

**NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**Scrutiny Panel 4 – Emissions Strategy (Action Plan)**

Your attendance is requested at a meeting to be held in The Jeffery Room,  
The Guildhall, St. Giles Square, Northampton, NN1 1DE on  
Thursday, 16 February 2017 commencing at 6:00 pm

**D Kennedy**  
**Chief Executive**

If you need any advice or information regarding this agenda please phone Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer, direct dial 01604 837408 email [ttiff@northampton.gov.uk](mailto:ttiff@northampton.gov.uk) who will be able to assist with your enquiry. For further information regarding **Scrutiny Panel 4 - Emissions Strategy (Action Plan)** please visit the website [www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny)

### Members of the Panel

Chair	Councillor Samuel Kilby-Shaw
Deputy Chair	Councillor Gareth Eales
Panel Members	Councillor Rufia Ashraf Councillor Mohammed Azizur Rahman ( Aziz) Councillor Julie Davenport Councillor Gareth Eales Councillor Terrie Eales Councillor Brian W Sargeant
Co-opted Members	Patrick Cross, WASPRA Graham Croucher, St James Residents Association

### Calendar of meetings

Date	Room
9 March 2017 6:00 pm 27 April	All meetings to be held in the Jeffery Room at the Guildhall unless otherwise stated

# Northampton Borough Scrutiny Panel 4 - Emissions Strategy (Action Plan)

## Agenda

Item No and Time	Title	Pages	Action required
1. 6:00pm	<b>Apologies</b>		The Chair to note any apologies for absence.
2.	<b>Public Addresses/Deputations</b>		<p>The Chair to note public address requests.</p> <p>The public can speak on any agenda item for a maximum of three minutes per speaker per item. You are not required to register your intention to speak in advance but should arrive at the meeting a few minutes early, complete a <a href="#">Public Address Protocol</a> and notify the Scrutiny Officer of your intention to speak.</p>
3.	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>		Members to state any interests.
4.	<b>Minutes</b>	<b>1 - 5</b>	Members to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2016
5.	<b>Witness Evidence</b>		The Scrutiny Panel to receive a response to its core questions from a number of Expert Advisors
5 (a) 6:05pm	<b>Director, Public Health, NCC</b>	<b>6 - 12</b>	
5 (b) 6:30pm	<b>Director - Highways, NCC and Director Carbon Management Team, NCC</b>	<b>13 - 17</b>	
5 (c) 7:00pm	<b>Cabinet Member for Environment, NBC, Head of Planning, NBC, Senior Environmental Health Officer, NBC and Director, Low Emissions Strategy Ltd</b>	<b>18 - 23</b>	

## NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

Monday, 5 December 2016

**COUNCILLORS PRESENT:** Councillor Sam Shaw (Chair), Councillor Gareth Eales (Deputy Chair); Councillors Rufia Ashraf, Terrie Eales and Brian Sargeant

**CO-OPTED MEMBERS:** Patrick Cross – WASPRA  
Graham Croucher – St James Residents Association

**WITNESSES** Neil Polden, Senior Environmental Health Officer  
Andrew Whittles, Director, Low Emissions Strategy Ltd

**Officers** Ruth Austen, Environmental Health and Licensing Manager  
Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer

**Members of the Public** 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?

## NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

### OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY



## SCRUTINY PANEL 4 – EMISSIONS STRATEGY

### (ACTION PLAN)

#### CORE QUESTIONS – EXPERT ADVISORS

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## CORE QUESTIONS:

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### **Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) Public Health team responses to**

**Core Questions:** Stephen Marks, NCC Public Health, 02 February 2017

- 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?*

#### *Training / awareness raising:*

Training / awareness raising for Councillors could be undertaken by inviting relevant experts to present to Councillors. For example an East Midlands Air Quality Network has been established to share information and good practice across the region, led by Public Health England. Public Health England representatives could be invited to speak to Councillors to help increase their understanding if required / appropriate. Councillors / officers from other local authorities who have been addressing air quality issues could be invited to speak of their own experiences and challenges in doing so.

Relevant local medical practitioners could be invited to speak about certain medical conditions and how they are affected / exacerbated by exposure to air pollution.

