ahead of it being presented to the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny

Date	Task Group Members in Attendance	Attendees	Purpose
		Michael Edwards - Head of Transport and Parking Stuart Steed - Environmental Protection Officer Stephanie Davis – Democratic Services Teri Reynolds- Democratic Services	Committee and Regeneration Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and onwards to Cabinet.

10. Summary of Evidence Collected and recommendations

Air Quality

10.1. This section explores the outcomes following discussions around air quality, the impact to the community of Medway, the Air Quality Action Plans and how to support the aspiration of the Council on improvements which will benefit the community.

Stakeholder Event

10.2. In the first session with Members, officers led a session to explore how to effectively support the Council in Governance delivery of its Air Quality Action Plans. A presentation was delivered on Air Quality in Medway and how wider Council services contribute to air quality ambitions and reporting. Reporting on management of Air Quality is a statutory function, details of which must be reported on an annual basis to DEFRA. There is continuous monitoring of levels across Medway, with 4 AQMAs currently in place across Medway, with action plans developed and implemented as required under the legal duty following the declaration of the areas. The action plans cover a period of 5 years and its reviewed and updated throughout the five year period to reflect current states of air quality, The action plan incorporates tackling sources of impact to air quality and a wide range of measures to address the duty to reduce emissions.

10.3. It was highlighted that the Air Quality Steering Group had been set up in 2016 and historically there had been low attendance at its meetings. The Group was set up to monitor progress of different departments in enforcing the action plan ambitions, engaging with colleagues on how they could contribute. However, the scope has been limited due to lack of full representation at meetings which has impacted on the ongoing commitment to address and implement action. Reporting on action plan progress was therefore an area identified as having potential to be improved due to low feedback on ongoing implementation (although reporting by some teams was excellent). To improve trajectory, consultation with the Environmental Protection Team would be beneficial on Council wide projects to enable air quality expectations to be built in at an early stage. This review presented an opportunity to bridge gaps, tighten relationships and improve engagement.

Consultation and engagement

10.4. It was referenced that the following steps were critical in progressing the Action Plan (AP):

- Having line of sight of activities of strategies and policies in various teams in the Council.

- Departments liaising with the Environmental Protection Team about proposed projects.
- Ability to feed into plans, such as the Local Plan, to ensure Air Quality is a focus and fundamental element of the plan.
- Representation from all Council departments on the steering group, with an emphasis on the importance of taking the AP seriously.
- Term of reference of steering group is reviewed every year and shared, ownership of this by a named person.
- Senior management representation on the steering group to ensure line of sight is maintained and to encourage increased attendance.
- Drop in sessions/all Member briefings to equip Councillors with the information and knowledge to take back to their wards/communities to raise awareness on Air Quality issues.
- Steering group is fundamental to ensuring partnership working as there are impacts that are cross district with KCC in areas such as Transportation and Highways.
- Increased partnership working with neighbouring boroughs on joint air quality projects.

10.5. Following the Initial meeting, a session took place with various departments which focused on three identified areas.

Roundtable Discussions

How Governance arrangements can be strengthened to ensure delivery of the Action Plan

10.6. Discussions took place around the main concerns with the effectiveness of the steering group, whose main focus was to assist the team that oversees the implementation and ongoing development of the action plan to fulfil its duties. One of the main issues identified with the steering group was poor attendance, which makes discussions on delivery of specific action plans difficult. In order to prevent those issues being carried forward to the next action plan, and to ensure that measures are progressed, it was vital to devise ways in which to promote the importance of the steering group to Council teams and ensure their attendance at meetings. In order to strengthen the steering group, it was proposed that a senior member of a department becomes the responsible person, i.e. a Head of Service, as this promotes continuity, ensures ownership of actions and acknowledges the importance of Council wide commitment to achieving the ambitions of the AP.

Strengthening and Improvement to internal accountability and reporting against the Council's AQAP

10.7. The 2015 Action Plan needed to be reviewed to determine if it still serves its original purpose and this was due to commence in 2025 (was approved by Cabinet at its meeting of 8 July 2025). In order to ensure that it remained a live document and to track progress, specific actions for teams should be reported against on a quarterly basis. Discussions took place on the possibility of the AP being created with indicators built in and it was suggested that the indicators be built into the Pentana reporting system. However, it was confirmed that the Pentana system contract would end in June 2025, with an in-house system being developed. This provided an opportunity for the EP team to work with the Corporate Performance and Intelligence Team to build in relevant indicators, specific to Medway's AP that would be beneficial for all.

10.8. Further engagement and scrutiny of reporting mechanisms to ensure they were fit for purpose and ensuring that engagement goes beyond just filling in forms was key, with more narrative and background information being supplied that supports the information captured.

10.9. In order to improve accountability, there was a need to improve confidence of staff knowledge, and it was suggested that this could be achieved through mandatory bitesize training on air quality, in particular its distinction from climate change, as many people made assumptions that it was the same thing. The possibility of training being rolled out through e-learning packages made available to all council departments was suggested. Equally, the Communications and Marketing Team was effective in promoting the AQ Comms strategy alongside the AP and its impact added to the Making Every Contact Count Training (MECC).

Improvement to consultation with the EP team on projects, plans, policies and strategic issues.

10.10. Discissions focused on putting in place a way for officers to have air quality at the forefront of their activities and it was suggested that one of the ways this could be done was to build in a section on the corporate report template that enables officers to consider and address implications in relation to a specific area of work. Mandating this on report templates would ensure that the Environmental Protection Team have some oversight, would be consulted on implications ensure that impact on air quality is always considered. It may encourage services to think in a different way. There was concern around lengthening the report template and also that there were many varying priorities for the Council, implications for which were not sought for in the report template and that there was a risk that it could open the way for a long list of things to be listed on report templates. Consideration was given to this being a time limited exercise and it was emphasised that report authors would need to own the narrative in the section and not expect the Environmental Protection Team to populate the section on their behalf.

10.11. It was agreed that air quality and climate change, whilst they impacted on each other, must be considered on their own individual merit. Educating officers was important but educating the general public was crucial as air quality was everyone's responsibility. A strong statement was needed from

the Council that it would hold itself accountable but the residents and public also needed to be accountable for improvements to air quality which was detrimental to all our health and lives.

Emerging Local Plan and Air Quality

10.12. Air quality is an important consideration in local plan-making. Traffic generation that would likely have a detrimental impact on air quality management areas was a factor in rejecting some sites that were promoted for development.

10.13. In addition to ecological impacts as part of the Habitats Regulations Assessment, which is a matter of legal compliance, Members were concerned about the need to assess impacts on human health. The Planning Service had been working with the Public Health Team to scope the requirements to support the new Local Plan. Subsequently, on 30 June 2025, the Council published a draft Health Impact Assessment Toolkit as part of the Regulation 19 proposed submission consultation.

10.14. The Council expects mitigations to form part of a proposed development, rather than as an off-site financial contribution for the Council to implement.

