
SCRUTINY INQUIRY PANEL - AIR QUALITY
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 NOVEMBER 2014

Present: Councillors Hammond (Chair), Coombs, Galton, Lloyd,
McEwing (Vice-Chair), O'Neill and Parnell

14. **APOLOGIES AND CHANGES IN PANEL MEMBERSHIP (IF ANY)**

It was noted the Councillor Lloyd had now permanently replaced Councillor Thorpe as a member of the Panel. This change had been report at the Council Meeting on 19th November, 2014.

15. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING)**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd October, 2014 be approved and signed as a correct record.

16. **AIR QUALITY - SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL**

The Panel considered the report of the Assistant Chief Executive relating to how effectively the Council was working to address air quality issues in the City.

Neil Tuck gave a power point presentation giving details of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, appended to the minutes.

The following responses were given to questions raised:-

- The funding ends March 2016, and following a period to assess, it was hoped that it would be possible to see if the objectives had been achieved by 2017.
- It was explained that the travel attitude survey targeted groups through "Mosaic", which through technology ensured that there was an equal proportion of each group questioned.
- It was commented that there needed to be more done to target the tourists that were visiting the City. The "totems" were used at the coach and train station together with the airport. At certain times of year there were also poster campaigns.
- Concerns were raised relating to the "My Journey" app being very sensitive to the spelling. This would cause a greater problem for people visiting the City that may not be familiar with place names or spellings. They were currently looking at refining the search engine in order to try to improve this.
- Information relating to the take-up of the free months travel, for target groups of young people entering employment, was not currently available as the resource restraints were causing difficulties accessing the data.
- There was a mechanism in place to ensure dialogue took place with the University to ensure that they have appropriate travel plan in place and that they were targeting investment in this area. A concern was raised relating the University not enforcing their own rule of students not being allowed to have vehicles.
- It was agreed that for some people moving away from travelling by car was not an option, due to the type of work they had. However for such groups there was always the option of looking at whether alternative travel could be used during their leisure time.
- There was a team dedicated to school journeys and this had resulted in a large increase in the number of children walking to school.

- There was a great amount of support for the Sky Ride event, however concern was raised about the safety of the roads for cyclists during normal usage. It was agreed that work was still needed to make the City's roads safer. Additional local Sky Ride events also took place across the City.
- The My Journey "Roadshow" attends many major City events to promote cycling. Babs the Big Red Bird would be at such events.
- Concerns relating to some advertising slogans being inappropriate had been noted. It was agreed that there was a need for something eye catching but it was important that it did not cause offence.

Steve Guppy gave a power point presentation on Ultra Low Emissions, appended to the minutes. Steve explained the government plan to reach ultra-low emission vehicle majority by 2050 and have announced £35M to be made available to 2-4 cities that commit and agree to a step change in ULEV adoption. The announcement was originally due in the Autumn, therefore it should be imminent and local air quality will be important when assessing bids.

The following responses were given to questions raised:-

- Currently the priority to improve air quality was to reduce the total number of vehicles, rather than looking at increasing the number of electric vehicles.
- Recharging points were sometimes included in new large developments, however these were not always publically accessible.
- The Council currently have one electric van in its fleet. It was likely to be used as a pool vehicle. It would not be possible to have it as one of the vehicles that was taken to home as there could be issues relating to the charging. Planning of the journey was crucial for the vehicle to ensure charging was not a problem.
- Opportunities to included planning conditions to include public charging points within new developments would be limited, as it would difficult to justify that this was reasonable with so few electric vehicles currently on the roads.
- It was estimated that the cost installing a home electric charging point was £600, however this could be between £6-9,000 if were for a public point that provided rapid charging.
- Issues relating to home charging for staff included people not having off-road parking and cost of electricity.
- There still was no agreement amongst manufactures on a standard charging plug, although it was thought that this was a matter that was in the process of being resolved.
- Telematics technology was not being utilised in Council vehicles as discussions had not yet taken place with staff. This was something that would be progressed as not only could it have a positive impact on air quality it could also generate a saving on fuel consumption.
- Having a fleet of electric vehicles based at the Council Depot to resolve charging issues was currently not an option as the large number the vehicles taken home out of hours was due to space issues.
- Eco Driver training was available to Council staff through My Journey project but was not compulsory – this was promoted via SCC managers.
- Concerns were raised that businesses in London raised very negative issues when the Low Emission Zone (LEZ) was introduced and whether the financial impact had been quantified. It was felt that the many drive behind the scheme was the commitment from the Government to improve air quality.

- Funding would come from the Government rather than Council budgets, however there was a risk of investing in emerging technologies that could change to alternatives in the future.
- Ways to improve air quality was now starting to be looked at internally when planning applications were being considered. Including what measures can be put in place to reduce impact on air quality, such as green infrastructure; particular species of tree; and types of roof tiles. Any conditions would need to be reasonable and cost would have to be considered. It would not be possible to impose conditions if they were not viable.
- The planning function could improve air quality in two ways; by reducing emissions and by mitigating emissions.
- It was suggested that even if it was not possible to impose conditions maybe it could be suggested to developers of major development proposal that they include the appropriate ducting so that future charging points could be installed with relative ease.
- It was reported that there was flexibility on what the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was spent on as it was not site specific in the same way that a S106 agreement.
- Imminent review of the Local Plan provided an opportunity to update and strengthen policies linked to address air quality.
- With regards to the Thornhill District Heating scheme it was accepted that there was a balance between the benefits of the scheme to the residents saving money on their current energy costs and the types of fuel used and the effects on air quality.
- Funding for the Air Alert scheme was available until 2016. So there would be a need to look at future funding of the scheme or it would stop. This could possibly be a question for Public Health as there was a need to look at the value of well-being.
- It was reported that an email had been received from DEFRA confirming that a new monitoring station would be installed in Southampton that was compliant with EU regulation. The location was most probably going to be the Old Redbridge Primary School site.
- Papers included with the agenda indicated that the cost of the introduction and enforcement of a LEZ on the Western Approach outweighed the benefits that it would achieve. Concerns were raised that this did not however take into account the cost on the health system. It was agreed that data on this was needed, it was not possible to consider the matter just on economics.