



Listening Learning Leading

# **Air Quality Action Plan 2014**

## **Consultation Summary**

**A summary of consultation undertaken by the council between June and July 2014 to help shape proposals to improve air quality across the district**

**NOVEMBER 2014**

## SUMMARY

This report provides a summary of the consultation that South Oxford District Council (SODC) undertook between June and July 2014 to prepare an air quality action plan for the district.

The consultation sought the views of various organisations, local communities and individuals on draft proposals intended to bring about air quality improvements throughout the district.

Opportunities were created for members of the public to provide feedback via our online consultation tool and in writing. We also ran a series of drop in sessions in each of the towns where we had established that air quality levels had been breached.

A total of 61 people and organisations responded to the consultation.

A range of issues and concerns were identified from the consultation responses. The most prevalent are shown in the table below along with our response

| <b>Your comments</b>  | <b>Our response</b>  |
|---|--|
| There should be more enforcement of Watlington's Weight Restriction Zone (WRZ)  | We are confident this is being addressed in the action plan (sections 6 and C2)  |
| The action plan should include actions relating to behavioural change, awareness and education, campaigning, website materials, travel planning | We have amended the action plan to make it clear that these actions are included(section 10)                               |
| More information about the health impacts of pollution and other pollutants aside from NO <sub>2</sub> (Nitrogen Dioxide) should be provided    | We are creating a new website which will contain more detailed information about pollution and its impact on public health |
| More information about PM2.5 (particulate Matter) should be provided. The council should monitor this type of pollution more closely            | DEFRA is responsible for the monitoring of PM2.5 and therefore the council has no plans to duplicate this work             |
| Low Emission Strategies and Low Emission Zones are supported  | We are confident this is addressed in the action plan (sections 1, A1, B1 and C1)  |
| 'Cut your engine campaign' is supported   | We are confident this is addressed in the action plan (sections A3 and B4)   |
| There should be camera enforcement of Weight Restriction Zones  | We are confident this is addressed in the action plan (sections 6 and C2)  |
| The action plan should be more detailed and include technical information about the source of pollutants and Air Quality Management Areas.      | Technical information and data requested will be made available on our new web pages                                       |
| Industrial sites should be moved out of Watlington  | This is not feasible in the foreseeable future   |
| The action plan should include an explanation of Low Emission Zones and Low Emission Strategies   | We have included an explanation of Low Emission Zones and Low Emission Strategies in the action plan                       |

We have made revisions to the Air Quality Action plan in response to the comments made and this has been sent to Defra for approval.

## THE AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN

The draft air quality action plan was published on 2 June 2014. The action plan was produced as a result of the national air quality objective for nitrogen dioxide not being met at a number of locations across the district, namely the market towns of Henley, Wallingford and Watlington. It proposed a series of potential actions for the district, some general and some area specific which all aimed to reduce levels of air pollution by tackling current sources and by better managing potential new sources.

## THE CONSULTATION

We consulted on the draft action plan between 2 June and 4 July.

The council held stakeholder and public workshops at the early drafting stage of the plan to gather feedback useful for the purposes of improving the draft policies outlined. Following the completion of the draft plan we consulted again to gather feedback to improve the proposed actions. We approached a wide range of stakeholders, including both statutory and non-statutory consultees. A full list of the people and organisations that we consulted is shown in Appendix 1 – Consultees.

To raise an awareness of the consultation and the opportunities to comment, we used a range of publicity methods which are detailed in Appendix 2 - Publicity methods used to attract interest in the consultation.

Members of the public were able to submit comments online using the council's consultation system during this period (<http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/airquality>). We also accepted comments made in writing to the council's offices at Benson Lane, Crowmarsh Gifford, Wallingford, OX10 8NL.

## CONSULTATION RESPONSES

61 responses were received in response to the consultation from members of the public and organisations interested in the draft plan.

