

|                         |  |  |                           |
|-------------------------|--|--|---------------------------|
| <b>Subject:</b>         | <b>Rottingdean High Street – Traffic and Air Quality</b>       |  |                           |
| <b>Date of Meeting:</b> | <b>11 October 2016</b>   |  |                           |
| <b>Report of:</b>       | <b>Executive Director – Economy, Environment &amp; Culture</b> |  |                           |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b> | <b>Name:</b>   | <b>Andrew Renaut</b>   | <b>Tel: 01273 29-2477</b> |
|                         |  | <b>David Parker</b>  | <b>01273 29-2474</b>      |
|                         | <b>Email:</b>  | <a href="mailto:andrew.renaut@brighton-hove.gov.uk">andrew.renaut@brighton-hove.gov.uk</a> |                           |
|                         |  | <a href="mailto:david.parker@brighton-hove.gov.uk">david.parker@brighton-hove.gov.uk</a>   |                           |
| <b>Ward affected:</b>   | <b>Rottingdean Coastal</b>                                     |  |                           |

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE****1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 On 21 July 2016, two items were presented to a meeting of the Council about traffic and air quality in Rottingdean High Street. They were a petition of more than 1,300 signatories by SAFE (St Aubyn's Field Evergreen), a Rottingdean campaign group, in conjunction with Rottingdean Parish Council, on behalf of Rottingdean village residents, and a Notice of Motion submitted by local councillors on behalf of the Conservative Group. Both submissions were debated and it was agreed that they should be referred to the council's Environment, Transport & Sustainability [ET&S] Committee.
- 1.2 This report has therefore been prepared to outline the background, and respond to, the primary issues raised in the submissions, which focus on requesting that the council outline options for improving traffic flow in the village and reducing air pollution in the High Street.
- 1.3 The B2123 links the A27 Trunk Road (Falmer) with the A259 and is part of a well-used route to reach Brighton Marina and the city's universities in the east of the city. Rottingdean High Street is at the southern end of the B2123 and is one of the city's two designated Air Quality Management Areas [AQMAs], which have been declared due to non-compliance with short and long term Nitrogen Dioxide [NO<sub>2</sub>] concentrations as set out in the air quality strategy for England. It is also a designated local shopping area in the council's approved City Plan (Part 1).

**2. RECOMMENDATION:**

- 2.1 The committee is recommended to note the options and considerations outlined within this report regarding possible measures or schemes that could improve traffic flow and reduce air pollution in Rottingdean village, and especially the High Street.

### **3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 In March 2015, the Council approved its fourth Local Transport Plan [LTP4] in which it outlines its long-term, strategic approach to transport and travel, and the principles and measures that can be used to deliver improvements between 2015/16 and 2018/19. The LTP acknowledges the degree and complexity of issues that can affect people within different areas or environments of the city, such as shopping areas or parks and open spaces.
- 3.2 In the context of the relative, limited levels of resource and funding available to invest in individual improvements to address these issues, the LTP refers to a number of locations where measures could be introduced. The primary aim of such work would be to identify improvements by focussing on locations where more than one problem can be resolved or mitigated and, once priorities are agreed, the development of possible options and suitable solutions to address them would then follow. Rottingdean High Street is included as one example of a number of similar locations within the city
- 3.3 In developing this principle further, a report about developing and agreeing future priorities for the LTP was considered by the ETS Committee in November 2015. The report proposed a focus on retail/shopping areas and included Rottingdean High Street as part of a broader analysis of those locations across the city for future (up to 2018/19). In approving the future priorities, the High Street was not prioritised to be brought forward at that time.
- 3.4 Rottingdean High Street is the smaller of two designated AQMAs in the city and is described in the council's associated Air Quality Action Plan [AQAP] (approved in 2015), which states that "The contribution of cars and vans to the ambient NO<sub>2</sub> is more substantial ... than anywhere else in the City Council area". It is considered to have inappropriate levels of traffic (>10,000 vehicles a day) within what is a confined space. Traffic flow through the village is actually estimated to be approximately 14,000 vehicles per day. It is also a designated local shopping area in the City Plan Part 1 (Policy CP4), and roads in the area (the A259 and B2123 (Falmer Road)) experience traffic congestion at busy times of the day.
- 3.5 Informal and formal discussions about traffic, transport and air quality issues have taken place over a number of years involving council Transport and Environmental Protection [EP] officers and representatives of the local community including representatives of the Parish Council, SAFE and local councillors. The most in-depth of these discussions have taken place as part of a Task & Finish Group set up with the Parish Council, which are explained in some detail below. Representations have also been raised by some local people more recently in connection with development proposals and planning applications in, and adjacent to, Rottingdean village. Officers are also advising the Parish Council on the preparation of a draft Neighbourhood Plan.
- 3.6 Submissions about these issues have also been made through various democratic processes including a public question, petitions, a deputation, member's letter and a Notice of Motion to Council and committee meetings. The representations made at the 21 July Council meeting have resulted in this report being prepared for consideration by the ET&S committee. Further submissions have also been received by the council since the July Council meeting.