#### *Assessing impacts of relevant decisions on air quality:*

Air quality will indirectly be affected by a whole range of policies and decisions, particularly those that influence road transport levels and patterns. Decisions that are made on other topics, such as town centre management, parking management, planning decisions etc. could clearly identify their likely impacts in relation to air quality, thus raising awareness amongst all those involved in those decisions of how other decisions could have air quality implications.

#### *Public understanding*

It is important that the public are made aware of air quality issues, in order that they can understand any risks and respond to them appropriately. Indeed, in many cases the public expect to be made aware of such risks. Awareness / understanding amongst the public could also be very important in gaining support for local initiatives to address air quality issues.

However such communications must be handled sensitively as research<sup>1</sup> shows that raising awareness of certain health risks can be particularly alarming to the public, especially if they don't feel that they have much control over those risks.

For example, while people may feel that they have control over the amount of physical activity they undertake, the amount of alcohol they consume or whether they smoke or not, they may feel that they have little control over their exposure (or that of their family) to air pollution. (This is sometimes referred to as a 'fright factor'.) As such raising awareness of the risks of air pollution without identifying any specific ways in which individuals can reduce that risk could be alarming and potentially counter productive.

Specific guidance about communicating with the public about air pollution has been produced and should be considered. This includes 6 key principles:

- A. Use information about what particulate matter is made of and where it goes to get the broader topic of air pollution onto the agenda – not statistics about health consequences.*
- B. Don't raise public concern about air pollution unless you can at the same time satisfy people's desire to do something to reduce their exposure.*
- C. Focus on what is known for certain about the health consequences of air pollution.*
- D. Talk about air pollution as a problem linked to specific places – and not as a general problem of the atmosphere.*
- E. Keep the focus of communications on practical improvements – not long-term solutions.*
- F. Demonstrate leadership and empower communities, instead of just expecting individuals to change their behaviour.*

These issues should be considered when communicating about air quality issues either through your own communications or via local press / media.

- b. *Are you aware of the causes and impact of air pollution? Please explain.*

**Causes of air pollution:**

NCC's Public Health team is aware that the causes of air pollution can be wide ranging, such as industrial sources, combustion from heating etc. However in general air pollution from road transport is often the most relevant air quality concern as it is often co-located with exposed pedestrians, homes, schools, shops etc. The Public Health team understands from the information provided / published by NBC that the primary sources of concern in relation to air quality in Northampton are indeed those from vehicle emissions.

NCC's Public Health team is also aware that trying to achieve improvements in air quality can be challenging, especially when other policy objectives (such as encouraging people to travel into town centres to support the local economy) can potentially contribute to negative air quality impacts.

**Impacts of air pollution:**

NCC's public health team is aware of the impacts of air pollution on health and wellbeing.

Individuals - The specific impact of air pollution on any one individual will always be complicated and will depend on a range of factors relating to that individual's existing health and also the nature and extent of their exposure to pollutants.

However there is increasing evidence that air pollution is a serious public health issue which can and does have significant health and wellbeing impacts. There is now evidence that long-term exposure to everyday air pollutants over months to years contributes to the development of cardiovascular disease (conditions affecting the heart or blood vessels), lung cancer, and respiratory diseases (e.g. asthma), as well as exacerbating them in people who already have those conditions.

In particular, the more vulnerable members of our communities are likely to be those affected the most, such as the young, the old and those with existing medical conditions.

It is also acknowledged that<sup>2</sup>, while EU and UK air pollution limit values are in place to protect human health, there are no absolutely safe levels of particulate matter (PM) and evidence suggests that health effects can still occur well below these limits.

Due to the nature of the effects of air pollution, it is difficult in individual cases to identify the exact nature and extent of the role of air pollution in death or illness. Air pollution will rarely be the sole cause of illness / death and would not be recorded as such on a death certificate for example. It is more likely that exposure to air pollution will exacerbate an existing condition or contribute to an illness / death along with other factors. It will always therefore be impossible to state the exact level of deaths or illness that are caused by air pollution in an area.

However modelling has been undertaken that gives an overview of the likely contribution of some air pollutants to death rates.

It has been estimated that there are 44,750 – 52,500 annual equivalent attributable deaths in the UK due to the impact of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and particulate matter PM. This has an annual social cost of £25.3bn - £29.7bn<sup>3</sup>.

