

## **Stage 1: Equality Impact Assessment**

### **1. What are the main aims purpose and outcomes of the policy change and how do these fit with the wider aims of the organization?**

The proposed Low Emission Strategy (LES) is aimed at improving the air quality in Maidstone for the benefit of all residents. The LES includes and extends the councils statutory Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP).

The proposed changes to the boundary of the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) will mean that instead of covering the whole urban/sub-urban area it will be focussed on the areas where air quality is actually in breach of the national objective level.

### **2. How do these aims affect our duty to:**

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization and other conduct prohibited by the act.**
- **Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**
- **Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**

In aiming to improve air quality the LES will benefit all residents. It will particularly benefit people who are vulnerable to poor air quality including the very young, the very old, and those with medical conditions such as respiratory or cardio vascular illnesses.

The LES action plan contains a wide range of actions. The majority of the actions are highly unlikely to affect specific groups of people either in protected groups or otherwise other than to improve their health. The public health section of the action plan will specifically seek to raise awareness among vulnerable groups and to further understand who is most affected by poor air quality in the borough.

The change to the AQMA will enable the council to focus resources on people most affected by poor air quality. This includes school children in the affected areas, those using the footpaths other public services. This will benefit all parties but will particularly benefit the vulnerable groups described above.

### **3. What aspects of the service change including how it is delivered or accessed could contribute to inequality?**

There are three actions that could impact on service users within the LES action plan.

The review of the bus station and bus timetabling has potential to impact on service users with protected characteristics of age and disability.

The review of park and ride has the potential to impact on service users with protected characteristics of age and disability

The imposition of a Clean Air Zone or Low Emissions Zone has potential to impact on service users with protected characteristics of age and disability

In all of these cases the actions or of sufficient magnitude that they will subject to specific reporting and approval by committee. They will also be subject to a detailed action specific equalities impact assessment.

**4. Will the policy have an impact (positive or negative) upon the lives of people, including particular communities and groups who have protected characteristics ? What evidence do you have for this?**

The LES and revised AQMA will have positive impacts for all residents of Maidstone. They will have a particular positive impact on vulnerable groups who are most affected by poor air quality. These are the very young, the very old and those with respiratory or cardiovascular diseases.

This is because the aim of the strategy is to improve air quality while the changes to the boundary of the AQMA will focus resources on the areas worst affected.

If the answer to the second question has identified potential impacts and you have answered yes to any of the remaining questions then you should carry out a full EQIA set out as stage 2 below.

### **Stage 2: Equality Impact Assessment**

<b>Name of Policy/Service/Function</b>
Low Emissions Strategy and Review of Air Quality Management Area
<b>Purpose</b>
What are you trying to achieve with the policy / service / function?

The improvement of air quality in the Maidstone area in order to protect public health. The focussing of resources on the areas where air quality is actually in exceedance of the national air quality objective.
Who defines and manages it?
The Environmental Protection Team as part of MIDKENT Environmental Health.
Who do you intend to benefit from it and how?
All residents and visitors to Maidstone will benefit from improvements to air quality. Those vulnerable groups who are most affected by poor air quality. These are the very young, the very old and those with respiratory or cardiovascular diseases. Will benefit the most.
What could prevent people from getting the most out of the policy / service / function?
Failure to deliver the actions in the action plan due to lack of funding or other practical barriers that cannot be overcome.
How will you get your customers involved in the analysis and how will you tell people about it?  The public health section of the action plan will specifically seek to raise awareness among vulnerable groups and to further understand who is most affected by poor air quality in the borough.
<b>Evidence</b>
How will you know if the policy delivers its intended outcome / benefits?
The council monitors air quality continually and we will be able to detect

improvements to air quality as medium term data trends. Progress on the action plan will be reported to committee annually.

How satisfied are your customers and how do you know?

A public consultation has been completed for the Low Emission Strategy and the change to the Air Quality Management Area. Changes have been made to reflect the consultation responses.

What existing data do you have on the people that use the service and the wider population?

The issue of air quality affects everyone.

What other information would it be useful to have? How could you get this?

A better understanding of mortality and illness rates that may be associated with air quality by geographic area. One of the actions in the low emission strategy is to work with public health to gain this understanding.

Are you breaking down data by equality groups where relevant (such as by gender, age, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, marital status, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity)?

No

Are you using partners, stakeholders, and councillors to get information and

feedback?
We done a wide ranging public consultation and councillor workshops to form and refine the action plan.
<b>Impact</b>
Are some people benefiting more – or less - than others? If so, why might this be?
Those people who are most vulnerable to poor air quality the very young, the very old and those with respiratory or cardiovascular diseases. Will benefit the most. This is because they are currently most adversely affected.
<b>Actions</b>
If the evidence suggests that the policy / service / function benefits a particular group – or disadvantages another - is there a justifiable reason for this and if so, what is it?
It is justifiable the benefits of the strategy will benefit those most adversely affected by poor air quality. This is because they have the highest health need. It is also scientifically unavoidable.
Is it discriminatory in any way?
No.

Is there a possible impact in relationships or perceptions between different parts of the community?
No.
What measures can you put in place to reduce disadvantages?
Not applicable
Do you need to consult further?
Some actions as detailed above will be subject to individual consultation.
Have you identified any potential improvements to customer service?
No
Who should you tell about the outcomes of this analysis?  Annual updates on measured air quality and progress on the action plan will be provided to the committee and to the Department for Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).
Have you built the actions into your Service Plan or Policy Implementation Plan with a clear timescale?

Yes.
When will this assessment need to be repeated?
Annual updates on measured air quality and progress on the action plan will be provided to the committee and to the Department for Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).