

**BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

**ECONOMY, SKILLS & TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE –  
PUBLIC MEETING**

**1030 hours on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2019, Committee Room 2, Council House –  
Action Notes**

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**Present:**

Councillor Tahir Ali (Chair)

Councillors Chaman Lal, Julien Pritchard, Simon Morrall and Ken Wood.

**Also Present:**

Councillor Waseem Zaffar, Cabinet Member for Transport & Environment

Stephen Arnold, Head of CAZ

Paul Faulkner, Chief Executive, Greater Birmingham Chamber of Commerce (GBCC)

Honorary Alderman Mike Olley, Westside BID

Zabir Hussain, Southside BID

Philip Singleton, Colmore BID

Baseema Begum, Research & Policy Officer

Rose Kiely, Group Overview & Scrutiny Manager

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**1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST**

The Chairman advised the meeting to note that members of the press/public may record and take photographs.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Lal declared a non-pecuniary interest as cabinet advisor on major projects to the Cabinet Member for Transport & Environment and a member of the West Midlands Combined Authority's Transport Delivery Committee. Cllr Lal also stated that he a Councillor for the Soho & Jewellery Quarter ward that is covered by the CAZ.

Cllr Pritchard declared that he was previously employed by Birmingham Friends of the Earth.

### **3. APOLOGIES**

Councillors John Clancy and Lou Robson.

### **4. ACTION NOTES**

The Committee agreed the action notes for the meeting held on the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

### **5. THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE CLEAN AIR ZONE (CAZ)**

(See document No. 1)

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting and explained the purpose of the session.

The Cabinet Member, Cllr Waseem Zaffar highlighted the key points of his presentation that was circulated as part of the agenda pack. Following this Paul Faulkner, Philip Singleton, Honorary Alderman Mike Olley and Zabir Hussain added the following points: -

- There are 3,500 members of the GBCC. Approximately 2,000 of these are in Birmingham. The GBCC have worked with the Council on a number of engagement events on the CAZ and have been kept up to date with the mitigations and exemptions on offer. There was some initial concern about the roll-out planned for 2019 as many businesses were not aware of the implications and would have struggled to adjust in the timeframe. However, it was highlighted that businesses are resilient, and they like to be informed so they can put plans in place.
- The Colmore BID supports 550 businesses and this does not include micro businesses (that use shared space). There are approximately 35,000 people based in the area. During the consultation on the CAZ last summer businesses were supportive of the CAZ. Large organisations in the area are looking at the policy and guidance and tuning their fleet appropriately.
- Southside BID consists of about 300 businesses. From the consultation that the BID has undertaken on the proposed CAZ public transport is a key issue as respondents felt that it is not fit for purpose currently. Any charges to businesses as part of the CAZ will be passed onto their customers and visitors leading to reduction in visitors ultimately. Keeping staff and particularly lower paid staff e.g. call centre workers was another issue raised as they are more likely to leave and go find work outside of the CAZ, therefore avoiding the charges. In terms of the exemptions feedback from the businesses consulted was that not much information had been shared on what these are and there was a lack of knowledge on the process for those staff eligible for an exemption. Another issue was that a lot of smaller businesses don't have the

time or resource to attend the consultation events on offer however they are the most at danger and desperately need the support. It was stated that these businesses were most likely to move out of the area to avoid the CAZ charges.

- Concern about the air quality (AQ) baseline data used by the Council and the calibration of the equipment used to measure AQ levels. What equipment is used to measure AQ and what are the manufacturers guidelines are on the calibration of the equipment?

Members then raised the following issues: -

- The focus of the presentation from the Cabinet Member was on transport issues only with no reference to the economic impact on businesses and employees within the CAZ area.
- What consultation has there been with businesses and has there been an impact assessment done with businesses within the CAZ?
- How many businesses are there within the CAZ? Concern on the number of businesses engaged with so far and the Council should be aiming for a higher number.
- Many manufacturers rely on their vehicles to receive deliveries and pick up goods using the 'just in time' process that ensures that they can get these quickly and efficiently. There was a fear that manufacturing companies would be hit disproportionately by the CAZ and would seek to leave the area as the prices to cover the cost of deliveries would rise and this would be detrimental for SME's in particular. The economic effect would be felt by the city as businesses (retail businesses were also highlighted) may choose to leave the area and/or city and this would have the most impact on the lowest paid employees.
- All the measures being put in place are transport related. Concern that as businesses raise their prices to cover the additional cost expected for travelling into the CAZ area this will inevitably mean a rise for prices which may result in less visitors to the city and customers going elsewhere. It was highlighted further that there is a need for the correct transport infrastructure to be in place to support people to make changes to their travel behaviour (for example, more and city-wide Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points).
- Why isn't the CAZ being considered for areas outside of the city centre where air pollution levels exceed government safe levels?
- The impact of not acting on clean air was highlighted as equally important. It was re-iterated that legal limits are not safe limits according to the World Health Organisation (WHO) and that there is data and evidence that supports the effects of air pollution on the health of citizens.
- The positive economic benefit of improving the public realm and making the city centre more pedestrian friendly (thus improving air quality) and attractive to visit hasn't been made clear. Ensuring there is clean air throughout the city is a problem however this can be addressed through improving the public transport infrastructure and accessibility issue.