Public Health England<sup>4</sup> use PM<sub>2.5</sub> as an indicator for mortality attributable to particulate air pollution. It was estimated that as at 2010, across Northampton, 6.1% of people aged over 25 would die prematurely each year because of particulate air pollution: equivalent to 102 deaths per year or 1168 associated life years lost.

Further work is being undertaken nationally to better understand the impact of Nitrogen Dioxide on Health and Wellbeing.

In addition to the health and wellbeing impacts of air pollution, the illness it causes will have significant financial / economic costs in terms of healthcare costs and lost productivity.

- 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.*

We are aware of the actions that have been proposed in the draft Low Emissions Strategy, which NBC consulted on in late 2016. The Public Health team's views on those actions were identified in the formal response to the consultation. In summary the Public Health team felt that the measures identified in the draft Low Emissions Strategy were unlikely to achieve the desired improvements in air quality and therefore meet the air quality standards identified in current legislation.

With regards to how actions to reduce air pollution could be publicised more widely, the following could be considered:

Relevant actions could be published more prominently on NBC's website, rather than within substantial strategy documents.

NBC could use its social media channels to raise awareness.

Messages about air pollution could be combined with other relevant public health messages – e.g. active travel such as walking / cycling can contribute to the individual's wellbeing as well as reducing contributions to air pollution.

NBC could report its strategy and associated actions formally to other relevant organisations and networks, such as the Northamptonshire Health & Wellbeing Board, health organisations, economic development partnerships, voluntary sector etc.

- 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.*

NCC's Public Health team has worked with NBC to inform the development of the draft Low Emissions Strategy and is happy to continue to do so. This is primarily through identifying the health and wellbeing implications of air pollution and contributing to efforts to address them.

The Public Health team is also working with NBC and other Northamptonshire Districts through the East Midlands Air Quality Network to try to learn from other areas with regards to addressing air quality.

The Public Health team also promotes physical activity through its direct activities and through its commissioned health and wellbeing services. Encouraging physical activity through active travel in Northampton could contribute to the Northampton Low Emissions Strategy by encouraging people to walk / cycle for personal wellbeing benefits, as well as wider air pollution benefits. While the funding environment remains extremely challenging for the Public Health service, as for other public sector

organisations, the Public Health team will seek to contribute to air quality related initiatives as best as it can.

- e. Do you have any other information you are able to provide in relation to the Emissions Strategy?

The Public Health team can access wide ranging information about the health and wellbeing impacts of air quality as well as related guidance and information on ways to address it.

The Public Health team can also contribute to any activities intended to raise awareness of air quality issues amongst the public, including identifying guidance that identifies effective ways of doing so.

1. Bennett, P. (1997), Communicating about risks to public health: pointers to good practice, Department of Health <http://www.bvsde.ops-oms.org/tutorial6/fulltext/pointers.pdf>

2. *Review of evidence on Health Aspects of Air Pollution – REVIHAAP: final Technical Report*, World Health Organization Office for Europe, 2013 <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/environment-and-health/air-quality/publications/2013/review-of-evidence-on-health-aspects-of-air-pollution-revihaap-project-final-technical-report>

3. [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/460401/air-quality-econanalysis-nitrogen-interim-guidance.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/460401/air-quality-econanalysis-nitrogen-interim-guidance.pdf)

4. Estimating Local Mortality Burdens Associated with Particulate Air Pollution, Public Health England, 2014



## Northamptonshire County Council

7<sup>th</sup> February 2017

Dear Scrutiny Panel,

### **RE: Response to the the Scrutiny Panel 4 – Emissions Strategy (Action Plan)**

This letter establishes Northamptonshire County Council's overarching response to the the Scrutiny Panel 4 – Emissions Strategy (Action Plan), Core Questions – Expert Advisors.

In order to provide a complete and holistic representation of Northamptonshire County Council's response, the feedback provided within this letter has been put together in discussion with a number of departments with a vested interest in air quality, emissions and climate change. I.e. Northamptonshire Highways, Transport Planning, Public Health, Energy and Carbon Management and Environment Management. As the Council does not have one single department or authority most suited to comment on the Core Questions this is deemed to be the most appropriate form of response. Please note, the Council's Public Health Team have also provided an independent response to the key lines of inquiry.

