



Air Quality Action Plan Consultation Results

30TH DECEMBER 2024

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Purpose

1. In areas where measured air pollution is above national air quality objectives, local authorities are legally required to declare Air Quality Management Areas. South Kesteven District Council created an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) for Grantham in 2013. Covering an area in the town centre along Manthorpe Road and Wharf Road it includes High Street and London Road.
2. In accordance with section 84 2¹ of the Environment Act 1995, the declaration of this area as an AQMA means SKDC is required to produce an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP), and consult on its contents. The aim of this is to set out how the Council intends to reduce the concentrations of NO₂ in that area to below the government's objectives.
3. The purpose of this report is to update members of South Kesteven District Council's Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and Full Council with the results of the Air Quality Action Plan consultation.

Proposal

4. Stakeholders - particularly those who live or work in proximity to Grantham's Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in Grantham town centre – were asked to comment on the contents of SKDC's 2024 draft Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP). Their feedback, once considered, will be used to:
 - Inform and refine the content of SKDC's Air Quality Action Plan. This will in turn continue to improve air quality in Grantham
 - Inform the Council's understanding of which actions and/or patterns of behaviour members of the public may consider incorporating into their own lives, to tackle poor air quality
5. Whilst focused on Grantham, responses from across the district were encouraged.

Objectives

6. The objectives of the consultation were identified as follows. To:
 - Capture feedback regarding the existing Air Quality Action Plan for Grantham and
 - Update those taking part on the improvements to date in air quality within Grantham town centre
 - Gauge feedback on proposed new measures for the 2024 AQAP in particular those designed to address poor air quality

¹ Section 84 2 ...the local authority which made the order shall prepare, in accordance with the following provisions of this Part, a written plan (in this Part referred to as an "action plan") for the exercise by the authority, in pursuit of the achievement of air quality standards and objectives in the designated area...

Timescales

7. The survey was launched on 13th November 2024 and was open for 4 weeks, closing on 11th December.

Stakeholders

8. The stakeholders were identified as follows:
- SK residents
 - Town and Parish Councils
 - The Environment Agency
 - Lincolnshire County Council

Methodology

9. The table below identifies the method(s) used for each of the stakeholder types:

| Stakeholders | Method(s) | Details |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Residents of South Kesteven | Press release, posts on social media channels, | Press Release and Social Media posts included web link to the survey. QR code also included on the PR |
| Town and parish councils | Contacted directly by email | Email included a web link to the survey. |
| The Environment Agency | Contacted directly by email | Email included a web link to the survey. |
| Lincolnshire County Council | Contacted directly be email | Email included a web link to the survey. |

Details

10. To fulfil the requirements of section 84 2 of the Environment Act 1995 – specifically the Council’s statutory duty to prepare, implement and keep under periodic review its Air Quality Action Plan - approval was given to consult on a new approach for South Kesteven.
11. Actions undertaken by the Consultation Officer and the Environmental Health Manager (Environmental Protection and Private Sector Housing) included:

- Preparing, designing and setting up the on-line survey
- Writing a press release and preparing social media posts
- Determining content for a web page to host the draft action plan
- Contacting all parish councils, Lincolnshire County Council and the Environment Agency by email to ask for their opinion
- Inputting and analysing feedback from 143 respondents
- Preparing a report

12. The survey included the following sections:

- An introduction to the consultation, why the action plan has been produced - including any legislative requirements - and how feedback will be used and responded to. It also included a link to the draft action plan
- A section on the existing Air Quality Management Area
- A section on the Air Quality Action Plan
- Actions to address poor air quality
- Demographic questions. These to include a question to identify the type of user (a member of the public, a town or parish council representative, or on behalf of another organisation etc)
- A statement on how any personal data they supply will be treated
- A thank you and closing date
- Links to SKDC data protection and privacy statements

13. The webpage included:

- An introduction to the consultation, why we need their help and how their feedback will be used
- A web link to the survey
- A copy of the draft action plan

14. The press release included:

- An introduction to the consultation
- A web link to the survey and the QR code
- Information on SKDC's position re: the air quality action plan
- What to do if they don't have on-line access or require the survey in an alternative format or another language
- Next steps

15. The social media posts included:

- An introduction to the consultation
- A web link to the survey

16. The consultation was promoted in the local media and on the Council's social media channels during the consultation period. There was activity on these channels- the posts promoting the consultation on Facebook gained 6,515 impressions, 30 engagements and 24 link clicks. The posts

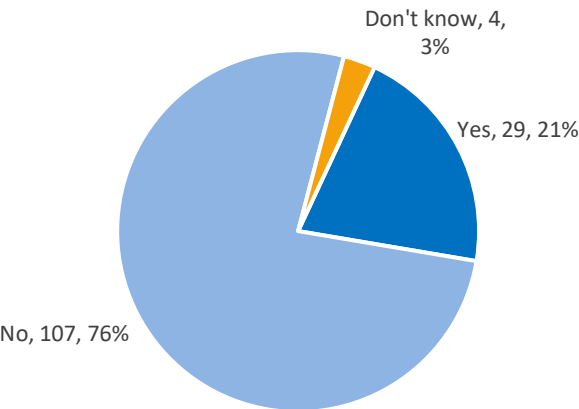
on X (formerly Twitter) gained 659 impressions and 5 engagements. The press release was posted on Grantham Matters website², but not by any of the other media outlets.