10.15 Air Quality Recommendations

Core Outputs

Recommendation	Output	Outcome	Baseline	Target	Timeline	Strategic alignment	Service Lead	Resources	Stakeholders
Scrutiny Review Theme: Consulting and engaging with Environmental protection Team on Council wide projects and policies that could impact air quality									
Recommendation 1.1 Trial inclusion of a section in Council report templates on Air Quality and what consideration/actions have been taken to satisfy this requirement alongside the project or policy in question.	The committee report template is revised to include a section on air quality impacts.	Decisions take into account the impact upon air quality and delivery of the air quality action plans.	This currently does not take place.	Every report covering new or changed policies/plans includes a section covering air quality impacts		Medway Air Quality Action Plan 2025-30 Medway Four Elms Hill Air Quality Acton Plan	Democratic Services		Residents, businesses, Councillors, internal council teams
Scrutiny Review Theme: Strengthening reporting and accountability on progress against the Councils Air Quality Action Plans									
Recommendation 2.1 Strengthen membership of the Air Quality Steering group by each department nominating a senior person i,e Head of Service or Assistant Director to stand as a member, attend meetings and be responsible for any actions arising from the meetings.	Invites to Steering Group meetings sent to designated Heads of Service./Assistant Director. Steering Group meetings booked in advance on a yearly basis.	Designated Heads of Service/Assistant Directors attend scheduled Steering Group meetings	This currently does not take place	All designated services represented at 100% of Steering Group meetings		Medway Air Quality Action Plan 2025-30 Medway Four Elms Hill Air Quality Acton Plan	Strategic Environmental Protection Team Designated Heads of Service/Assistant Director		Internal council teams
Recommendation 2.2 Air quality specific actions (with indicators) for teams to be built into the new in house reporting system with progress to be updated quarterly, with HOS mandated to engage with and report back to the steering group.	Air quality action plan measures, performance indicators and responsibilities provided to Business Intelligence for inclusion in corporate reporting system	Air quality action plan measures included in corporate reporting system. Quarterly and end-of-year updates received on progress as per requirements of the Air Quality Steering Group and Annual Status Report deadlines. Annual updates included in Annual Status Report submission to DEFRA.	This currently does not take place	Quarterly and end of year updates received on 100% of air quality action plan measures		Medway Air Quality Action Plan 2025-30 Medway Four Elms Hill Air Quality Acton Plan	Environmental Protection Team Business Intelligence Designated Heads of Service/Assistant Director		Internal council teams

Recommendation 2.3 To explore a Council wide E-learning package of training on air quality to ensure firm understanding by all Council staff on roles and responsibilities in relation to air quality.	E-learning package included in corporate E-learning program.	Improved awareness of the Councils role and responsibilities in air quality management.	This currently does not take place	All new/existing staff (and members?) completed E-learning package		One Medway Council Plan. This could be part of the corporate e-learning plan	Workforce Development	Will require budget to produce the E-learning package in conjunction with an external specialist air quality consultant	Internal council teams
. Strengthening governance arrangements to ensure delivery of the Air Quality Action Plans									
Recommendation 3.1 CMT to be asked to ensure as a corporate priority and commitment that everyone takes responsibility for air quality and to nominate an Air Quality Champion,	CMT nominate an Air Quality Champion	The CMT Air Quality Champion attends Air Quality Steering Group meetings. The CMT Air Quality Champion ensures that air quality is considered a high level consideration alongside other corporate priorities.	This currently does not take place	CMT Air Quality Champion in place. Attendance of CMT Air Quality Champion at 100% of Steering Group meetings.		One Medway Council Plan. Medway Air Quality Action Plan 2025-30 Medway Four Elms Hill Air Quality Acton Plan	CMT		Internal council teams
Recommendation 3.2 Cabinet to be asked to nominate a lead Councillor (the relevant portfolio holder) to sit on the steering group to hold everyone to account	The Cabinet to nominate a designated portfolio holder to attend Air Quality Steering Group meetings	The nominated portfolio holder attends Air Quality Steering Group meetings.	This would provide a strategic oversight across the diverse air quality function of the authority	Attendance of nominated portfolio holder at the Steering Group meetings		Medway Air Quality Action Plan 2025-30 Medway Four Elms Hill Air Quality Acton Plan	Cabinet		Councillors, internal council teams
Aspirational Outputs									
All four air quality management areas in compliance with the nitrogen dioxide annual mean air quality objective	Revocations orders submitted to DEFRA.	Revocation of all Medway AQMAs approved by Cabinet once sustained compliance achieved as demonstrated by monitoring data and/or modelling. The areas will then continue to be monitored locally for ongoing compliance and improvement.	4 AQMAs	0 AQMAs	By 2030	Medway Air Quality Action Plan 2025-30 Medway Four Elms Hill Air Quality Acton Plan	Environmental Protection Team.		Residents, businesses, Councillors, internal council teams

11. Summary of Evidence Collected and Recommendations

Low Traffic Neighbourhoods

11.1. The Task Group conducted an in-depth review of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) as part of a broader focus on Air Quality, Public Transport, and Active Travel. A stakeholder event took place which allowed the group to consult with expert witnesses. This allowed the group to gather intelligence and understand how principles could be applied across Medway.

11.2. Discussions took place on understanding the use of traffic management tools and what they meant for Medway, such as reduction in traffic, creating better greener public spaces, which all would have an impact on air quality. Members were clear that the focus was not around whether Medway should introduce or implement LTNs but more about what elements of traffic managements tools could be considered for areas within Medway to assist in improving air quality.

11.3. Therefore, the group explored the local travel infrastructure in Medway, which was still behind some other authorities that had implemented traffic management tools. There was a heavy reliance on the use of cars due to inadequate transport links, in particular in more rural parts of Medway. It was agreed that whilst Medway needed a good public transport network there was also a need to explore how to improve transport hubs such as train stations, improve the local environment and encourage people to walk or cycle more where possible. There should be utilisation of the Medway Travel plan and various initiatives to devise and promote ways of travelling across Medway in a more sustainable and healthier way.

11.4. Members concluded that it was vital to have a vision on the elements of traffic management tools that they wanted to explore, to fully engage with communities and let them lead discussions on what would be appropriate for their community and tailor to the specific needs of each area. It was important that all services would together to help raise awareness and assist to build and environment of trust which could produce an openness to creating a shared vision between the Council, partners and the community.

11.5. Following the stakeholder event, round table discussions took place to explore case studies and aspects of traffic management tools that may be more suitable to Medway.

12. Case Studies

East Bristol Liveable Neighbourhood Pilot

12.1. The East Bristol LTN covers several residential streets in the Easton and Lawrence Hill areas. It includes both small residential streets and larger

boundary roads. The pilot area is compact, focusing on key neighbourhoods to test the impact of LTNs on traffic and air quality.

12.2. Key Features

- **Filtered Permeability**: Use of bollards, planters, and pocket parks to restrict through-traffic whilst maintaining access for buses, pedestrians, and cyclists.
- **Traffic Calming**: Implementation of speed humps and narrowed roads to slow vehicle speeds.
- **Speed Limit Reductions**: Speed limits reduced to 20 mph on several residential streets. This was part of a broader strategy to enhance road safety and encourage active travel.
- **Improved Infrastructure**: Enhanced pedestrian crossings, cycle paths, and better street lighting.
- **Community Engagement**: Co-designing changes with communities to meet local needs.

12.3. Impacts

- Some streets experiencing a reduction in traffic of up to 50%.
- Improvements in air quality, with reductions in nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) levels by approximately 20% in the areas affected.
- An increase in walking and cycling. Surveys indicated that 60% of residents reported walking more, and 40% reported cycling more since the implementation of the LTN.