Overall, the broad consensus is that the actions detailed within the Action Plan need to constitute meaningful activities which will reduce emissions and improve air quality. Key areas for consideration could include:

- Clear demonstration and publicity of Northampton Borough Council's own organisation-wide and operational actions (e.g. Northamptonshire County Council is committed to continually improve its energy management practices through the ISO50001:2011 certification; this may be something that Northampton Borough Council wish to consider);
- Mapping and review of active local measures which are already taking place that could be supported and enhanced by NBC (Northamptonshire County Council is also proactively identifying priority locations within the Nene Valley which provide opportunities for habitat restoration and enhancement, through an opportunity mapping exercise);
- Recognising the importance of engaging with the broader public health agenda; and

- A prioritisation list of large-scale measures which, even if aspirational, could be implemented directly by NBC in the medium/long-term (e.g. trams, park and ride, parks and green spaces, electric vehicles and electric vehicle infrastructure, etc.).

It is important to recognise that not all of the measures will create new costs for NBC, e.g. NBC staff are already able to use electric vehicles provided by a company called E-Car who already have several electric vehicle hubs located within the Borough. Utilisation could provide an effective means of lowering NBC costs and emissions if used by staff for work based travel. Furthermore, electric vehicle infrastructure can be provided now by companies who are willing to pay for the privilege, e.g. a company called Instavolt will pay £1,000 a year to install a charging point. Therefore, providing new income for the Council and new services for the public.

Northampton Borough Council may also wish to be mindful that the strategy and its Action Plan are the responsibility of Northampton Borough Council only, as at present the strategy does not give this impression. Of course, NCC will always try and be supportive of this extremely important initiative.

Please find below Northamptonshire County Council's input into the Scrutiny Panel 4 – Emissions Strategy (Action Plan), Core Questions – Expert Advisors.

Please note, the following NCC key documents are referenced within our response to the Core Questions and can be accessed online:

- NCC's Local Transport Plan
- NCC's Northamptonshire Climate Change Strategy 2014-17
- NCC's Northamptonshire Highway Air Quality Strategy

**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?**

Publication of the Borough Council's emission statistics may be a pertinent exercise to better understand what actions need to be taken at the Council level to positively contribute towards reducing air pollution. The strategy acknowledges the need to encourage the Council to implement policies which incentivise the uptake of Low Emission Vehicles but it does not determine the scale or criticalness of this need. A recent study undertaken by NCC's Energy and Carbon Management Team, based on data which has been externally audited (against the ISO50001:2011 standard), found that in 2015/16, the carbon emissions associated with NCC's business travel decreased by 46% compared to



2012/13. This resulted in a decrease of carbon emissions of 892tCO<sub>2</sub> compared to 2012/13.

The Strategy recognises the need to build “our air quality monitoring and modelling capability to inform evidence-based decision-making”. Air quality monitoring may also be of interest to the public and Councillors, and may assist in developing their understanding of air quality issues, particularly if the area/constituency in which they live has poor air quality (people may be more likely to want to do something about a problem if there is evidence that the problem exists and it is personal to them). Critical to this however is making this data widely available and accessible, and currently it is not. A starting point may be the use of data compiled by Defra, plus utilisation of their document ‘What are the Causes of Air Pollution’ which could be adapted for local use. In the longer term, a real time emissions reporting system may be of consideration.

Additionally, research studies and news articles can also help to engage Councillors and the public. Consider collaboration with the University of Northampton, or other research establishments, and disseminating the results of any studies broadly within appropriate media channels. There may be a number of local students interested in undertaking empirical research in this field for relatively low cost.

**b) Are you aware of the causes and impact of air pollution? Please explain.**

Some of the causes and impacts of air pollution in Northampton are identified within NCC’s Northamptonshire Climate Change Strategy 2014-17 and NCC’s Northamptonshire Highway Air Quality Strategy.

**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.**

Without review of the LES it is only the actions that NCC and partner organisations – as captured within the Northamptonshire Climate Change Officers Group Action Plan – are taking within Northampton which are known in any detail for comment.

Regarding wider publicity of actions being taken by the Borough Council to reduce air pollution, it may be that a concerted message is one which would be better received. It is clear that Northampton is targeting growth and economic development, and that much of this is targeted in the town centre, where the air quality is poorest. Thus, is there an opportunity to strengthen the focus placed upon achieving both economic growth and significant improvements in air quality?