In response to the points raised, Members were told: -

- Birmingham was set a challenge to become legally compliant on air pollution levels ASAP through a ministerial direction and this has included working with Climate-Earth.
- Government has been asked for more funding to put all measures in place for the CAZ however the amount approved will be used to mitigate and provide exemptions as per approved business case.
- A full economic assessment was done as part of the Full Business Case (FBC). A number of briefing events and roadshows were held over the summer where between 100-200 businesses were engaged with. More events will be running in the new year and work will continue with the BIDs and GBCC. Wider marketing will be done to reach as many people as possible to raise awareness and give further information on exemptions and mitigations.
- Businesses are looking at innovative ways to continue to operate with the CAZ in place. The Council has engaged with as many businesses as much as possible and by working with the GBCC. A 'Business Breathes' website has also been set up with information for businesses not just in the CAZ but the wider area also. Businesses are engaging with the Council and the Council has been engaging with different businesses as part of its consultation. As part of this businesses have been involved in helping to shape mitigation and exemption measures. The Cabinet Member assured the Committee that work will continue to support all businesses throughout the process.
- It is anticipated that with the introduction of the CAZ and the communication and engagement with citizens and businesses this will encourage people to move to more sustainable and greener modes of travel.
- The Cabinet Member stated that the Council was always looking for new ways to engage with residents, businesses and other stakeholders. However, it should be noted that the Council does not have the resource to engage with every business but will use the forums and stakeholders in place to be proactive and reach as many businesses as possible. It was also confirmed that engagement with businesses will continue after the implementation of the CAZ to see how the mitigations and exemption measures are working.
- Engagement and communication with BIDs in the city has been positive with attendance at wider events and feedback has been overall supportive.
- Anecdotal evidence from some businesses during the engagement on the CAZ shows that many vehicles being used are already compliant. Data collected shows that currently approximately 27% of vehicles travelling within the CAZ are non-compliant. In addition, mitigation measures have been welcomed and will help some of the businesses in the short to mid-term.
- It was clarified that from the original modelling carried out as part of the FBC there is in the region of just over 6,534 businesses in the city. Clarification will be provided on the number of businesses in the CAZ.

- In terms of the impact on lower paid staff there are specific mitigations targeted – a 12-month exemption and a scrappage scheme. There is also a mobility fund to help access to public transport and this has been set up in direct response to feedback received from businesses. In addition, 40% of the funding allocated - £15m has been secured to support taxi drivers.
- It was acknowledged that the city does not currently have the transport system it desires. However, measures are being put in place such as priority to buses through Bus Lanes (and enforcement cameras to help with this) but bigger strides are needed.
- The Council has received confirmation that National Express West Midlands will not be increasing bus fares. It is hoped that coach companies will follow suit as Birmingham is not the only city to introduce a CAZ and so this is something nationally that cities will need to look at. Freight vehicles are in the same position.
- Currently there are 5.28% EV vehicles in Birmingham and it was acknowledged that there are not enough EV charging points. However, a procurement process has concluded and from January 2020 there will be 200 extra commercial EV charging points installed in the city centre and this will be doubled moving forward.
- The air monitoring equipment used in the city was calibrated and included and approved in the business case to government. The data collection was done by AQ expert consultants. Monitoring equipment was requested as part of the funding package from government however it was not awarded. The Council will be using its CAZ revenue for future AQ monitoring. but not awarded so BCC will use its CAZ revenue to ensure fit for purpose AQ monitoring system. AQ levels will be measured again following further planned public realm works.
- A separate group of local members from wards within the CAZ areas chaired by the MP for Ladywood and they have been engaged to discuss key issues that impact the residents in their wards and neighbourhoods.

**RESOLVED: -**

1. Members requested a summary of the information contained within the FBC on the economic impact assessment on businesses within the CAZ.
2. Further information contained within the FBC on specifics around the air pollution levels in the city to be provided to the Committee in plain language.

**6. CURZON PUBLIC REALM**

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

**7. WORK PROGRAMME DISCUSSION – NOVEMBER 2019**

(See document No. 2)

The Chair discussed the possibility of a short report to City Council highlighting the Committee's concerns about the lack of engagement and information to businesses in respect of the economic impact of the CAZ and requesting that urgent work is carried out with businesses within the area.

Cllr Pritchard requested that the Committee revisit the West Midlands Pension Fund item and consider further detail at a future meeting.

Members agreed to defer the Committee's December meeting to January due to purdah. All items from the December meeting will be carried forward and the Committee will consider these at an additional meeting in January.

**RESOLVED: -**

1. Following receipt of information in relation to the agenda Item 5 – 'The Economic Impact of the CAZ' members to assess whether a short report summarising the key issues should be discussed at a future City Council meeting.
2. The December meeting is re-arranged for 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020 at 4.30pm.

**8. REQUEST(S) FOR CALL-IN/COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION/PETITIONS RECEIVED (IF ANY)**

None.

**9. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

**10. AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS**

Agreed.

**RESOLVED:-**

That in an urgent situation between meetings the Chair, jointly with the relevant Chief Officer, has authority to act on behalf of the Committee.

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The meeting finished at 12:36 hours.