- 17. Several stakeholders, identified as part of the scoping exercise, were contacted directly on the first day of the consultation. These included town and parish councils, Lincolnshire County Council and the Environment Agency.
- 18. The consultation closed on 11 December 2024. 143 responses were received. No requests were received from respondents to provide a printed copy of the survey, or one in an alternative format or another language. This was, however, an option available to them.

The results

- 19. The first section of the survey asked respondents for their views on SKDC’s Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). Respondents were asked if they knew that parts of Grantham Town Centre were monitored for air quality. Levels of knowledge about the AQMA were quite low, with around one in five (29 or 20.7%) stating that they knew Grantham Town Centre was subject to an AQMA. Just over three quarters of those taking part in the survey (107 or 76.3%) were not aware that it was in situ, as illustrated below:

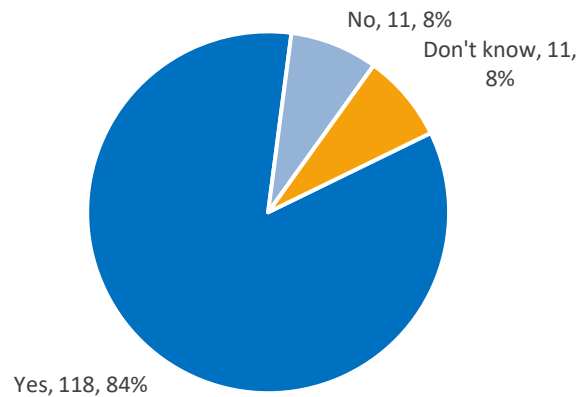
Q1. Were you aware that the central part of Grantham is covered by an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)?



² <https://granthammatters.co.uk/have-your-say-on-skdc-s-air-quality-action-plan/>

20. When asked if they thought the Council should do more to communicate the Air Quality Management Area that is in place, and what it means, most respondents (118 or 84.3%) thought that they should. This is shown below:

Q2.Do you think the Council should do more to communicate the AQMA that is in place, and what it means?



21. The third question on the survey asked respondents for their comments on Grantham's Air Quality Management Area. Their responses were varied, and included suggestions for extending the area covered by the AQMA to include Springfield Road, Hill Avenue and Belton Lane in Grantham, and requests to re-consider the number of new homes being built, and the effect this has on air quality, and banning log burners and open fires.

These are illustrated in the quotes below:

"It should cover a wider area where there is frequent traffic congestion e.g. Springfield Road"

"Cars regularly backed up (at peak times) around Hill Avenue and Belton Lane. Could do with monitoring those areas too."

"Allowing hundreds of new homes to be built, means potentially over a thousand extra cars in and around Grantham. This contributes towards air pollution...."

"Ban log burners and open fires. They burn anything and everything."

22. The impact of the quarry near West Deeping on air quality was also mentioned by several respondents. Although not relevant to this particular question, the free text option was used by respondents to comment on an issue with air quality they feel strongly about, as illustrated in the quote below:

"What about the poor air quality in and around West Deeping as a result of the incessant and uninterrupted open cast Mining activities?"

23. The second section of the survey informed respondents that although there have been reductions in the levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) air pollution at all monitoring sites, three sites have only

been under objective levels for air pollution for the last 2-3 years. Whilst acknowledging that this is positive and a step in the right direction, respondents were asked for their views on what could be done to reduce levels of pollution in Grantham Town Centre. Suggestions included asking the County Council to co-ordinate the roadworks (which were happening in Grantham whilst this survey was active), increasing the availability and affordability of public transport, reducing the number of new homes being built and encouraging more people to walk or cycle.

“Reduce the number of roadworks in the Town Centre. The number of cars sat with their engines idling over the last 6 months is ridiculous.”

“Cheaper and more public transport.”

“...Less housing developments!!!...”

“Make walking & cycling more attractive...”