## **4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

4.1 There are a broad number of possible options that could be explored and reviewed by the council in terms of their feasibility for improving traffic flow and reducing air pollution in Rottingdean. The council's approved LTP highlights a number of measures that can be used to achieve wider policy objectives. These include:-

- a) delivering sustainable and accessible transport options such as better citywide public transport services and promoting and providing for the use of alternative fuels and provide associated equipment e.g electric vehicle charging points;
- b) providing a safer environment such as redesigned road layouts to reduce number and severity of casualties and collisions; and
- c) creating an attractive environment such as improved streets to user friendly layouts and environments, including street trees.

4.2 The council's approved Air Quality Action Plan [AQAP], produced by the council's Environmental Protection Team, includes a number of measures that have been, or could be, used across the city or in specific locations. These vary considerably in their content and applicability. For Rottingdean High Street it refers to possible options such as the re-routing of general traffic (with modelling or trials), and the use of weight restrictions or 'Keep Clear' markings in the narrowest section of the High Street. It additionally suggests discussions involving the Sussex Air Group, Lewes District Council and East Sussex County Council about the reliance on private cars for transport in the Peacehaven area. Actions could also include providing more transport choice; exploring funding of communal rapid electrical charging for vehicles in order to encourage electric and hybrid vehicles; and encouraging the wider community to reduce the number of car journeys it makes that pass through the High Street.

4.3 Discussions with the Parish Council, outlined further in Section 5 of this report, have also identified some possible measures that it considers that would address its concerns. These include four scenarios, each of which the Parish Council suggests should be tested using computer modelling to assess their impact. They comprise one-way traffic in the High Street; two-way traffic, but with a chicane (priority working) at the narrowest point; and closure/pedestrianisation of the High Street. This work has involved the council's Road Safety Manager and Head of Transport Projects.

4.4 Taking into account the above principles, a number of possible alternative options that could be pursued in order to improve traffic flow in the village and reducing air pollution in the High Street have been suggested or identified in recent years, including those suggested by the Parish Council. These range from local traffic management measures to a local, or more strategic, bypass, and are outlined and reviewed in Appendix 2.

## **5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

5.1 As outlined above, Transport and Environmental Protection Team officers have been working with members of the Parish Council since 2014, as part of the regular liaison/engagement process, which was led by the former Assistant Chief

Executive. Discussions about traffic and air quality evolved into a more formalised Task & Finish Group (established in 2015), with its own Terms of Reference and a stated focus on the delivery of short to medium solutions ('quick wins'). Proposed options include changes to traffic management in the main High Street, and its closure (partial or otherwise), but it is understood that clarification is still being sought about some traffic data and the costs of certain technical activities, and that further data may also be required. As a result, no wider or formal consultation/engagement has been undertaken by the Parish Council on any of its proposed options for the village, in order to further review and refine the number or form of them.