For clarity, responses have been categorised into three groups, general comments, appraisal of current actions and proposed new actions.

### General comments

A large number of responses we received related to the level of detail provided in the draft action plan. Some respondents said that there wasn't enough information provided in the report on the causes of pollution and its impact on public health, as well as technical information about the pollution detected. There was also confusion about what specific proposals in the action plan referred to such as Low Emission Strategies.

There were also comments made about including actions to drive behaviour change, awareness and education campaigning and website materials.

A few people said the more pressure should be put on other organisations such as Oxfordshire County Council to take action where this fell beyond the remit of South Oxfordshire District Council

| Action number<br>(if applicable) | Measure  | Percentage<br>of<br>responses |
|----------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| 10                               | The actions should include, behavioural change, awareness and education, campaigning and website materials   | 19.7                          |
| N/A                              | More health information is needed and health information on other pollutants is needed   | 18                            |
| 1                                | It is not understood what a LES/LEZ is – more detail is needed   | 11.5                          |
| N/A                              | More detail in action plan, (make it more technical, source apportionment explain background emissions, other sources, more info about AQMA technical) | 11.5                          |
| N/A                              | Action is needed from Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) along with integration into LTP4  | 8.2                           |
| 9                                | The planning section is not clear and it is not understood what is currently being done and what the council propose to do                             | 8.2                           |
| N/A                              | We need to lobby and force other agencies to take action e.g. OCC  | 4.9                           |
| N/A                              | Ours and our contractors fleet should be low emission and we should lead by example  | 3.3                           |
| N/A                              | Why has Henley AQMA not been extended  | 1.6                           |
| N/A                              | Car club / bike hire scheme should not be written off  | 1.6                           |
| 5                                | The taxi licensing action not fully understood – more detail needed  | 1.6                           |
| N/A                              | More information is needed on justifying the level of pollutants and why we don't measure some   | 1.6                           |
| N/A                              | Details and maps and monitoring should be included   | 1.6                           |
| N/A                              | Not clear that the plan is for the whole district, people are worried about other areas  | 1.6                           |
| N/A                              | More detailed cost benefit wanted, including health impacts  | 1.6                           |
| N/A                              | Consultee not happy that options have been dismissed before the consultation and request to know the justification for each of these                   | 1.6                           |
| N/A                              | We should have made a two tier document one technical and one summary document rather than leaving out technical detail                                | 1.6                           |

## Views on actions proposed in the draft plan

The majority of actions proposed in the draft action plan were supported by respondents to the consultation.

The most popular action was enforcement of the Weight Restriction Zone proposed for Watlington. Nearly a quarter of all respondents expressed a preference for this.

Support for the ‘cut your engine’ campaign and the creation of Low Emission Strategies and Zones were also popular with nearly 15 per cent of respondents making comments in favour of these actions.

Notably, 16 percent of respondents were against the proposal to keep street parking in Watlington.

The table below shows the distribution of positive and negative comments in relation to the actions proposed in the draft plan by frequency.

| Action  | Measure  | Percentage of responses |
|---------|--|-------------------------|
| C2      | More enforcement of WRZ                                    | 24.6                    |
| B4 & A3 | Support for cut your engine campaign                       | 14.8                    |
| 1       | Support for LES and LEZ                                    | 14.8                    |
| C3      | Keep on Street Parking in Watlington                       | 16                      |
| C3      | Remove on street parking in Watlington                     | 8.8                     |
| 2       | Support for electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure           | 8.2                     |
| C3      | Support for Watlington traffic calming village feel        | 8.2                     |
| C2      | Reduce size of Watlington WRZ                              | 8.2                     |
| 4       | Freight consolidation support                              | 4.9                     |
| 6       | Support for more enforcement of all traffic orders         | 4.9                     |
| 8       | Support for eco driver training, should be more widespread | 4.9                     |
| 10      | Support for community projects                             | 4.9                     |
| C2      | WRZ signage support  | 4.9                     |
| 9       | Support for planning initiatives                           | 3.3                     |
| B2      | Support for Wallingford ring road signage                  | 3.3                     |
| 3       | Support for green parking permits                          | 1.6                     |
| 4       | No freight consolidation centre support                    | 1.6                     |
| 6       | Fines for engine idling                                    | 1.6                     |
| 6       | Increased enforcement of WRZ Wallingford                   | 1.6                     |
| 7       | Support for SODC green fleet                               | 1.6                     |
| 8       | No support for eco driver training                         | 1.6                     |
| 10      | Behavioural change support                                 | 1.6                     |
| B3 & A3 | Park and stride campaign support                           | 1.6                     |
| C1      | No support for reducing the size of the WRZ in Watlington  | 1.6                     |

