

## **Sefton MBC comments on EX.55: INSPECTOR'S NOTE – AIR QUALITY PLANS FOR NO<sub>2</sub>**

1.1 The Council's planning, air quality and strategic transport planning officers have considered the Defra documents referred to in the Inspector's note [EX.55] and their implications for the Sefton Local Plan, and consider that there are no significant implications for the reasons set out below.

### **2. Improving Air quality in the UK: tackling nitrogen dioxide in our towns and cities: UK overview document (Defra, Dec 2015)**

- 2.1 This provides an overview of the government's UK plan for improving air quality, notably in relation to nitrogen dioxide. Section 3.8 provides an overview of measures which local authorities should take to improve air quality across England, including:
- Considering whether to prepare and implement a Low Emissions Strategy
  - Existing statutory duties in relation to air quality, including the Air Quality Management Area approach
  - Transport initiatives to help tackle pollution, reduce NO<sub>x</sub> emissions, increase the use of buses, cycling, walking and other local transport initiatives; and to encourage cleaner ways of travel.
  - Planning new developments to make sure that they do not add to or cause significant additional air quality issues, and comply with national planning policy guidance on air quality.
- 2.2 Paragraph 4 of this UK overview document indicates that it should be read alongside plans for each of the 38 zones where air quality issues relating to nitrogen dioxide have been identified. Liverpool Urban Area (which includes the parts of urban south Sefton which are extensions of Liverpool's urban area) is one of these zones – see section 3 below.

### **3. Air Quality Plan for the achievement of EU air quality limit value for nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) in Liverpool Urban Area (UK0006) (Defra, Dec 2015)**

- 3.1 This is an updated air quality plan for the achievement of the EU air quality limit values for nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) for the Liverpool Urban Area. It updates the plan published in September 2011.
- 3.2 This 2015 Air Quality Plan includes information relating to the context, NO<sub>2</sub> exceedance, and past, current and future local air quality management measures. Annex C sets out in more detail past, current and future local air quality management measures.
- 3.3 Section 1.3 of the Plan states that while the annual limit value for NO<sub>x</sub> was exceeded in 2013 across the Liverpool Urban Area it is likely to be achieved before 2020 through the measures already in place and referred to in the Plan.

### **4. Implications of these documents for the Sefton Local Plan**

- 4.1 The Council considers that the Local Plan, notably the proposed modifications to policy EQ5 'Air quality' [set out in LP.32 and LP.33], sets out a robust framework for managing and improving Sefton's air quality which is in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) [NR.1], and in line with the measures set out in section 3.8 of '*Improving Air quality in the UK: tackling nitrogen dioxide in our towns and cities: UK overview document*' (Defra, Dec 2015) (see para 2.1 above).
- 4.2 Local Plan Policy EQ5 'Air quality' (including proposed modifications) says that:
1. "Development proposals must demonstrate that they will not:
    - Result in a significant worsening of air pollution levels in an Air Quality Management Area or

- Hinder the revocation of an Air Quality Management Area by:
      - introducing significant new sources of air pollutants, or
      - Introducing new development whose users will be especially susceptible to air pollution, or
      - Lead to a significant decline in air quality
  - 2. Where appropriate, major developments must incorporate measures to reduce air pollution and minimise exposure to harmful levels of air pollution to both occupiers of the site and occupiers of neighbouring sites”.
- 4.3 Other Local Plan policies [as set out in LL.32 and LP.33], complement the approach to reducing journeys and emissions and managing air pollution, in line with the with the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) [NR.1], and in line with the measures set out in section 3.8 of *‘Improving Air quality in the UK: tackling nitrogen dioxide in our towns and cities: UK overview document’* (Defra, Dec 2015). These policies include:
- MN2 ‘Housing, employment, and mixed use allocations’ – the location of these allocations helps reduce the need to travel, as demonstrated in the Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Plan [LP.3].
  - IN2 ‘Transport’ - regarding minimising the environmental impact of transport
  - EQ1 ‘Planning for a healthy Sefton’ – regarding managing air quality and pollution.
  - EQ3 ‘Accessibility’ – regarding location and design of new development to encourage walking and cycling, and its location in areas accessible to existing or proposed bus stops, rail stations, local services and facilities.
  - EQ4 ‘Pollution’ – regarding air pollution
  - EQ7 ‘Energy efficiency and low carbon design’ – regarding encouraging major development to reduce greenhouse gas emissions where practicable, including through energy efficiency measures, use of low carbon, decentralised and renewable energy and provision of infrastructure for low emissions vehicles.
- 4.4 The Local Plan is part of Sefton’s corporate commitment to air quality management. This includes carrying out Sefton’s statutory duties regarding air quality, including progress in meeting national air quality objectives and targets, and implementing the Action Plans for Sefton’s five Air Quality Management Areas. It also includes implementing measures set out in the 2011 Local Transport Plan [TR.9] and the 2015 Transport Plan for Growth [TR.11] to help reduce traffic emissions. This corporate commitment to air quality management is on-going.
- 4.5 These corporate commitments are in line with the measures set out in section 3.8 of *‘Improving Air quality in the UK: tackling nitrogen dioxide in our towns and cities: UK overview document’* (Defra, Dec 2015) and encompass many of the past, current and future local air quality management measures set out in *‘Air Quality Plan for the achievement of EU air quality limit value for nitrogen dioxide (NO2) in Liverpool Urban Area (UK0006)’* (Defra, Dec 2015). The majority of the measures identified in Table C.1 relating to Sefton’s Air Quality Management Areas have either been completed or are being implemented.
- 4.6 The Council’s planning, air quality and strategic transport planning officers have considered the Defra documents referred to in the Inspector’s note EX.55 and their implications for the Sefton Local Plan, and consider that there are no significant implications. The Local Plan and these other corporate commitments are in line with the measures set out in section 3.8 of *‘Improving Air quality in the UK: tackling nitrogen dioxide in our towns and cities: UK overview document’* (Defra, Dec 2015) and encompass many of the past, current and future local air quality management measures set out in *‘Air Quality Plan for the achievement of EU air quality limit value for nitrogen dioxide (NO2) in Liverpool Urban Area (UK0006)’* (Defra, Dec 2015).