- Most drivers complied with the new speed limits, leading to a decrease in the number of vehicles exceeding the speed limit.
- The reduction in speed limits did not significantly impact traffic flow, as the decrease in speeds was moderate and did not cause congestion.
- The introduction of the 20-mph speed limit was linked to fewer road traffic injuries. There was a 16% reduction in casualty rates one year after implementation and a 22% reduction three years after.
- The scheme also contributed to a significant reduction in fatal injuries, with a city-wide reduction of around 63% in fatal injuries between 2008 and 2016.

12.4. **Community Feedback**

The community response to the East Bristol Liveable Neighbourhood (EBLN) project has been mixed.

Positive Feedback:

- Many residents have expressed support, highlighting the benefits of reduced traffic, safer streets, and improved air quality.
- A petition supporting the continuation of the project emphasised it has created safer spaces for children, the elderly, pedestrians, and cyclists.

Negative Feedback:

- Some residents have protested and opposed the project, citing concerns about traffic displacement and accessibility issues.

12.5. Birmingham, Moseley, and Kings Heath - Places for People

12.6. The LTNs in Birmingham cover the residential areas of Moseley and Kings Heath. These neighbourhoods include small residential streets and larger boundary roads. The LTNs are moderately sized, covering several blocks within each neighbourhood.

12.7. Key Features

- **Filtered Permeability**: Use of modal filters to restrict through-traffic.
- **Traffic Calming**: Speed humps and narrowed roads to slow down vehicle speeds.
- **Speed Limit Reductions**: Speed limits reduced from 40 mph to 30 mph on key roads.
- **Improved Infrastructure**: Enhanced pedestrian crossings and cycle paths.
- **Community Engagement**: Extensive public consultations and educational materials to promote community awareness and support.

12.8. Impact

- Significant reduction in traffic volumes, with some streets experiencing up to a 40% decrease.
- Improvements in air quality, with reductions in nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) levels by up to 7.3%
- Increase in walking and cycling, with a 25% rise in active travel among residents.

- Majority of drivers complied with the new speed limits, leading to a decrease in the number of vehicles exceeding the speed limit.

- Thirty percent reduction in road traffic injuries.

12.9. **Community Feedback**

Community feedback for the Birmingham LTNs in Moseley and Kings Heath has been varied.

Positive Feedback:

- Many residents appreciated the reduced traffic and improved safety.

Negative Feedback:

- Some residents expressed concerns about increased traffic on boundary roads.

- There were also concerns about difficulties for disabled car users.

12.10. **Manchester - Active Neighbourhoods**

Manchester's LTNs, also known as Active Neighbourhoods, are implemented in various parts of the city, including Levens Hulme and other residential areas. These LTNs cover multiple residential streets within each neighbourhood, creating a network of low-traffic zones.

12.11. **Key Features**

- **Filtered Permeability**: Use of planters and bollards to block entrances to certain roads.
- **Traffic Calming**: Speed humps and narrowed roads to slow down vehicle speeds.
- **Speed Limit Reductions**: Speed limits reduced from 40 mph to 30 mph on several roads.
- **Improved Infrastructure**: Enhanced pedestrian crossings, cycle paths, and better street lighting.
- **Community Engagement**: Extensive public consultations and educational materials to promote community awareness and support.

12.12. **Impact**

- Reduction in traffic volumes by approximately 40% in the affected areas.
- Improvements in air quality, with reductions in nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) levels by up to 8%.
- Increase in walking and cycling, with a 35% rise in active travel among residents.
- Majority of drivers complied with the new speed limits, leading to a decrease in the number of vehicles exceeding the speed limit.
- Significant reduction in road traffic injuries.

12.13. **Community Feedback**

Community feedback for Manchester's Active Neighbourhoods has been mixed.

Positive Feedback:

- Many residents appreciated the reduced traffic and improved safety.

Negative Feedback:

- Some residents expressed concerns about traffic displacement.
- There were also concerns about impacts on accessibility.

Waltham Forest, South Leytonstone Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN)

12.14. The South Leytonstone LTN covers several residential streets in the South Leytonstone area. It includes a mix of small residential streets and larger boundary roads. The scheme is divided into four areas.

12.15. **Key Features**

- **Filtered Permeability**: Installation of eleven modal filters (road closures to motorised vehicles) to restrict through-traffic.
- **Traffic Calming**: Implementation of speed humps and narrowed roads to slow down vehicle speeds.
- **Speed Limit Reductions**: Speed limits reduced to 20 mph on several residential streets.
- **Improved Infrastructure**: Enhanced pedestrian crossings, cycle paths, and better street lighting.

12.16. **Impact**

- Significant reduction in traffic volumes, with some streets experiencing up to a 31% decrease.
- Improvements in air quality, with reductions in nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) levels by up to 8%.
- Increase in walking and cycling, with a 37% rise in cycling on internal streets.
- Majority of drivers complied with the new speed limits, leading to a decrease in the number of vehicles exceeding the speed limit.
- 56% decrease in collisions post-implementation.

12.17. **Community Feedback**

Community feedback for the South Leytonstone LTN in Waltham Forest has been varied.

Positive Feedback:

- Many residents appreciated the reduced traffic and improved safety.

Negative Feedback:

- Some residents expressed concerns about traffic displacement and impacts accessibility.

13. Summary of Findings

13.1. The LTNs in East Bristol, Birmingham, Manchester and Waltham Forest cover various residential streets, including small residential roads and larger boundary roads. These schemes were designed to create safer, low-traffic environments within compact or moderately sized areas.

13.2. All four LTNs incorporate filtered permeability using bollards and planters to restrict through-traffic. Speed limit reductions, typically to 20 mph or 30 mph, are a common feature aimed at enhancing road safety, supported by traffic calming measures such as speed humps, cushions and narrowed roads. Improved infrastructure includes enhanced pedestrian crossings, cycle paths, and better street lighting.

13.3. The LTNs have led to significant reductions in traffic volumes, with some areas experiencing decreases of up to 50%. Air quality improvements were achieved, with reductions in nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) levels ranging from 7.3% to 20%. Levels of walking and cycling have increased, and speed

compliance has improved, leading to fewer vehicles exceeding speed limits. The LTNs have led to reductions in road traffic injuries and fatal injuries.

13.4. Community engagement is a crucial aspect of these schemes, with extensive public consultations and co-designing changes to meet local needs. Post-implementation surveys and consultations were undertaken to gather residents' opinions and address concerns. Regular reviews and community meetings ensure that LTNs meet their objectives and address any issues that arise. Community feedback has been mixed, with positive responses highlighting reduced traffic, safer streets, and improved air quality, however, there are some concerns about traffic displacement and accessibility remain.

14. Low Traffic Neighbourhoods DfT Research Report

14.1. This report reviews Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) schemes that have been introduced in England since March 2020. The research aimed to build an evidence base on the impacts of LTNs, local engagement processes, and the views of communities and businesses affected by these schemes.

14.2. The review of existing evidence assessed impacts thematically with key findings summarised below:

Motor Vehicle Travel: LTNs effectively reduce traffic volumes within internal roads but results for boundary roads was mixed, with some experiencing increased traffic volumes.

