

## NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF SCRUTINY PANEL 4 - EMISSIONS STRATEGY (ACTION PLAN)

Monday, 5 December 2016

<b>COUNCILLORS PRESENT:</b>	Councillor Sam Shaw (Chair), Councillor Gareth Eales (Deputy Chair); Councillors Rufia Ashraf, Terrie Eales and Brian Sargeant
<b>CO-OPTED MEMBERS:</b>	Patrick Cross – WASPRA Graham Croucher – St James Residents Association
<b>WITNESSES</b>	Neil Polden, Senior Environmental Health Officer Andrew Whittles, Director, Low Emissions Strategy Ltd
<b>Officers</b>	Ruth Austen, Environmental Health and Licensing Manager Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer
<b>Members of the Public</b>	Steve Miller, Northants Green Party Tom Appleyard

#### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Aziz and Davenport.

#### 2. DEPUTATIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none.

#### 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING)

There were none.

#### 4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2016 were signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

#### 5. PRESENTATION TO SET THE SCENE

Neil Polden, Senior Environmental Health Officer, NBC and Andrew Whittles, Director, Low Emissions Strategy Ltd. gave the Scrutiny Panel two comprehensive presentations that set the scene, highlighting the salient points.

The Scrutiny Panel asked questions, made comment and heard:

- It was noted that continuous monitoring takes place and locations in St James include Weedon Road – outside the bathroom shop, outside Maxi Save, corner near to the Respite House, 13-15 Weedon Road; others are located along St James

Road – by the Barbers, the Bus Club, the flats (opposite the Thomas Beckett pub), Aberdeen Terrace, junction of Harlestone Road, along Harlestone Road and four on Spencer Bridge Road.

- In response to a query regarding whether the eight pollutants exceed limits, the Scrutiny Panel was advised that this was just NOx.
- 1:20 deaths in Northampton attributed to particle matter. A Lancet report detailed that should someone reside 100 metres near to a major road they have a 10 per cent increased chance of a stroke. Issues regarding pregnancy and living near to a busy road were referred to.
- Northamptonshire County Council is responsible for traffic, Northampton Borough Council responsible for air quality.
- 65-70% of new vehicles are diesel; they have the same emissions as a 12 year old petrol car
- The need for an orbital road system was highlighted. It was acknowledged this would cost in the region of £150 million. Busy and complex traffic junctions will continue unless a more strategic solution is found.
- The Scrutiny Panel heard that a Euro 5 bus has the emissions of 177 cars; there are a lot of complexities.
- The Scrutiny Panel was referred to a consultation questionnaire, there had been 108 responses.
- It was noted that the Clean Air Act is 40 years old.
- The Scrutiny Panel felt that there is the need to set a standard for buses, noting there are a number of old buses in Northampton.
- In response to a query whether Euro 6 is enforceable; Andrew Whittles advised new vehicles have to comply to a certain standard (euro standards). Bus companies usually turn over a bus every 15 years; however some are kept for 20-25 years.
- The kit to convert a bus to Euro 6 costs £11,000, A new 9 metre bus would cost £90,000; a double decker £250,000 plus £120,000 for a hybrid. Hydrogen powered buses cost around £500,000 to £1 million.
- It is relatively easy to take Euro 3 and Euro 4 buses up to standard.
- In response to a query why bus companies don't in the main take up funding to convert their buses; the Scrutiny Panel heard that when you retrofit a vehicle it causes there to be an increase in fuel consumption of 1-2%.
- In Reading a number of buses have been converted to methane and it has created an increase in passengers of 30%. If there is a more attractive public transport system, more people will use it.
- The Scrutiny Panel heard that some Local Authorities use Traffic Regulation Orders whereby buses have to be licensed and are only licensed if they are at a specified standard.
- Charging points and various initiatives by a number of car dealers were discussed. It was noted that York has the most public charging facilities but the least electric cars.
- The Scrutiny Panel heard that taxi drivers are on board with the Low Emissions Strategy. A lot of Private Hire vehicles are hybrid.
- The proposed incinerator development at St James was referred to. It was noted that should the development come forward and if it was above EU emission levels objections could be made; however, air quality is relevant to planning but not an over-riding issue. The Scrutiny Panel suggested that a potential recommendation

of its final report could be that Planning takes more account of air pollution statistics.

- It was commented that the cycle routes in Northampton are poor.

AGREED: That the information provided informs the evidence base of this Scrutiny Review.

## **6. CORE QUESTIONS**

The Scrutiny Panel considered the draft core questions to be put to the expert advisors.

AGREED: That the core questions are finalised and sent to the expert advisors.

## **7. COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The Scrutiny Panel approved the Community Impact Assessment for this Review. The document would be published on the Scrutiny Webpage.

The meeting concluded at 7:52 pm

## NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

### OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY



## SCRUTINY PANEL 4 – EMISSIONS STRATEGY

### (ACTION PLAN)

#### CORE QUESTIONS – EXPERT ADVISORS

The Scrutiny Panel is currently undertaking a review: Emissions Strategy (Action Plan): To provide Scrutiny input into the Action Plan for the Council's Emissions Strategy

**Key lines of Inquiry:**

To increase Councillor and public understanding of air quality issues in Northampton

To understand the causes and impact of air pollution

To understand the actions being taken to reduce air pollution in Northampton

To understand the actions being taken by partners to reduce air pollution in Northampton

To provide recommendations for the production of the Action Plan for the Council's Emissions Strategy, which will identify ways of improving air quality in Northampton

Examine all current air quality management areas to ensure they are performing. To see if they can be improved and consider all other factors and future factors in moving forward

The expected outcomes of this Scrutiny Review are:

- To make informed recommendations regarding the production of the Action Plan for the Council's Emissions Strategy

## **CORE QUESTIONS:**

A series of key questions have been put together to inform the evidence base of the Scrutiny Panel:

- a. Please can you give your views and suggestions on how you think Councillor and public understanding of air quality issues in Northampton can be increased?
- b. Are you aware of the causes and impact of air pollution? Please explain.
- c. Are you aware of and do you understand the actions being taken to reduce air pollution in Northampton? Please provide suggestions of how these actions can be publicised wider.
- d. The themes of the draft Northampton Low Emissions Strategy are Evidence for Change, Creating a Low Emissions Future and Reducing Vehicle Emissions, please provide details of how the actions taken by your organisation contribute to these themes and would your organisation be prepared to fund / contribute to the funding of measures that benefit you / your organisation.
- e. Do you have any other information you are able to provide in relation to the Emissions Strategy?