**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**

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Northamptonshire  
County Council

**these themes and would your organisation be prepared to fund / contribute to the funding of measures that benefit you / your organisation.**

NCC's Northamptonshire Climate Change Strategy 2014-17, Northamptonshire Highway Air Quality Strategy and Local Transport Plan detail the actions planned by NCC pertaining to the three themes of the Northampton Low Emissions Strategy.

Specifically, the works being undertaken by the NCC in highways transport have concentrated on the dual themes of freeing up congestion at key junctions, e.g. Gas Street roundabout, Victoria Promenade/Bedford Road, and also encouraging other modes of travel through initiatives such as the introduction of the Cycle Connect scheme (joint with NBC) and our Smart Corridor/Commuting initiative on which work has recently started at St James, with further works to follow on the Kingsthorpe and Kettering Road corridors.

NCC has also consulted with all staff during the development of a new staff Travel Plan, which establishes travel policy and guidance in light of the County Council's move to One Angel Square in Northampton over the next few months. There are highly innovative low emission approaches being followed including minimal staff car parking, park and ride, Faxi app (tailor made personal commuting options for staff), pool vehicles, etc.

NCC is willing to consider funding, supporting and/or contributing towards measures if it is recognised that they will provide a discernible benefit and also demonstrate that they can save the Council money.

**e) Do you have any other information you are able to provide in relation to the Emissions Strategy?**

Publication of current low carbon travel initiatives within the area may help to encourage more people to engage with the low carbon transport agenda but details are important. E.g. Figure 7 of the LES does show an E-Car Club Hub which is no longer in use but it is not named. So, it does little to facilitate public accessibility to electric vehicles. If not within the Strategy itself, is the Action Plan considered an appropriate place to reference specific initiatives? If so, community car clubs and the Cycle Connect scheme could be highlighted as a minimum. Furthermore, with NCC's move to One Angel Square, and the forthcoming new University campus becoming operational, there will be new challenges and opportunities that will need to be considered.

Thank you for consulting Northamptonshire County Council in this exercise.

Sincerely,



Dr Darren Perry

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## 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

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## CORE QUESTIONS:

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**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?**

There is increasing knowledge about the health impacts of air pollution, i.e. that it doesn't just cause asthma but can lead to serious issues affecting mortality and morbidity. It is worth pointing out that PM2.5 is a Public Health Outcomes Framework indicator, therefore working with public health should be prioritised

There has been significant interest from the County Council's public health team and the link between air quality and health. There is experience within other partners that could be used to help promote messages, and also the consideration for combining messages regarding exercise and health, e.g. the benefit that switching to exercise may have on health and air quality. As a passive intervention, reducing vehicle emissions would have the greatest benefit on more deprived communities.

Referring to the outcome of the consultation on the LES responses suggests that understanding of air quality issues amongst the Northampton population appears to be good.

However, to further understanding of issues there are a range of suggestive (soft and hard) methods which could be incorporated to raise public awareness.

There is further work required to revise and refine the Council's webpages for air quality to promote the LES and inform the public as to how they can do their part to improve air quality.

This should include raising the awareness of the issues surrounding diesel car emissions and the mixed messages that the public receive from the Government who provide incentives through vehicle excise duty (VED) to many diesel car models. This leads to a perception that diesel cars are environmentally friendly and cheaper to run, however, their emissions of oxides of nitrogen (NOx) are comparable to heavy duty

vehicles and they are often more expensive to run and maintain based on the average mileage of most motorists.

There is substantial local employment in Northampton with a significant number of local and national employers. There is scope to engage with local business for promoting information regarding air quality and the benefits of using low and ultra-low emission vehicles through targeted travel plans. Incentives could be provided to employees to promote and reinforce uptake of cleaner technologies.

There could also be a drive around promotion of messages such as using public transport vehicles to display messages, e.g. buses, taxi's and e-hire bikes as mobile advertising to promote messages. Signage around the town used for traffic updates could also have a similar input.

The LES has articulated project ideas for implementation such as the prospect of 'try and buy'. The principle is to allow a free week's hire of an electric vehicle (EV) for residents of new development schemes to allow trial of the technology and helping to inform decisions when making a new vehicle purchase. This could be supported with information linked to air quality, e.g. the benefit of shifting away from petrol/diesel.