Economy: there is limited researched evidence on the economic impacts of LTNs.

Access: LTNs do not adversely affect emergency vehicle response times. There are mixed impacts for disabled people, with some positive and some negative experiences.

Active Travel: Mixed impacts on active travel, with some evidence of increased walking and cycling, but not conclusive on whether this is due to more people engaging or increased activity among existing users.

Quality of Life: There is evidence of reduced street crime and improved road safety within LTNs. Indirect benefits include improved air quality and increased active travel, contributing to higher quality of life.

Air Quality: The report provides a comprehensive review of the impacts of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) on air quality, drawing on multiple studies and data sources. The findings indicate that LTNs have succeeded in improving air quality on internal roads, but the benefits are not uniformly experienced on boundary roads, some experiencing minimal reductions, no change, or even increases in air pollutants.

14.3. A study of Islington observed a statistically significant reduction in average NO_2 concentrations by 5.7% on internal roads. There was also a statistically

significant decrease in average NO_2 concentrations of 8.9% on boundary roads. However, the impacts on specific boundary roads were mixed, with some areas experiencing no impacts and others experiencing an increase in car traffic.

14.4. An Urban Planning for Better Air Quality study utilised air pollution sensors to measure levels of Nitrogen Oxides (NOx) and Particulate Matter (PM10) within and outside the boundaries of three LTNs (City of London, Islington and Wandsworth). The research revealed a substantial reduction in these pollutants' levels after the LTNs were implemented. Similar reductions were also observed in areas not designated as LTNs, implying that other factors, potentially the COVID-19 lockdowns, might have contributed to these decreases.

14.5. Oxford City Council's Air Quality Annual Status Report for 2022 described the introduction of East Oxford LTNs and measured NO_2 levels. LTN areas recorded a higher rate of reduction in levels of NO_2 (23.75% decrease from 2021-2022 on sites with available data) compared to other areas in Oxford (8% decrease from 2021-2022). The evidence demonstrates mixed effects on boundary roads with some locations seeing increases or no change in NO_2 levels. For example, boundary roads St Clement's Street and The Plain saw a 10% increase in 2022, suggesting that LTNs may have resulted in traffic displacement.

15. Advice and Analysis

15.1. The DfT Research Report concludes that Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) have demonstrated several positive impacts, particularly in terms of reducing traffic volumes within internal roads, improving air quality, and enhancing road safety. However, the benefits are not uniformly experienced, especially on boundary roads where mixed results were observed. The report also highlights the need for:

- Continuous monitoring and evaluation of LTNs to understand long-term impacts, particularly on air quality.
- Genuine and inclusive community engagement to address local needs and concerns and improve the perception of LTNs.
- Tailored Approaches that consider the specific context and needs of each area to maximise benefits and minimise adverse effects.

15.2. Research indicates that 20mph zones can lead to a reduction in emissions by up to 12%, primarily due to less aggressive driving and smoother traffic flow. In Portsmouth, the introduction of 20mph speed limits led to a 22% reduction in total road casualties. In Bristol, the implementation resulted in avoiding 4.53 fatalities, 11.3 serious injuries, and 159.3 slight injuries per year. Following the introduction of 20mph zones, Bristol saw a 23% increase in walking and a 20% increase in cycling.

15.3. Research suggests that whilst traffic calming measures can improve road safety and reduce vehicle speeds, their impact on air quality is nuanced and depends on the specific measures implemented and how they affect driving patterns. Whilst lower speeds can reduce emissions, frequent acceleration and deceleration due to traffic calming measures such as speed humps can increase emissions. Current guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), which is supported by Public Health England, recognises the need for such measures however, and recommends that speed reducing schemes aim to promote a smooth driving style.

15.4. Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) can impact on a council's network management duties under the Traffic Management Act 2004:

- The Traffic Management Act requires local traffic authorities to manage their road networks to ensure the expeditious movement of traffic. LTNs, by design, restrict through-traffic in residential areas, which can potentially conflict with this duty. However, LTNs aim to reduce overall traffic volumes and promote active travel, which can contribute to smoother traffic flow in the long term.

- LTNs can help reduce congestion within their boundaries by limiting through-traffic. However, they may also cause traffic displacement to boundary roads, potentially increasing congestion and disruption in those areas. There is a need to monitor and manage these effects to comply with the duty to avoid, eliminate, or reduce road congestion.

- The Act requires councils to facilitate the movement of traffic on road networks managed by other authorities. Implementing LTNs requires coordination with neighbouring authorities to ensure that traffic displacement does not adversely affect adjacent areas.

- LTNs must be designed to ensure that emergency services can access all areas quickly and efficiently. There is a need to work closely with emergency services to address any access issues and comply with network management duties.

- Effective community engagement is crucial for the successful implementation of LTNs. Ensuring LTNs have local support, and residents are informed and consulted about changes aligns with the broader objectives of the Traffic Management Act to manage road networks in a way that meets the needs of all users.

16. Medway Context

16.1. Modal share travel data for Medway has been sourced to contextualise comparisons with cities like Bristol, Manchester, and London.

Location	Walking	Cycling	Public Transport	Private Motor Vehicle
East Bristol	25%	10%	30%	35%
Birmingham (Moseley & Kings Heath)	20%	5%	25%	50%
Manchester (Active Neighbourhoods)	25%	5%	18%	52%
Waltham Forest (South Leytonstone)	30%	10%	25%	35%
Medway	15%	5%	20%	60%

This data highlights that Medway residents are more car-dependent, with lower levels of walking, cycling, and public transport use. This is influenced by:

- Geographical spread: Medway includes a mix of urban, suburban, and semi-rural areas, making active travel less viable for many residents.
- Public transport limitations: Unlike cities such as Manchester or London, Medway lacks a high-frequency, high-capacity public transport system like trams or underground networks.
- Economic factors: many residents rely on cars for commuting due to the location of employment centres and limited alternatives.

16.2. Medway's existing plans, policies, and strategies, including the One Medway Council Plan, Climate Change Action Plan, Local Transport Plan, and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, reference the principles behind LTNs. Key features of LTNs, such as modal filters, speed limit reduction, physical traffic calming measures, and other changes that have altered the character of the highway, already exist at locations across Medway.

16.3. Recent highway safety improvements in Luton, aligned with the Arches Neighbourhood Plan, introduced traffic calming, enhanced pedestrian infrastructure, to reduce through-traffic and improve safety. These changes, including speed cushions and streetscape enhancements, have lowered vehicle speeds and contributed to improved air quality, with nitrogen dioxide levels now below target thresholds.

16.4. Medway launched 7 School Streets Scheme in Marh 2024, with another 4 sites due to go live under Tranche 2 on 29 September 2025, with another on

the 3 November 2025[6]. These initiatives reflect LTN principles by restricting vehicle access during school drop-off and pick-up times, reducing traffic volumes, improving air quality, and encouraging walking and cycling. Together, they support safer, healthier, and more sustainable travel environments.

17. Conclusion

17.1. Medway has already implemented several schemes aligned with LTN principles, demonstrating that it is possible to apply LTN concepts in a targeted and incremental way, rather than through blanket road closures.