24. The third section of the survey focused on SKDC’s Air Quality Action Plan. Setting out how the Council is going to reduce concentrations of air pollutants and exposure to air pollutants across South Kesteven, not just in the zone covered by the Air Quality Management Area, respondents could view the draft action plan by clicking on a link embedded in the survey. Several comments were received. Some respondents, whilst supportive of the action plan in general, thought it should be wider in its remit. Requests were made to monitor other types of air pollution in other areas of the district -most notably West Deeping. A couple of respondents were quite critical of the action plan, and thought it needed to be more specific. Comments illustrating each of these threads are included below:

“Living in West Deeping I am extremely concerned about the air quality in our area and how it will be further reduced if the new quarrying area is approved.”

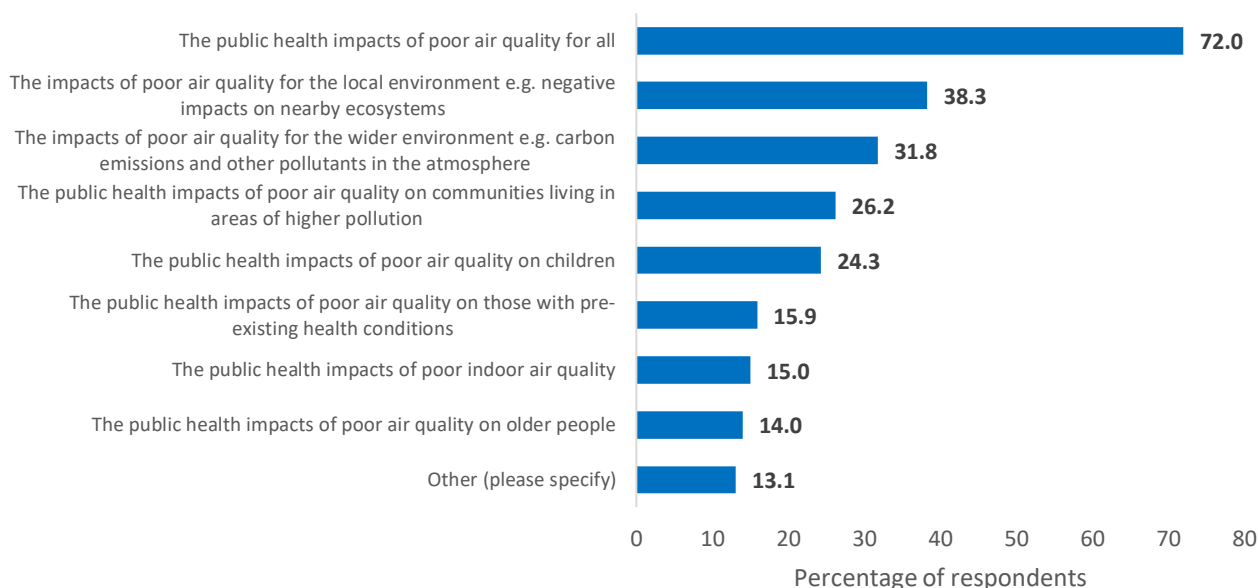
“A lot of words..... Very generic and not very specific.”

25. The fourth section of the survey asked respondents for their opinions on several different actions and behaviours. Designed to mitigate or lower emissions, they form a central part of South Kesteven’s Air Quality Action Plan. Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

- The strategic highways improvements undertaken as part of the Grantham Southern relief road will help to address poor air quality in South Kesteven
- Traffic management should be improved at key junctions in Grantham Town Centre
- The levels of emissions from buses travelling through Grantham Town Centre should be improved
- The Clean Air Lincolnshire project raises awareness of the impacts of poor air quality and the importance of improving air quality monitoring
- Participation in activities including walking, cycling, scooting and public transport use should be encouraged
- Improved provision of cycling infrastructure in Grantham Town Centre
- Council owned vehicles should be upgraded to reduce emissions
- Improved travel planning for Council staff

