



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Overview and Scrutiny

Scrutiny Panel 4 – Emissions Strategy (Action Plan)

Response to the core questions of the Scrutiny Panel from – Steve Burd, Managing Director, Stagecoach Midlands

a) My company believes that Northampton Borough Council should highlight the damaging effect of pollution in terms of buildings emissions, transport and worsening road traffic congestion by means of articles in its publications, presentations at local community based forums and through liaison with educational establishments and businesses.

b) Stagecoach Midlands is aware of the damaging consequences of poor air quality on health and life expectancy.

We believe that there is a need for your local authority to encourage all businesses, other establishments and home owners to take steps to reduce their environmental footprints through introducing more energy efficient systems and practices.

There is also a key need to address the ever worsening problem of traffic congestion in the Central Northampton area, which causes considerable additional traffic related pollution. The Northampton road system is currently unable to cope at times of key demand or when a small traffic light problem or a minor road traffic accident occurs.

Ultimately actions will have to be taken to restrict car access to many areas of the town, as there is little scope to increase road capacity.

Any new policies designed to restrict vehicles on the basis of emission levels should not only cover buses and taxis, but also diesel cars, lorries and vans as these cause more pollution than public transport. The growth of internet shopping is also resulting in increasing problems with van deliveries in central areas, as more customers seek to have their goods sent to their places of work rather than their homes.

c) Stagecoach is aware of Northampton Borough Council's "Northampton Low Emission Strategy 2016-201", its NLES Air Quality planning Technical Guidance and

it's Northampton Borough Council Low Emission Fleet Procurement Guidance.

d) During the last five years Stagecoach Midlands has spent over £10.2 million purchasing 66 brand new Euro V low emission buses for its Northampton depot - 57 single decks and 9 gold double decks.

As a result of this investment the company's fleet of 104 buses at Northampton depot currently consist of:-

- 75 Euro V single decks and double decks
- 10 Euro IV single decks and minibuses
- 19 Euro III double decks.

The company has committed to replace these Euro III double decks with newer vehicles of at least Euro IV standard by the end of November 2017.

It is not our intention to seek to upgrade the emissions levels of these Euro III vehicles through conversions, as it is Stagecoach's experience elsewhere that such conversions result in higher breakdown rates and unreliability.

The average age of Stagecoach Midlands Northampton fleet is 5.5 years at the present time, well below the Government's target to operators of 8 years.

e) Stagecoach Midlands strategy is to invest in the latest low emissions diesel engines buses in order to maximise the environmental benefit derived from this investment in new vehicles.

Given that Northampton is not an area where high levels of profit are generated, as is evidenced by the withdrawal of First from the town a few years ago, and the very high cost of ultra low emission buses compared to conventional low emission vehicles, it is the company's view that in future it should invest in Euro VI vehicles rather than hybrid or electric ones.

The available finances will enable the purchase of a higher number of Euro VI buses that ultra low emission vehicles, which will enable environmental improvements to be secured on a greater number of routes that would otherwise be the case. The level of emissions from Euro VI buses are a fraction of those produced by Euro III and older vehicles.

Between 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 it is Stagecoach Midlands plan to take delivery of 9 Euro VI single decks for service 1 and 14 new Euro VI double deck vehicles for service X4 which is based at Kettering, but provides one of the towns key inter urban routes.