## Other suggested actions proposed by consultees

We asked consultees if they had any further suggestions for actions to be included within the plan. A total of 51 suggestions were made which are detailed below, along with our response.

| Proposal number | Proposed action  | Feedback to proposal  |
|-----------------|--|---|
| 1               | Camera enforcement of WRZ                                | OCC will investigate options to improve the enforcement problem of WRZ enforcement. If camera's are found to be the best solution OCC are committed to finding the best camera technology and are supportive of the measure   |
| 2               | Move Industrial site out of Watlington                   | Although OCC would support any desire to do so this is not feasible in the foreseeable future and would need to be part of a wider spatial planning initiative led by the district council                                    |
| 3               | Bypass for Watlington                                    | This would only be possible as a result of significant additional housing development in the area which would attract section 106 money to pay for the bypass   |
| 4               | One way on Wallingford bridge                            | This is being investigated as a result of the outcomes of the LEZ study   |
| 5               | Travel planning and green transport promotion            | This will be made more explicit as it is already incorporated in action 10  |
| 6               | TRO (Traffic Regulation Order) for Henley want a WRZ     | Henley Town Council have already applied for a TRO, this is an OCC decision. OCC are looking into the best solution for the problem which may include different enforcement methods and alterations to sizes of existing WRZs |
| 7               | Improving public transport should be in plan             | This can only be improved if there is a commercial basis on which to do so  |
| 8               | Satellite navigation rerouting should be in              | This measure is included in the plan under action B2  |
| 9               | Width restrictions so HGVs can't get through Watlington  | See response for action 1   |
| 10              | One way system for Watlington                            | With the current road network, there are only so many configurations possible and the existing arrangement is deemed to be the optimum. Future housing development may provide future opportunities to re-assess.             |
| 11              | Tree planting and green spaces, green walls should be in | This is already included in action 10 so we will make it more explicit  |
| 12              | Ban lorries in Watlington                                | See response for action 1   |
| 13              | Ring road / relief road for Henley                       | This is not something that is currently deliverable due to issues relating to funding and environmental impacts   |
| 14              | Transport survey of Watlington (investigating            | This measure is partly being completed under the current LEZ project.   |

