

**Submission to the Health & Social Care O&S Committee by Councillor Barbara Dring, Chair of Licensing & Public Protection Committee (LPPC)**

‘How are the implications for air quality considered in policy decisions?’

The publication in September 2017 of Birmingham’s Health & Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee report ‘The Impact of Poor Air Quality on Health’ came at a very opportune time for the Licensing & Public Protection Committee. The O&S report identified the link between pollution and poor health and said that ‘The City Council needs to demonstrate leadership and take ownership of this issue by developing a strategy to address this effectively.’

LPPC had already set out on a course to introduce a vehicle emissions policy for the taxi and private hire vehicles prior to the O&S report. The work of officers in Licensing was already well advanced in September 2017, in preparation for the draft licensing policy being presented to the LPPC meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2017.

The O&S report was nevertheless extremely helpful in that it gave officers and members of LPPC even more justification for the policy that LPPC was being asked to adopt. It provided the written evidence to link poor health outcomes to air pollution, and it provided LPPC members and officers with a corporate / policy framework within which to work.

The report to LPPC on 23 October 2017 referenced the O&S report in paragraph 1.4.

The eight recommendations in the LPPC report were all approved by the Committee. The most significant decision was to adopt a an emissions policy for taxi and private hire vehicles that will require them to meet the emissions standards for a Clean Air Zone (Euro 4 for petrol and Euro 6 for diesel) by 31 December 2019.

Under a scheme funded by the Department of Transport, 65 hackney carriages have been converted to run on LPG. LPPC agreed to extend their licences from 2021 until 2025 in recognition of the beneficial impact they have on reducing pollution.

Further work has to be done by LPPC in terms of agreeing on a policy in respect of engine sizes and on the criteria that should be applied to licensing electric vehicles. An officer/member working group has been convened for this purpose which will make recommendations to LPPC.

A medium to long-term policy going beyond December 2019 for vehicle emission standards will be consulted on and agreed by LPPC in the coming year.

A copy of the October 23 LPPC Vehicle Emissions report is attached for reference.

## Land Use Planning – An Environmental Health perspective

Environmental Health respond to consultations on planning applications and this response includes air quality matters. Air quality is a material consideration in planning terms as evidenced by paragraph 124 of the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>1</sup>.

124. Planning policies should sustain compliance with and contribute towards EU limit values or national objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and the cumulative impacts on air quality from individual sites in local areas. Planning decisions should ensure that any new development in Air Quality Management Areas is consistent with the local air quality action plan.

Environmental Health consider air quality when making responses and make appropriate recommendations to Planning Management on planning applications where air quality is an issue / expected to be an issue.

In making recommendations Environmental Health make use of the Low Emissions Towns & Cities Best Practice Guidance on Planning and Air Quality<sup>2</sup> which provides a mechanism for assessing applications based on scale and likely impact and seeks to minimise the damage arising.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG, March 2012,

<sup>2</sup> [https://go.walsall.gov.uk/low\\_emissions\\_towns\\_and\\_cities\\_programme](https://go.walsall.gov.uk/low_emissions_towns_and_cities_programme)