17.2. Imposing LTNs without strong local support could lead to community division and backlash, particularly online. This has been observed in other areas where schemes were introduced rapidly or without adequate consultation. Medway's approach should therefore emphasise:

- Genuine co-design with residents.
- Transparent communication about objectives and impacts.
- Monitoring and adaptation based on feedback.

17.3. It is recommended that Medway does not pursue full-scale LTN closures but instead focuses on high-priority areas with poor air quality or high casualty rates, streets with strong community support for change, and opportunities to integrate with development planning and active travel infrastructure. This would ensure Medway adopts a tailored, context-sensitive approach that reflects local transport characteristics and community needs.

[6] https://www.medway.gov.uk/schoolstreets

17.4 Low Traffic Neighbourhoods Recommendations

Core Outputs									
Recommendation	**Output**	**Outcome**	**Baseline**	**Target**	**Timeline**	**Strategic alignment**	**Service Lead**	**Resources**	**Stakeholders**
1.1 Undertake a pilot scheme for introducing reduced speed limits within high-density residential areas such as Strood, where support from residents and other stakeholders is demonstrated and they can meet wider strategic objectives for sustainable transport, road safety and air quality. If targets and outcomes are achieved, then seek to implement similar schemes across Medway.	A design for a 20mph zone or 20mph speed limit with traffic calming measures as appropriate	Reduction in average vehicle speeds, increased active travel, and improved air quality in residential areas.	Current speed limits and traffic volumes in target areas, pedestrian and cycle counts and air quality data	For each zone/street, 20% reduction in average vehicle speeds, 10% reduction in vehicle emissions and a 20% increase in sustainable journeys	Medium to Long Term (1-3 years)	One Medway Council Plan, Local Transport Plan, Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and Climate Change Action Plan	Transport & Parking	Capital programme, local transport grant funding, Section 106 contributions	Residents, businesses, emergency services, local councillors
2.1 Incorporate measures to restrict thorough traffic into sustainable transport infrastructure improvements and environmental place-making schemes delivered through the Council's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. Use successful schemes elsewhere in Medway to support the case for filtered permeability and traffic calming in other areas. Ensure schemes maintain access to sustainable modes and transport hubs and are co-designed with, and supported by, residents and other stakeholders	A transparent consultation and engagement process and walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure schemes that include context-sensitive traffic calming and filtered permeability	Reduced motor traffic, increased active travel, and improved air quality with improved health and well-being outcomes for residents	Current traffic flow data in target areas, pedestrian and cycle counts and air quality data	30-50% reduction in through-traffic, 10% reduction in vehicle emissions and a 20% increase in sustainable journeys	Medium to Long Term (1-3 years)	Local Transport Plan, Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, Bus Service Improvement Plan	Transport & Parking	Capital programme, local transport grant funding, Section 106 contributions	Residents, delivery services, emergency services, public transport operators
3.1 Work with bus operators to accelerate the transition to low-emission and zero-emission vehicles, prioritising Euro VI upgrades and exploring feasibility of electric or hydrogen buses.	Joint fleet improvement plan with operators, including funding bids and pilot trials for zero-emission buses.	Reduced emissions from bus fleet, improved air quality, and progress towards net zero transport.	75% of fleet meets Euro V or VI standards; average fleet age is 11.7 years.	90% of fleet meeting Euro VI or better by 2028; pilot zero-emission bus service operational by 2027	Medium to Long Term (1–3 years)	BSIP, Climate Change Action Plan, Local Transport Plan, One Medway Council Plan	Transport & Parking	BSIP funding, DfT ZEBRA grants, operator investment, potential S106 contributions	Bus operators (Arriva, Nu-Venture, ASD, Chalkwell), DfT

Recommendation	Output	Outcome	Baseline	Target	Timeline	Strategic alignment	Service Lead	Resources	Stakeholders
Aspirational Outputs									
4.1 Consider the feasibility of developing an Environmental Place-Making Scheme, co-designed with, and supported by, residents and local stakeholders	Context-sensitive traffic calming and filtered permeability, revitalised public realm with improved health and well-being	Green infrastructure, reallocation of road space, redesigned parking, filtered permeability, and community spaces. Enhanced active travel, public transport infrastructure, and reduced car dependency.	Audit of existing street layout, traffic volumes, walking and cycling accessibility and public realm condition	25% increase in walking/cycling; improved air quality indicators	Long-term (3-5 years)	Emerging Local Plan, One Medway Council Plan, Local Transport Plan, Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and Climate Change Action Plan	Climate Change, Greenspaces, Highways, Transport & Parking	Local Transport Resource grant funding (DfT) External grant funding Capital Programme	Councillors, Residents, local businesses, emergency services, public transport operators
5.1 Develop a Kerbside Strategy for Medway to optimise the use of kerbside space for sustainable transport, accessibility, and placemaking.	Draft and consult on a Kerbside Strategy that sets out principles for managing kerbside space, including loading, parking, EV charging, verges, parklets, and green infrastructure, including bus shelters and cycle facilities	More efficient and equitable use of kerbside space that supports active travel, public realm improvements, and climate resilience.	No current kerbside strategy in place.	Adopted strategy by 2028 with pilot schemes implemented in priority areas.	Long-term (3-5 years)	Climate Change Action Plan, Local Transport Plan, LCWIP, BSIP	Climate Change, Greenspaces, Highways, Transport & Parking	Officer time, consultancy support, Local Transport Resource grant funding	Highways, Planning, Public Health, Community Groups, Local Businesses

Risks		
Activity	**Risks**	**Mitigation**
20mph Case Study in Strood	Community resistance; limited enforcement; funding constraints.	Early and inclusive community engagement; use of design-led speed reduction (e.g. road narrowing); explore external funding (e.g. DfT grants); coordinate with police on enforcement priorities.
Filtered Permeability & Traffic Calming in Infrastructure Schemes	Traffic displacement; emergency access concerns; stakeholder disagreement.	Early and inclusive community engagement, traffic modelling to assess displacement; co-design with emergency services; phased implementation with feedback loops; clear signage and access protocols.
Expansion of School Streets	Parental opposition; enforcement limitations; inconsistent school participation.	Awareness campaigns with schools and parents; phased rollout prioritising willing schools; regular feedback sessions.
Sustainable Design in New Developments	Developer non-compliance; weak enforcement; lack of early engagement.	Strengthen planning conditions and design codes; early engagement with developers; training for planning officers; use of Section 106 to secure infrastructure.
Aspirational: Twydall Green Environmental Place-Making	Funding gaps; community division; unclear maintenance responsibilities.	Apply for external grants (e.g. Active Travel England); use participatory design to build consensus; clarify maintenance roles early
Development of a Kerbside Strategy for Medway	• Resistance from stakeholders with competing interests (e.g. parking, loading, public realm)	• Establish a cross-departmental working group to lead strategy development • Conduct stakeholder mapping and early engagement to identify priorities and concerns • Pilot kerbside reallocation schemes in selected areas to test feasibility and gather data

	• Conflicting demands on kerbside space (e.g. EV charging, deliveries, active travel) • Risk of strategy not being adopted or implemented due to lack of political or financial support	• Align strategy with existing plans (e.g. Climate Change Action Plan, LCWIP, Parking Strategy)

18. Summary of Evidence Collected and Recommendations

18.1. Asthma

This section will explore the outcomes following discussions around asthma and air quality, the impact to the community of Medway.