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|    | gating systems/traffic lights etc)   | With the current road network, there are only so many configurations possible. With future housing development the section 106 money could mean this is something we could look into   |
| 15 | Congestion charge in Watlington and Wallingford at peak times  | At present, only London has a congestion charging regime as congestion was a serious impediment to both public health and economic growth. Congestion charging regimes are deeply unpopular with many businesses, commuters and residents. There is evidence that congestion charging does impact adversely on economic growth and town centre vitality and are extremely costly to introduce. Boundaries need to be carefully considered to avoid the traffic simply being displaced to other areas. Significant investment in public transport has to happen before congestion charging can be introduced. In Oxfordshire, congestion charging would have to be introduced by OCC who have responsibility for Highways in conjunction with the district and town councils. OCC are looking at regimes to better manage the traffic throughout the District however have no current aspirations to roll out congestion charging within the District |
| 16 | Review ITS (Intelligent Traffic System) - alter for AQ + more sensors further back from Wallingford bridge | Installing more sensors further back from the bridge will not achieve any air quality benefit. The signals are set up to regulate traffic into the town and will only release the level of traffic which can sensibly get through the system. We are comfortable this is set-up to its optimum operation but OCC are happy to review it if there is a specific issue   |
| 17 | Sustainable renewable energy projects should be in   | This is already included in action 10 so we will make it more explicit   |
| 18 | Collect up to date traffic information   | Traffic data is collected routinely and can be found on Highways website   |
| 19 | Traffic priority signs for Watlington  | This will be looked at as part of the review OCC are doing with Watlington Parish council (WPC) over parking and traffic issues within the town  |
| 20 | Regular steering group meetings in Wallingford   | We are happy to reconvene these once the action plan process has been completed  |
| 21 | More consultation with public on the action plan   | Working groups fed into the action plan at an earlier stage and coupled with the five week long public consultation, this is considered to be a sufficient consultation process and exceeds the statutory obligations  |
| 22 | No bypass for Watlington   | This would only be possible if there is significant additional housing development in the area   |
| 23 | No more development in Wallingford   | Under planning regulations it is not possible to do this   |

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| 24 | Enlarge Wallingford AQMA to cover a wider area                              | No foreseeable benefit seen as the action plan and planning document cover the entire District and are not restricted to the AQMA area alone  |
| 25 | Ban any further developments that allow HGV's in the WRZ                    | Under planning regulations it is not possible to do this  |
| 26 | Monitor PM2.5, lobby for DEFRA funding, include more information about them | DEFRA undertake this monitoring and so we have no plans to do so  |
| 27 | 20mph speed limit in Watlington   | The average speed of traffic in the AQMA in Watlington is below 30mph and so we do not see any benefit in introducing a lower limit at this time  |
| 28 | More pollutants should be measured  | Our 'Updating Screening Assessments' which can be found on our website, explain why it is not necessary to monitor other pollutants at this time. It is not a DEFRA requirement and the figures for the district are well below limit values  |
| 29 | 20mph speed limit Henley  | The average speed of traffic in the AQMA in Henley is below 30mph and so we do not see any benefit in introducing a lower limit at this time  |
| 30 | Want parking enforcement included   | This is included within action 6  |
| 31 | Air alert feasibility should be in  | This will be made more explicit as it is already incorporated in action 10  |
| 32 | Alter timings of Wallingford lights   | A scheme was introduced in 2008 which altered the traffic light operation during peak times to ensure the signals on the bridge don't cause blocking back into High street. The signals drop to a set of fixed timings to enable co-ordination and ensure progression along High street and not leave cars queuing there. OCC think this is working well however, the operation can be reviewed as needed |
| 33 | Ban on HGVs between certain hours – Wallingford                             | As HGVs are not the principle contributor in Wallingford this measure would be unlikely to solve the air quality problem. Also considerations such as economic viability of businesses within the town and noise impacts of out of hours deliveries on residents mean this action is not feasible   |
| 34 | No HGVs in the market place in Henley                                       | This would not resolve the air quality issue  |
| 35 | Roadside vehicle testing  | This is an action that could be included under the promotional awareness campaigns within action 10   |
| 36 | Remove parking in Wallingford Castle Street and Town hall                   | This would adversely affect the economic viability of the town without providing sufficient alternative parking and therefore we do not support it  |
| 37 | Countdown lights  | This is currently being investigated as part of the 'cut your engine campaign measures' A3 and B4.  |