- 5.2 Council officers have also participated in a number of different meetings with, and responded to correspondence from Rottingdean Parish Council and local/community groups about traffic and air quality issues in the village. In addition to the Notice of Motion, local ward councillors have also participated in meetings, or expressed views, about the issues that have been raised, and indicated that there is no disagreement with the Parish Council about the need to investigate, identify and implement measures to address the problems in the High Street.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 Taking into account the considerations set out in this report, and the decision already taken by the ET&S Committee in November 2015 when setting out future project priorities for 2015/16 to 2018/19, it is proposed that officers should continue to liaise with representatives of the community in Rottingdean in order to clarify any outstanding issues about data or costs. This would then enable the discussions of the Task & Finish Group to be drawn to a close. If it chose to do so, the Parish Council could seek to further refine its proposals for improving traffic flow and reducing air pollution, by seeking the views of the wider village community on the principles of each option.
- 6.2 The conclusions of that work could then help inform the consideration of proposals for Rottingdean High Street, alongside other locations in the city where there are similar but competing priorities, as a possible future project priority for inclusion in the council's next LTP Delivery Plan (to run from 2019/20 onwards). If included, further discussions and recommendations would then be made when annual decisions are made by the council about the content of its LTP capital programme and the allocation of the available funding to different projects and programmes.

## **7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

### Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The cost of officers continuing to liaise with representatives of the community in Rottingdean to clarify any outstanding issues will be funded from existing employee budgets within the Transport and other service areas where appropriate. More in-depth consideration of any transport/highway options to improve traffic flow and reduce air pollution in the Rottingdean village/High Street area would include more comprehensive technical analysis and calculations,

engineering design, consultation and subsequent construction and monitoring, if agreed, would require adequate levels of resources in terms of officer time and budget. The sums of money included in Appendix 2 are very approximate and only intended to provide an indication of a possible order of cost.

- 7.2 Funding for more-in depth consideration of options or capital works has not been identified. Potential sources of funding that are available include the Transport Division's revenue budget, and/or the LTP capital programme. The allocation of such budgets during 2016/17 to any such work would have implications for existing, agreed priorities in terms of other projects and investment agreed by this committee and the council's Policy, Resources & Growth. Any future year budget allocation would require approval in accordance with council's Financial Regulations and Standard Financial Procedures.
- 7.3 Officers will explore potential joint and external funding options with Rottingdean Parish Council should development and delivery of a scheme commence. External funding is potentially an important source of income, but funding conditions need to be carefully considered to ensure that they are compatible with the aims and objectives of the council.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Steven Bedford*

*Date: 16/09/16*

Legal Implications:

- 7.4 The process of local air quality management is set out in Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 and in the Air Quality (England) Regulations 2000. The Act provides that the Council has a duty to prepare, and may from time to time revise, an air quality action plan [AQAP] in relation to an area designated as an Air Quality Management Area. The purpose of the AQAP is to ensure that the Council takes suitable action to improve air quality within the area.
- 7.5 In considering the traffic management implications associated with improving traffic flow, the council would have due regard to the Transport Management Act 2004, especially Section 16 which imposes a duty ("the network management duty") on local traffic authorities to manage their road network in order to achieve the efficient movement of traffic on the authority's road network. An authority can take any action that it considers will contribute to improving traffic flow on its road network.
- 7.6 It is not considered that any adverse human rights implications arise from the recommendation set out in this report.

*Lawyer Consulted: Hilary Woodward*

*Date: 20/09/16*

Equalities Implications:

- 7.7 There are no direct equalities implications associated with the content of, and recommendations made within, this report. Therefore, an Equality Impact Assessment has not been carried out, nor is one planned.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.8 There are no direct sustainability implications associated with the recommendations made within this report.

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.9 Issues associated with air quality and public health have been taken into account in previous decisions made by this committee when setting priorities, and are outlined in the council's LTP and AQAP, which are background documents to this report.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

1. Potential options to improve traffic flow and reduce air quality problems in Rottingdean/High Street.

### **Documents in Members' Rooms**

1. None.

### **Background Documents**

1. Minutes of Full Council meeting – 21 July 2016
2. Report on LTP – Future Priorities (agenda item 45) to, and minutes of, November 2015 ET&S Committee.
3. BHCC Air Quality Action Plan [AQAP] (2015).
4. BHCC Local Transport Plan [LTP4] (2015).
5. Notes of meetings with Rottingdean Parish Council.
6. Correspondence/documentation received from or on behalf of members of the public, Rottingdean Parish Council, and local/community groups and businesses.