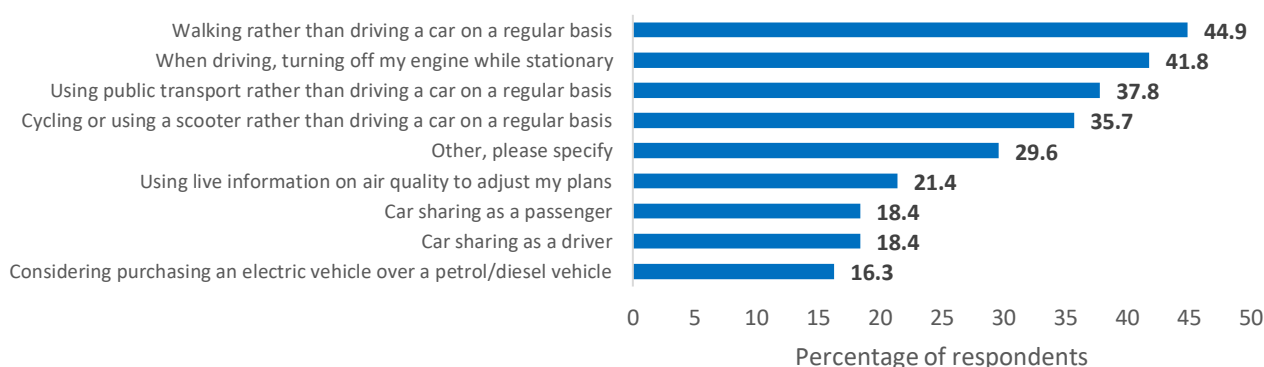
26. The percentages of respondents agreeing with each of these statements ranged from 43.2% to 79.4%. Eight out of ten (81 or 79.4%) respondents thought that traffic management should be improved at key junctions in Grantham Town Centre. Seven out of ten respondents thought that participation in activities including walking, cycling, scooting and use of public transport should be encouraged (73 or 72.3%) and the level of emissions from buses travelling through Grantham Town Centre should be improved (71 or 70.3%). The statement “The strategic highways improvements undertaken as part of the Grantham Southern relief road will help to address poor air quality” and “The Clean Air Lincolnshire project raises awareness of the impacts of poor air quality and the importance of improving air quality monitoring” were less popular with respondents. 44 respondents (43.2% and 43.5% respectively) agreed with each of these statements.
27. In order to inform areas of focus in SKDC’s Air Quality Action Plan, the fifth section of the survey asked respondents to identify which areas of air quality were most important to them. They were asked to choose three from the following:
- The public health impacts of poor air quality for all
 - The public health impacts of poor air quality on children
 - The public health impacts of poor air quality on older people
 - The public health impacts of poor air quality on communities living in areas of higher pollution
 - The public health impacts of poor air quality on those with pre-existing health conditions
 - The impacts of poor air quality for the local environment e.g. negative impacts on nearby ecosystems
 - The impacts of poor air quality for the wider environment e.g. carbon emissions and other pollutants in the atmosphere
 - The public health impacts of poor indoor air quality
 - Other – please specify:
28. Most respondents thought it was important to focus on the public health impacts of poor air quality for all, rather than particular sections of the community. When asked to choose no more than three, respondents chose as follows:

Q7. What areas of air quality are most important to you?



29. When asked what actions or patterns of behaviour they would be most likely to consider undertaking or changing to help tackle poor air quality, the percentages of respondents identifying each of the following actions ranged from 16 respondents (16.3%) who said that they would consider purchasing an electric vehicle rather than a petrol or diesel vehicle to 44 (44.9%) who said that they would consider walking rather than driving a car on a regular basis. Their choices are illustrated below:

Q8. What actions or patterns of behaviour would you be most likely to consider undertaking or changing to help tackle poor air quality?



30. The final question on the survey asked respondents if they were a local resident, a business, or were responding on behalf of a town or parish council or a partner organisation. Three quarters of those responding were people who live in the district. Responses were also received from local businesses and town and parish councils. An analysis of the 22 responses received from those who chose to answer “other, please specify” were received from those living either in or near West Deeping, in rural areas across the district or from other areas.

Conclusion

31. Levels of awareness about the parts of Grantham Town Centre currently covered by the Air Quality Management Area are quite low. Only one in five of those taking part in the survey knew that it was subject to this requirement. Perhaps not surprisingly, there is support from survey participants for the Council to do more to communicate with the local community about the Air Quality Management Area, and what it means. Eight out of ten respondents were keen to see more information being made available.
32. Respondents were generally in favour of the actions and behaviours which form a central part of SKDC’s Air Quality Action Plan. Designed to mitigate or lower emissions and as such improve air quality, eight out of ten (81 or 79.4%) respondents thought that traffic management should be improved at key junctions in Grantham Town Centre.
33. Most respondents thought it was important to focus on the public health impacts of poor air quality for all, rather than particular sections of the community. Seven out of ten respondents (77 or 72.0%) chose this as one of their three priority areas.
34. A commitment to changing behaviours was also evident, with four in ten respondents stating that they would consider walking rather than driving a car on a regular basis.
35. Promoted on social media channels and in the local press, this consultation attracted responses from residents across the district, including some from West Deeping, concerned about the impact of a quarry on the air quality in their local area. Whilst not the subject of the initial consultation, and not covered by the remit of the Air Quality Action Plan, it may be prudent to investigate some of the concerns that have been raised about air quality in this location.
36. Members are asked to note the results of this consultation. Any updates to the Council’s Air Quality Action Plan that may be required should now be identified.

Prepared by Deb Wyles
Communications and Consultation
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