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|    |  | It does however only work on fixed timing lights not reactive lights  |
| 38 | Green bus for Wallingford  | This is a commercial sector decision not something we could demand  |
| 39 | Put in pinch point at Crowmarsh and Wantage Road roundabout            | The introduction of pinch points leads to queuing traffic and therefore high air pollution levels, this is not a measure we would support   |
| 40 | Traffic lights in Watlington at peak times to hold traffic out of town | This is likely to be met with complaints and non-compliance from road users. OCC tried something similar with traffic lights on the A415 as you approach Abingdon from the south - they were so unpopular locally that the scheme had to be compromised by moving the lights closer to the centre of Abingdon which has reduced their effectiveness                               |
| 41 | Park and Ride at Henley (Twyford railway)                              | OCC have previously reviewed this and found it is not feasible as the low critical mass in Henley does not generate enough demand   |
| 42 | Take away access exemptions to WRZ                                     | This is not lawful and will not be pursued  |
| 43 | Road markings and signage to assist at pinchpoints in Watlington       | This will be looked at as part of the review OCC are doing with Watlington Parish Council (WPC) over parking and traffic issues within the town   |
| 44 | No support for Wallingford one way system                              | This is not an action put forward in the action plan  |
| 45 | Better signage at Watlington zebra crossing                            | This will be looked at as part of the review OCC are doing with WPC concerning parking and traffic issues within the town   |
| 46 | Car free town centre in Wallingford                                    | The economic impact of this could be negative unless there is significant investment in alternative means of travel and associated infrastructure. It may just displace traffic to other parts of the network / town centres. Other issues to consider are the traffic flows, of residents, businesses and commuters, and whether there are alternative routes that could be used |
| 47 | Wallingford park and ride  | The demand is unlikely to enable this on a commercial basis and is therefore not considered to be viable  |
| 48 | Use river as transport means   | The logistics and benefits of this are not evident and it is not seen as a viable option  |
| 49 | More cycle parking   | This can be incorporated into action 10   |
| 50 | Better maintained footpaths  | If there are any concerns about the state of footpaths these should be reported direct to OCC. Parish councils can raise the money to repair footpaths and then ask OCC to deliver the improvements   |
| 51 | Engine idling enforcement  | This is included within action 6  |

## **NEXT STEPS**

We have sent our draft air quality action plan to DEFRA who have approved it.

Some actions included within the plan are already underway and some have been investigated and are not feasible. Some of the actions require OCC support either now or in the future and many are funding dependent.

Once the plan has been adopted it will be made available on our website and progress will be monitored and reported on annually.

## APPENDIX 1

### **Consultees:**

#### **Statutory**

Oxford County Council  
Wallingford town council  
Henley town council  
Watlington parish council  
Environment Agency  
Public Health England  
Vale of White Horse District Council  
Cherwell District Council  
Oxford City Council  
Aylesbury Vale District Council  
Wycombe District Council  
West Berkshire District Council  
Reading Borough Council  
Wokingham District Council

#### **Non statutory**

OCVA  
ORCC  
Sustainable Wallingford  
Watnext  
Henley in Transition  
Chiltern Conservation Board  
Chamber of Commerce  
General Public

## APPENDIX 2

### **Publicity methods used to attract interest in the consultation.**

We publicised the consultation in several ways.

#### **The press**

We issued a press release outlining the consultation, as well as how residents could comment.

This publicity led to several opportunities for Cllr Anna Badcock to take part in both radio and television interviews to publicise the consultation. The communications team also dealt with ongoing press queries from various publications.

#### **Our website**

The press release was featured on our website, as well as a dedicated page at [www.southoxon.gov.uk/airquality](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/airquality). It was on the front page panel of our website for the duration of the consultation.

We also sent out tweets to publicise the consultation and encourage residents to take part.

#### **Council publications**

The consultation was also publicised in South News, our regular newsletter sent to parish and town councils.

#### **Open days**

We hosted an open day in each of the towns covered by the AQMA – Watlington, Wallingford and Henley. Council officers were on-hand at each of these sessions to answer any questions residents had and general information was provided on static presentation boards.

The open days were publicised in our press releases and on our air quality page.

#### **Internal communications**

The consultation featured in In Focus, our fortnightly newsletter that is sent to district councillors and staff.