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SCRUTINY INQUIRY PANEL - AIR QUALITY  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 31 JULY 2014

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Present: Councillors Coombs, Galton, Hammond, O'Neill and Parnell

Apologies: Councillors McEwing and Thorpe

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

It was noted that following receipt of the temporary resignation of Councillors McEwing and Thorpe from the Panel, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, acting under delegated powers, had appointed Councillors Mintoff and Lloyd to replace them for the purposes of this meeting.

2. **ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR**

**RESOLVED:-**

- (i) that Councillor Hammond be elected as Chair for the Municipal Year 2014/2015; and
- (ii) that it be noted that the Vice-Chair would be elected at the next meeting.

3. **REVIEW TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Panel considered the report of the Assistant Chief Executive setting out the terms of reference and the project plan for the Inquiry.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (i) that the terms of reference as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be noted: and
- (ii) that the outline inquiry project plan as set out in the terms of reference be approved.

4. **INTRODUCTION TO THE REVIEW**

The Panel considered the report of the Assistance Chief Executive setting out the introduction to the review on Air Quality.

**RESOLVED** that the following comments, from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport; the Team Leader from Southampton City Council's Scientific Services; and Member of the Public be noted and used as evidence in the review.

Councillor Rayment – Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport

Explained that Cllr Shields would be taking the lead on the issue with regards to Public Health.

Cabinet position – welcome the review as air quality was not as good as it could or should be.

Vibrant City with a very busy port, which bring many benefits, but also creates problems.

Air quality has been a matter of considerations since at least 2007.

Cabinet were looking at an action plan, but agreed to wait until the scrutiny review had been completed.

Concerns about the removal of air monitoring stations – one was not owned by City Council and there were issues with equipment that was not producing accurate readings.

Steve Guppy – Team Leader, Scientific Services

PowerPoint presentation giving a broad overview and covering the following:-  
Central Government was responsible for air quality, however Local Authorities carry out the function. Measurements were link to “harm”.

Assessment process was a three year cycle and currently in fifth round and at the detailed assessment stage.

If figures show any issues then an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) was declared. During the assessment process Southampton has declared a total of 10 AQMAs. Most were significantly due to road transport and were in the areas with arterial road links. Explained the network of 50+ diffusion tubes and the 8 locations for continuous monitoring stations.

Public Health Implications – possibility that some issues were not just the result of air quality, respiratory health issues could be linked to historic City occupations.

Air Quality Action Plan – included an air alert for those residents that have signed up, giving them information when air quality had reach moderate levels or above. This addresses the impact however there was a need to address the levels.

Focus was on transport as most of the issues were caused by this.

Improvements had been made but had not been delivered as expected. The increase in diesel sales, which contain much higher polluting levels had off-set a lot of the other positive measure that have been introduced.

DEFRA had funded a feasibility into introducing a Low Emission Zone along the Western Approach. It was clarified that consultants had been looking the option of a low emission zone for the City. They were indicating that it was possibly not feasible and that a strategy would probably be a better solution. Both options would be presented.

EURO6 vehicles would have to achieve test data.

Need to consider the cost of improving air quality compared to the cost to public health  
Need to look at reducing emissions produced rather than the number of vehicles.

Many schemes being progressed as part of the action plan.

Ultra Low Emission Schemes were being considered, with possibility to bid for funding from Central Government.

It was confirmed that diesel trains did have an impact on the results, including the sidings that were located in the docks.

Concerns were raised that focus was on nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) levels and not on greenhouse gases and particulates. It was explained that these were separate issues and that monitoring was based on public health issues. Limits had not been reached. There had been large reductions in such emission, including the refinery.

Agreed that actual numbers, rather than percentages of premature deaths in Southampton associated with pollution would be presented to the meeting linked to Public Health.

Monitoring stations were located in areas where the volumes of traffic were greatest and also in areas where there was queuing traffic on a regular basis. Need to consider traffic planning to stop the queues from forming.

Air quality was a factor that was considered when bus routes were planned with the bus companies. However as private companies these agreements had to be based on good working relationships to ensure that they are fulfilled.

Concerned where raised that with the economic improvement there could be an increase in the emissions. It was agreed that there could be an impact, however it was noted there was not a big reduction in the trade from the docks during the recession.

HGV operators had other priorities such as fuel security and consumption and with these improvements there should be lower emissions. EURO6 engines should achieve this.

Clarity was sort on the reason why the monitoring station had been removed at Redbridge. This station had been there since 2002. Over the last two year NO<sub>2</sub> readings had only captured 20% of the data and 90% was needed. The particulate data recovery at the location was still good, however the station was not cost effective if it was not monitoring for NO<sub>2</sub>. It was an option for a community group to take in the responsibility of monitoring the particulates if they wished, however the cost associated with servicing was in the region of £10,000.

A request was made for a progress update on the action plan detailed at appendix 5 to the report. It was noted that this information would be more beneficial in August/ September when there would be a better overview.

It was asked if there was an age limit for the taxis within the City. It was reported that there were quarterly meetings from the taxi trade and this matter was already being discussed, with the plan to include an age limit as part of the low emission strategy.

David Cooper, a member of the Southampton Cycle Campaign addressed the meeting and raised the following points:-

- Southampton does not have good city centre cycling
- Concerned about cycle routes at Platform Road and Western Approach and that views had not been properly listened to
- All plans in the City should consider cycling as per of the infrastructure as this would reduce emissions
- Concerned that even if results were below EU limits this did not mean that they were not harmful
- There should be a focus on vehicles as these were the cause of the pollution

Councillor Rayment responded to some of the issues raised. She explained that a new forum for cyclist had been established to promote cycling and improve communication. However the organisations that were receiving the invitations to the meetings were not necessarily informing the right members about attending. All were welcome. Councillor Keogh was leading on the forum.

Issues relating to schemes had arisen in the past as the different cycling groups had different views. Therefore the decision makers have to find a compromise.

It was confirmed that once the scheme at Platform Road was complete that there would be provision for cyclists.

Ms Lindsi Bluemel, secretary of the Southampton Cycling Campaign addressed the meeting and raised the following points:-

- Concerned about the cluster of accidents that have occurred on the Western Approach
- Plans to down grade the current off road cycle route on the Western Approach to mix with the traffic, which would be very dangerous for cyclists
- Concerned about the proposed closure of the cycle path from Millbrook to Central Station
- Shared paths with pedestrians was not the best option. Were possible separate cycle paths should be included

It was reported that the issues relating to cycle path route at Third Avenue were still being resolved, however this was proving complicated as many of the groups involved had different priorities.

Steve Dobson, a member of the Western Docks Consultative Forum, addressed the meeting and raised the following points:-

- Concerned about particulate monitoring not being undertaken
- EU have declared that there were certain particulates that it was not acceptable to have at all
- Concerned about the threat of major developments such as wood fired power stations

It was reported that monitoring of certain particulates was not required by regulation. Other emissions testing gave a good indication of levels.