

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE

1000 hours on 2nd August 2018, Committee Room 6 – Actions

Present:

Councillor Liz Clements (Chair)

Councillors Chaman Lal, David Barrie and Kath Hartley

Also Present:

David Harris, Sub-Programme Lead, Clean Air Zone, BCC

Rebecca Hawthorne, Principal Transportation Behaviour Change Officer, BCC

Sylvia Broadley, Sub-Programme Lead, Developing Infrastructure, BCC

Duncan Vernon, Interim Acting Assistant Director, Public Health, BCC

Mark Wolstencroft, Sub-Programme Lead, Environment, BCC

Lynda Waltho, Regional Director, Confederation of Passenger Transport UK - Midlands region

Keith McNally, Operations Director, Confederation of Passenger Transport UK - Midlands region

Ali Bell, Head of External Communications, National Express West Midlands (=

Martin Stride and Chris Crean, Birmingham Friends of the Earth

Steve Lyne, Eco Sutton

Roger Low, Eco Sutton

Kath Taylor, Eco Sutton

Gavin Passmore, Partnerships Manager, Sustrans (West Midlands)

Baseema Begum, Research & Policy Officer, Scrutiny Office

Rose Kiely, Overview & Scrutiny Manager, Scrutiny Office

1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

The Chair advised those present that the meeting would be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast via the Council's Internet site and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there are confidential or exempt items.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Zaker Choudhry, Timothy Huxtable, Josh Jones and Hendrina Quinnen.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

The Chair reminded members to declare all relevant interest.

4. TACKLING AIR QUALITY IN BIRMINGHAM – CLEAN AIR ZONE CONSULTATION

(See document No. 1)

The Chair, Cllr Clements gave a brief overview of the purpose of the consultation. The session would allow for a discussion with invited partners and for the Committee to produce a collective response for submission to the consultation. During the discussion the following points were made:

- Life expectancy in Birmingham is lower than the England average for urban areas and many health issues can be related to poor air quality not only those that are respiratory in nature. Public health data indicates that residents in some parts of the city can expect to have a healthy life expectancy of 60 years and in deprived and inner city areas this is only 50 years.
- The most vulnerable in society are affected the greatest for example by the increase in childhood asthma admissions to hospital. The rate of admissions due to childhood asthma in the city were around double the national rate.
- Mitigation measures will be put in place for businesses and individuals who operate and live in the city, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), those with disabilities, taxi drivers and others as appropriate.
- There is a big issue with meeting the set compliance for coaches within the required timescale. There are currently 21,000 coaches in operation in the UK and only 4,200 are Euro VI standard (and therefore compliant with the standard required). The remainder of the coaches vary and although retro-fit technology on older vehicles is a possibility and is in development, at the moment it has not been accredited. Furthermore there is currently no accredited solution that meets the need of all coaches and there is no guarantee that any solution developed will work.
- The retro-fit of coaches is a UK-wide issue and City Council officers are working with Joint Air Quality Unit and the Energy Saving Trust that have set up the Clean Vehicle Registration Accreditation Scheme (CVRAS).
- Differential pricing, for example different charges for differing vehicles or particular charges for the time of day a vehicle enters the CAZ. BCC officers confirmed that alternative solutions were looked at however this would mean the issue of air pollution would be shifted elsewhere and did not solve the problem of providing cleaner air for the citizens of Birmingham.

- It was noted that in particular coaches coming into the city would be adversely affected by the CAZ charge that would inevitably be passed onto customers who are highly sensitive to price. As a result coach companies, who in the main are small and often family run businesses could suffer negatively.
- National Express West Midlands (NXWM) confirmed that their bus fleet will be 50% Euro VI compliant by January 2020 and want to make bus travel the attractive option for passengers. They have the ability to increase the frequency of buses, routes and times of operation fairly quickly to cater for any increase in demand following implementation of the CAZ. NXWM are also looking at investment in other types of engine as part of their commitment to cleaner travel alongside the retro-fitting of those buses that are currently not compliant with the CAZ.
- Quick, clean and reliable integrated public transport is needed across the city to encourage people to use it including good value multi-modal fares. In addition it was also important to reallocate road space (for example with segregated cycle lanes and signed walking routes) to encourage more people to cycle and walk as part of their journeys where possible.
- Some monitoring of NO2 levels in Sutton Coldfield (by Eco Sutton) noted that although the area doesn't fail on average pollutant emissions it does have hotspots due to idling of vehicles in congested areas such as schools. This was particularly notable in built up areas where the pollution is worsened by the effect of trapping emissions.
- There is no strong evidence to suggest that the use of green walls absorbs pollution rather they do raise temperature meaning an increase in humidity and pushing pollution away. To mitigate this impact it was suggested that in places like the city centre where there are many businesses it might be beneficial to arrange deliveries of goods in the evening or at night.
- It was imperative that consideration is given to placement of refuelling stations for Hydrogen and LPG vehicles. Currently within the proposal there is only mention of electric vehicles. It was stated that electric vehicles have a lighter lifetime carbon footprint than diesel and petrol due to how the battery is manufactured. There is also a need to consider the assumptions underlying modelling used for the CAZ. For example coach journeys are different to those undertaken by HGV's.
- The Committee heard that the whole CAZ proposal was predicated on securing government funding for a host of measures to support the health and wellbeing of citizens. This not only equates to investment in measures to tackle air pollution but schemes that support walking, cycling and public transport.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee will submit a written response to the consultation based on the key issues raised at the meeting.

5. SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

(See document No. 2)

The work programme was noted.

6. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Future meeting dates of the 2018/19 municipal year of were noted.

7. REQUEST(S) FOR CALL IN/COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION/PETITIONS (IF ANY)

None.

8. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

9. 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.

The meeting ended at 1200 hours.