18.2. Stakeholder Event

A session took place where various partners across the health community came together to provide information on known existing links between air quality and asthma, as well as the established teams which support this agenda such as the Paediatric Asthma Working Group (PAWG). There was discussion of existing and recommended interventions and support programmes to improve Asthma outcomes and reduce exposure to air pollution. Gaps were identified in the local authority teams which can contribute to the delivery of the Asthma Bundle of Care.

18.3. Asthma in Medway and Swale was a problem that was not well controlled, and Members learnt that air quality disproportionately affected certain groups, the young, the elderly and vulnerable groups. This impacts various aspects of life such as educational attainment, this impacts inequality, health and life outcomes with this in deprived demographic most likely to be impacted and disadvantaged.

18.4. Impacts of air pollution outweighs issues such as obesity in terms of its impact but gets less awareness by the general public and it was therefore important to work closely on communications campaigns to increase awareness of air pollution and support people to safeguard themselves from harm. Raising awareness in the community on the link between poor air quality and the impact on health was vital, in particular increased awareness on respiratory conditions such as asthma as a condition and the triggers.

18.5. Professionals worked according to the ‘National Bundle of Care for Children and Young People with Asthma’ guidance model of the National Bundle of care, tracked hospital admissions, asthma reviews and uptake of annual reviews. There was also safer asthma campaigns targeted at families and a website for schools, many of which had signed up to be asthma friendly. There were various training programmes in place including National Health Service England tiered training to equip health care professionals to confidently have discussions with parents, carers and young people on how to manage air quality, pollution and asthma. It was vital that residents and the community understand the risks of poor air quality, both indoors and outdoors and the air pollutions have real contributions to adverse respiratory health and has been proven in the case of Ella Adoo-Kissi-Debra whose death from asthma was linked to air pollution.

18.6. In Medway and Swale, A&E attendance and emergency admissions for children’s asthma has remained high, it was therefore important to increase awareness through the Safer Asthma Campaign. Air Pollution is one of the

largest environmental risk for health as it is classed as a 'silent killer'. This is due to risk of exposure being everywhere and affecting everyone.

18.7. Children and young people in particular are affected by air pollution for various reasons, such as immaturity of their immune system and can be affected right from when they are in the womb, which can lead to miscarriage, low birth weight and early birth, which in turn can increase the risk of chronic lung disease and can also affect cognitive ability.

18.8. Members discussed how to tackle the issues and agreed that this must be a collective effort from all partners to take responsibility on driving the importance of the message home as councils were not generally the trusted messengers and, in this case, health care professionals were more trusted to convey messages, and in addition, they had higher instances of interaction with the community.

18.9. Asthma was covered under the standard health framework, which was responsible for conducting annual reviews. This had historically been a tick box questionnaire and work was being undertaken to move away from that by targeting GP practices with patients who were among the highest hospital admission rates and highest prescribing rates to offer them 1:1 support on raising awareness and knowledge in order to improve the quality of their reviews.

18.10. It was suggested that there be increased work in partnerships with schools through various initiatives such as school streets, with the most effort currently being undertaken with schools where data showed they had the worst air quality recordings, delivering key messages on less usage of care around schools, cars idling and the impacts. Encouraging children to get their parents and carers to engage and get involved.

19. Camden Council Talk and Presentation

19.1. Tom Parkes, Equality Programme Manager, Sustainability Air Quality and Energy Service from Camdem Council delivered a presentation to Members on some of the work that had been carried out in Camden on air quality. The team is responsible for maintaining compliance with statutory responsibilities regarding local air quality management. The team had undertaken several projects aimed at improving air quality in Camden, an area in central London, categorised as inner London. It has some large green spaces, but generally speaking, it is a very built up area, densely populated and historically always had extremely high levels of air pollution due to busy roads, lots of commercial and construction activity due to development. The main sources of pollution in Camden were due to emissions from commercial buildings, in particular commercial cooking, construction machinery and the railway.

19.2. In 2002 the whole of Camden was declared as an air quality management area for NO_2 and particulate matter or PM10. So, unlike some local authorities where some portions of the borough or an authority area might be declared as an air quality management area, the entirety of Camden was declared. This

was useful in that it enabled a consistency in approach and information provided for planning applications as well as design of strategies and action plans for air quality.

19.3. 8% of all mortality in Camden is attributable to particulate matter air pollution. The burden of air pollution is not distributed evenly, so the data from public health intelligence in Camden suggests that there is a quite a disparity in asthma prevalence in children and young people. There are much higher rates of indices and multiple deprivation affecting children and infants something that is mirrored nationally. There is an association between household income or area wide income or multiple deprivation and adverse health outcomes and air pollution both indoors and outdoors.

19.4. It is also known that air pollution affects different communities differently and the data source showed that asthma prevalence is much higher among Asian and Black children in Camden than among white children. The public health intelligence data showed nationally that the higher the proportion of people from minority and ethnic backgrounds in a particular area, the higher the long term exposure to air pollution. This was mirrored in Camden and that had shaped understanding about what needed to be done and how to approach action to improve air quality so that it effectively tries to break down health inequalities and social injustices that air pollution exacerbates and causes.

19.5. Camden's Full Council made a decision to adopt the World Health Organisation (WHO) Air Quality guideline for Particulate Matter (PM), which is the term for a mixture of solid particles and liquid droplets found in the air and is regulated due to the potential detrimental health impact, as it was more stringent than the legal limit for PM2.5. The legal limit for PM2.5 is that the annual average concentration should not exceed 5ug/m3 whilst the WHO recommends that the annual average concentration of particulate matter with a diameter of 2.5 micrometres or less (PM2.5) should not exceed 5 μg/m³. For 24-hour averages, it should not exceed 15 μg/m³, and it is recommended that this level is not exceeded for more than 3-4 days per year. Exposure to PM2.5 is very damaging for health overall and there is strong association between that and adverse health outcomes, hence the focus on reduction of PM in Camden.

19.6. This was an ambitious target for Camden and led to the development of their cleaner air action plan, which was co designed with the community. Due to the local knowledge and experience of people's contribution, it led to a more effective action plan, and it helped to break the perception between residents that addressing issues with air quality was only a Council responsibility. It allowed residents to own the responsibility of working towards addressing local issues. This harnessed a collective spirit of people wanting to work together towards the vision of cleaner air that would benefit everyone.

19.7. Some of the work included a change to the Council's constitution to embed the idea that environmental accountability and stewardship, should be at the heart of everything the Council does. This was a response to the Community vision for the borough and meant that any officer or any elected Member,

either undertaking a procurement exercise or making a decision, needed to think about the environmental implications of the decision or the project that they were undertaking. This formalised the requirement to prevent action being taken in isolation and allowed officers to address how their project might affect air quality and ensure their proposed mitigations were suitable.

19.8. Camden made a decision to create a 'fleet template' that was appended to contract documents for service providers to complete which set out how to think about and document air quality implications.