The Council is also in a position to incentivise low emission vehicles through its car parking. This could be the introduction of free or subsidised parking (advertised to raise awareness for others) for anyone with a low emission vehicle. Similar steps could be taking for a variable levy regarding parking permits issued on permit holder streets in the town.

Previously the town has had awareness days for projects, such as 'In town without my car'. A similar short-term project could be trialled under the umbrella of air quality to raise local awareness.

Harder measures which could be used to raise awareness and understanding of air quality could include the setting of emissions standards. This has already been pursued in respect of taxi emission standards, and is being pursued through discussion with local bus operators. Speaking with these stakeholders has raised the profile of air quality and prompted discussion at licensing committee meetings for the private hire trade already.

A more formal approach for setting of emissions standards would be the introduction of a clean air zone (CAZ) for the town. This would set a minimum emission standard for the town, and dependent upon feasibility could be introduced as a voluntary CAZ. A CAZ would be a very public

process, but in addition would require signage to inform people they are entering a CAZ to promote awareness.

Workplace parking levy (WPL) has been mooted as another approach for setting emission standards by charging employers for parking spaces. The revenue this generates can be paid back into highway projects, but this can only be implemented by a highway/transport authority. The Council would be excluded from pursuing a WPL and would not have control on how revenue generated could be spent.

So far only a single Council has pursued WPL (Nottingham) which introduced a WPL in 2013. However, a WPL could raise awareness of air quality issues where its purpose is to introduce charging against employers to offset the peaks at congestion times.

**b. Are you aware of the causes and impact of air pollution? Please explain.**

Yes. This is documented in the draft of the low emission strategy which has been project managed and developed in collaboration with Andrew Whittles of Low Emission Strategies Ltd.

The initial drive behind developing the LES is because of the Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) across the town. These were declared due to emissions associated with road transport sources.

However, there is a growing body of evidence which identifies a number of health impacts associated with exposure to poor air quality, even where levels are below those mandated in national legislation. There are stronger associations for a detrimental impact upon health where housing and other types of sensitive receptors are situated close to significant transport sources, e.g. roads.

Contributors to air pollution are predominantly associated with combustion sources, such as industry, domestic and transport sources. Local pollution in Northampton will be a mix of local, regional, national and international sources. Locally vehicle emissions are the most significant source and growth in diesel car numbers has been a key contributor to locally produced sources of emissions.

In a very broad sense there will be a local background for pollutants comprised of emissions from regional, national and international sources. Locally generated pollution will add to this background, and

where there are locally generated pollution sources these can create hot-spots, e.g. near to busy roads.

- 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.**

Yes. Please refer to answers provided for questions b & c.

- 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.**

In pursuing the themes of the NLES work has already developed to set emissions standards for private hire/hackney drivers. This work is in progress and going through a process of public consultation to agree the setting of a progressive emissions standard. This work has been instigated from the NLES and other local pressures, and is now being led by the licensing department.

We are also actively seeking to make applications for grant funding to support measures for low emission vehicles/infrastructure. It is also proposed to make capital bids for funding to support trial projects, such as the possibility of low emission taxi demonstrator trial to create confidence within the local private hire/hackney trade and support a shift towards cleaner vehicles.

We have also met with local bus operators to discuss the setting of emissions standards for buses that operate through Northampton. We will liaise with County to use Highways powers to aim to set emission standards for buses from 2018. We have also developed guidance with regard to public sector tendering and contract awards as part of Social Value procurement. This has included measures in the planning guidance for suggesting the setting of emissions standards on commercial development schemes.

We have consulted on proposed local guidance for planned new developments to encourage developers to incorporate low emission measures into their development. This is proposed to stand alone as an



action plan and has been developed to reflect national planning policy. There is also an aim that this builds on limited local policy, e.g. BN9, but also as local planning policy develops low emission measures become a standard requirement for new development, where feasible to do so.

The LES has been designed as a platform for inward investment, including securing funding from Government programmes e.g. OLEV, DfT, AQ Grant. Where the local authority has a published action plan (or equivalent) for air quality, it is placed in advantageous position to secure funding to support improvement projects.

**e. Do you have any other information you are able to provide in relation to the Emissions Strategy?**

None.