19.9. In terms of policy changes, Camden looked at its parking policies and parking charges and whilst they already had some emissions based parking charges, they introduced a diesel surcharge and air quality surcharge to capture some of the types of vehicles that are now quite old but also disproportionately emitting pollution on the street scene. The charge is higher for diesel vehicles than for petrol vehicles because the evidence suggests that some petrol vehicles are still cleaner than some diesel vehicles. Bigger cars which have a greater climate impact are also charged more and part of the rationale for this was that only about 1/3 of Camden households actually have access to a private vehicle. So not a huge proportion of Camden's population were using cars and lot of the cars that come into Camden to park came in from outside of the borough. People with disabilities in Camden are much, much more likely to walk or use buses to get around the borough than people who do not have disabilities. They were less likely to use cars or to be driven in cars, and the same applied for lower income households. Charges were introduced, including charges for electric vehicles and motorcycles, which had been difficult to achieve public acceptance of. However, the evidence showed that electric vehicles still produced particular air pollution and motorcycles, in some cases, can actually be more polluting than older petrol vehicles. The evidence was used to ensure that there was a fair parking system in place that did not open loopholes for some types of vehicles, in order to be exempt from charges and there were incentives in place to balance out impacts.

19.10. Members were keen to know how Camden communicated its messages to communities and were informed that it had partnered with other local authorities and developed a unified approach, collective action and consistency in messaging. There was also extensive work with schools by developing a range of workshops as well as visiting schools to deliver sessions and activities. This enabled meaningful engagement with the school community, both children and adults and being able to disseminate information to parents and carers.

19.11. Increasingly Camden Council was trying to work with NHS partners as it too recognised that local authorities are not necessarily trusted messengers whilst healthcare professionals, are, as their voice carries a lot of weight. There was continuous work on building links with the integrated care system to upskill the healthcare sector and healthcare community to build their knowledge and confidence on air quality to enable them to pass on helpful advice to patients and people they came into contact with.

19.12. In developing various campaigns, Camden officers ensured that they tested various messaging campaigns and used a lot of sensitivity in their messaging. There were some challenges in getting some demographics of Camden to realise and participate in the vision and get them to recognise why they should consider making changes for the benefit of everyone.

20. Roundtable Discussion

20.1. Discussions took place with Council officers and external public health colleagues on Medway Air Quality and with schools on how to help raise awareness and support ongoing work. Additionally, there was discussion around communication and plans to assist in awareness, self-care and action. The transitions from childhood to adulthood and the effects of air quality in respiratory conditions from childhood into adulthood were also discussed.

20.2. There were various initiatives taking place, including the Asthma School award and the A Better Medway Schools Award (ABM), to raise awareness. The Council had joined up with ABM Schools supporting a policy level assessment. There was also some funding for climate eco awarded schools and those schools would be encouraged to then take forward the Asthma Schools Programme. The Child Health team engaged extensively with primary and secondary schools in Medway.

20.3. Whilst there was a large element of Asthma and effects on children covered in the review, discussions also took place on the wider benefits of awareness raising and training that was beneficial for vulnerable people and adults as they were also in the same spaces. It was important not to lose sight of the adult population who also struggled with many respiratory illnesses as a direct result of air pollution, such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, as well as asthma.

20.4. The Public Health Team Communications Strategy on Air Quality and health relate to a whole family approach by exploring behaviours and modifications and adaptations to ways of life that benefits all. Many activities are targeted to be delivered through schools, as children then take home those important messages. The Community Health Care Teams offer training, which is delivered to parents on air pollution, on how it affects children with respiratory conditions, which can then in turn be translated into adulthood. Alongside the work with young people in schools, there is an offer for parents and carers, with campaign materials for adults alongside those for children. There are campaigns linked in with active travel as part of a school awards programme which encourages schools to have active travel plans, to encourage parents and carers to walk or cycle more with their children to school. There were also anti-idling projects taking place at Medway Hospital to encourage people to turn off cars when in the vicinity of the hospital.

20.5. Asthma messaging was linked into some air quality messaging and there was a group in place, the Kent and Medway Air Quality Communications Partnership which comprise of officers across Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board and Medway. They have established four priority areas to take

forward, continuing operations of the Kent Air website and Pollution Alert service, particularly to vulnerable persons, which has been a key theme for the previous air quality strategy in the air quality action plan in order to promote the digital training resources and air pollution for health and social care practitioners across Kent. Resources have been produced using DEFRA funding, which are available to all social care staff and help inform around air quality and its impact on health, particularly indoor air quality focused on practitioners who undertake home visits.

20.6. Improving Air Quality at Home - Advice is provided on simple steps such as opening windows can help improve indoor air quality. Research shows that cooking appliances like air fryers can release tiny particles into the air, and using cooker hoods can help reduce this. Local teams are working on giving home visitors useful resources so they can talk to residents about easy ways to make the air cleaner like cutting back on burning wood, use of candles or incense, and remembering to ventilate. These small changes can make a big difference to the air we breathe indoors.

20.7. Medway Community Healthcare were in the process of production of some targeted and co-ordinated communications campaigns with wider partners, and it was suggested that housing providers would be a key partner in raising awareness of around indoor air pollution where they can have conversations and spread awareness. Members learnt that work was underway through the Making Every Contact Count training programme by ensuring professionals going into homes were supported and equipped to raise awareness and provide advice in those opportunistic moments.

20.8. The importance of good communications and ensuring the Council get the right messages across at the right times of year was discussed and Members learnt that the Communications and Marketing Team worked extensively with the Public Health Team on transmitting messages to the community. There was a plan in place for days when there is high pollution alert with a notification link to the clean air website. There was, however, more to be done on how to get the messages out at the right time. Messages were currently focussed on days when it is known to be a period of moderate or high pollution and focused on the positive things that people can do to mitigate risks as people tend to be more responsive to positive messaging. Using communication routes wisely and not just at moderate and high pollution times would be key moving forward.

20.9. It was found that it was difficult to do targeted communication notifications for people that live alongside AQMAs as people may not necessarily live in an AQMA but may be passing through. Members felt that there was more that could be done to raise awareness such as appropriate signage, tapping into local Facebook groups and linking into local WhatsApp groups. It was crucial that the Council worked on the Communications Strategy and how to get the message across in a targeted and effective way.

21. Challenges and Opportunities

21.1. There were several challenges and opportunities identified which included:

Councils are not generally trusted messengers

- Perceptions of intentions
- Healthcare professionals may be more trusted when conveying the same key messages

Councils may not have good reach to the most vulnerable people

- Often constrained by resources and limited to people with a particular interest in sustainability or local matters
- Collaboration with primary and secondary care and local health services (pharmacy, antenatal/neonatal, health visitors, vaccine outreach etc.) presents an opportunity to improve self-management of triggers

Climate change brings new challenges for air quality

- The trend of improving air quality might not continue in the same way, e.g. increasing ozone. The combination of extreme heat and related pollution on mortality is 'super additive'.
- Building knowledge and empowering action now will build more climate-resilient communities.

22. Key Points

22.1. In conclusion, there were several key points from the asthma strand of the review which included the following:

- Local authorities have a responsibility for improving air quality and have some levers to achieve this in some environments
- Two-way engagement between local authorities healthcare professionals and NHS services is very important and it will be mutually advantageous.
- Reducing air pollution to decrease asthma in Children and Young People will also reduce risk factors linked to air pollution and other respiratory and Cardio Vascular illnesses throughout life.
- Improving outdoor and indoor air quality now, and building public awareness, will better prepare us for the future environmental challenges imposed by climate change.

22.2 Asthma Recommendations

Core Outputs									
Recommendation	**Output**	**Outcome**	**Baseline**	**Target**	**Timeline**	**Strategic alignment**	**Service Lead**	**Resources**	**Stakeholders**
2.1 Renew the Air Quality Communication Strategy to support the new Air Quality Action Plan. Connect work undertaken to improve Air Quality across Medway with new strategies, working groups, and community assets.	Connect work undertaken to improve Air Quality across Medway with new strategies, working groups, and community assets	A comprehensive and collaborative approach to air quality communication, fostering greater community engagement and more effective dissemination of information from sources the public of Medway will resonate with.	Existing Air Quality Communication Strategy Published 2017	Established Air Quality Communication Strategy published Q4 2025-26.	Stakeholder engagement Q3 – Publication Q4. 2025-26.	Medway Air Quality Action Plan Kent and Medway Low emission Strategy Medway Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Public Health	Public Health and Environmental Protection Funding	Medway Council Public Health, Environmental Protection and Communications Teams. KCC NHS Kent and Medway.
2.2 Develop a section of MECC (Making Every Contact Count) training for Council staff and other professionals conducting home visits to offer meaningful advice on improving indoor air quality and reducing exposure to pollutants and respiratory irritants, including knowledge of pathways to address housing-related air quality issues such as mould and carbon monoxide concerns.	A tailored MECC training module focused on indoor air quality, delivered to Council staff and professionals conducting home visits, incorporating practical guidance on identifying and mitigating pollutants, respiratory irritants, mold, and carbon monoxide risks, along with referral pathways for housing-related air quality issues.	Improved the ability of Council staff and other professionals to provide actionable advice during home visits, leading to enhanced indoor air quality, reduced exposure to pollutants and respiratory irritants, and better management of housing-related air quality issues like mold and carbon monoxide for Medway residents.	No specific air quality component in current MECC training; limited staff awareness of indoor air quality issues.	Train Staff from Medway Council Housing and Adult Social Care Teams in Q4 2025-26. Sessions Available for partners 2026-27.	Development Q3 – Pilot Q4 Medway Council Staff and Adoption with external offer 2026-27.	Medway Health and Wellbeing Strategy. NICE Guidance NG149	Public Health – Workforce Development Team	Public Health – Workforce Development Team	Medway Council Environmental Protection Team KCC Public Health Team Medway Council Housing and Social care Teams NHS Kent and Medway.
3.1 Enhance existing air quality activities in schools by incorporating targeted information for parents and carers to support air quality improvement and asthma	Updated school air quality programs with new resources, such as informational leaflets, or digital	A comprehensive approach to children's health, with consistent air quality and asthma management practices implemented at school and home, resulting in	Current school programs focus only on in-school activities,	All resources and have parent and career messaging to join up	33 Schools engaged in 2025-26 implement	Medway Air Quality Action Plan Medway Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Public Health	Public Health – Child Health team NHS Kent and Medway Asthma Lead	NHS Kent and Medway Medway Schools

management both at school and at home.	content for distributed to parents and carers, detailing practical steps to improve air quality and manage asthma effectively.	reduced asthma triggers and improved respiratory health for children in Medway.	minimal parental engagement around this topic.	action at school and at home.	asthma policy and recommendation for home messaging to obtain A Better Medway Schools Award.				Medway Breathes (Rainham Eco Hub)
3.2 Allocate a member of staff from Medway Council to attend PAWG (Paediatric Asthma Working Group) to ensure campaigns and work are aligned.	A designated Medway Council staff member actively participating in PAWG meetings, contributing to coordinated campaign planning and information sharing.	Enhanced collaboration and alignment of air quality campaigns and initiatives across Medway, leading to more effective and unified efforts to improve air quality and public health outcomes.	No dedicated Council representative at PAWG; ad-hoc collaboration.	Attendance or representative to attend all PAWG meetings.	Immediate	Medway Health and Wellbeing Strategy Air Quality Communication Strategy	Medway Public Health Team	Staff time	NHS Kent and Medway Medway Council Public health Team
3.3 Communication of High Air Pollution Days information shared with NHS Kent and Medway Communications Team.	Regular dissemination of High Air Pollution Days alerts and guidance to the NHS Kent and Medway Communications Team for onward distribution to healthcare providers and the public.	Increased public and practitioner awareness of high air pollution days, enabling timely protective measures to reduce exposure and mitigate health impacts for Medway residents is communicated.	Inconsistent communication of high pollution alerts; limited public reach.	Formalise Air Pollution messaging from all partners of Kent and Medway AQ Communications Group.	Q4 Message Agreement. Live for Seasonal Episodes of Q1 2026-27	Kent and Medway Air Quality Communication Strategic Partnership Air Quality Communication Strategy	Medway Council Communication Team	Medway Council Communication Team	Medway Council Public Health Team NHS Kent and Medway Communication Team
3.4 NHS Kent and Medway staff to be provided with resources from the Clean Air Academy to increase practitioner skill and knowledge of air quality and its impact on health to inform conversations.	Clean Air Academy resources, such as training materials, toolkits, or webinars, distributed to NHS Kent and Medway staff to enhance their understanding of	Improved practitioner confidence and competence in discussing air quality issues with patients, leading to better-informed health conversations and enhanced patient outcomes related to air quality in Medway.	Limited air quality training for NHS staff; basic awareness only.	Air Quality training from Clean air platform added to recognised CPD for NHS staff. Prioritised for those supporting respiratory	E course Added to staff portal Q3 2025 Promotion with	Kent and Medway Air Quality Communication Strategic Partnership Air Quality Communication Strategy	Medway Council Public Health	Officer Time and Staff Clean Air Academy (DEFRA Grant Funded resource)	Kent and Medway Air Quality Partnership NHS Kent and Medway Medway Council

	air quality and health impacts.			and cardiovascular services.	targeted Professional Q4				
3.5 A member of NHS Kent and Medway team to attend AQAP meetings.	A designated NHS Kent and Medway team member regularly attending AQAP partnership meetings to contribute insights and align health-focused air quality initiatives.	Strengthened partnerships and integration of health perspectives into air quality action plans, resulting in more cohesive strategies and improved health outcomes related to air quality in Medway.	No Current NHS representation at AQAP meetings.	Full attendance at AQAP meetings.	Q3 2025	Medway Air Quality Action Plan Medway Health and Wellbeing Strategy Air Quality Communication Strategy	Medway Council Health Protection team	Officer Time	NHS Kent and Medway Medway Council

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Air Quality

Climate Change Action Plan 2025 -2028

https://www.medway.gov.uk/climatechange

Air Quality Action Plan being refreshed

https://www.medway.gov.uk/downloads/file/7339/medway_air_quality_action_plan_2024_draft

Air Quality Planning Guidance

https://www.medway.gov.uk/downloads/file/2147/medways_air_quality_planning_guidance

To be renewed 2025-2030

Medway Council Air Quality Communications Strategy

https://www.medway.gov.uk/downloads/file/2845/medway_air_quality_communication_strategy

The Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) Framework

https://laqm.defra.gov.uk/
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Low Traffic Neighbourhoods

Medway Council Plan

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Public Health – Asthma

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