

# **Cabinet Response to the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group Air Quality Report**

## Introduction

At the Cabinet meeting on 2nd October 2013 consideration was given to the report of the Air Quality Task Group. As the Chairman of the Task Group, Councillor S.P. Shannon was unable to be present, the Leader welcomed the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board , Councillor P. Lammas to the meeting and invited him to introduce the report.

Councillor Lammas referred to the recommendations of the Task Group which were contained within 5 chapters within the report:

- The review of the Air Quality Scrutiny report completed in December 2007
- The role of Worcestershire Regulatory Services
- The role of Worcestershire County Council
- Health implications; and
- Conclusion

The Cabinet then discussed and considered each of the recommendations in detail.

## Response to recommendations

Please find below responses to the recommendations contained within the scrutiny report:

### **Recommendation 1**

#### **(Arising from the 2007 report)**

#### Recommendation 1 – Low Emission Zones

Further consideration be given for LEZs to be included within the Air Quality Action Plan.

#### Recommendation 7 – Town Centre Redevelopment

A representative from Worcestershire Regulatory Services to be included within the membership of the Town Centre Redevelopment Group.

#### Recommendation 8 – High Street and The Strand

Although not declared as an Air Quality Management Area the continued monitoring of the air quality at Davenal House should take place and consideration be given to alterations to the traffic lights.

#### Recommendation 17 – Taxi Ranks

Regular reminders to taxi drivers in respect of leaving their engines running whilst waiting for the next fare at a taxi rank.

### **Cabinet Response**

#### **Recommendation 1 – Low Emission Zones**

This was not supported in view of the likely finance implications.

#### **Recommendation 7 – Town Centre Redevelopment**

It was reported that the Town Centre Redevelopment Group was no longer in existence.

#### **Recommendation 8 – High Street and The Strand**

It was noted that monitoring was on going but it was felt that changes to the traffic lights would be costly at this stage.

#### **Recommendation 17 – Taxi Rank**

This was approved.

### **Recommendation 2**

- (a) that separate Air Quality Action Plans be produced for the four AQMAs in Bromsgrove district in order to address the particular circumstances in each location
- (b) that the Action plans contain specific targets and detail projected timeframes and all actions should be implemented within those timescales

### **Cabinet Response**

This was not agreed as it was felt that the overall County Air Quality Action Plan would be sufficient.

### **Recommendation 3**

That a separate Air Quality Steering Group should be established in respect of the four AQMAs in Bromsgrove district.

### **Cabinet Response**

It was not agreed that a separate Group was required as it was felt that the single Steering Group would be sufficient.

#### **Recommendation 4**

That the Overview and Scrutiny Board be provided with regular progress reports from the Air Quality Steering Group.

#### **Cabinet Response**

This is not applicable if the separate Steering Group is not set up. It was suggested as an alternative that the Annual report to DEFRA also be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Board at no additional cost.

#### **Recommendation 5**

Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) applies for funding from the DEFRA Air Quality Grant Programme. If the first application is not successful the WRS should persist in submitting further applications in subsequent years.

#### **Cabinet Response**

It was agreed that WRS should apply for DEFRA funding as appropriate and in accordance with the Air Quality Action Plan.

#### **Recommendation 6**

That Worcestershire County Council applies for funding from the Worcestershire Local Transport Body in order to fund traffic management measures that will tackle air pollution in the Bromsgrove AQMAs.

#### **Cabinet Response**

Whilst this is a matter for the County Council there is no objection to requesting the County Council to make the application.

#### **Recommendation 7**

That Worcestershire County Council liaises with local bus operators to establish a local bus quality partnership in order to investigate the potential to update the bus fleets operating within the Bromsgrove district.

#### **Cabinet Response**

Whilst this is a matter for the County Council there is no objection to requesting the County Council to liaise with the relevant bus operators.

### **Recommendation 8**

That the health implications of air pollution be the focus of a detailed review by the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### **Cabinet Response**

It was noted that discussions were on going and that there was no objection to the issue being raised by the District Councillors who were Members of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### **Recommendation 9**

That the regular monitoring of particulate air pollutants within the Bromsgrove District's four AQMAs is carried out by Worcestershire Regulatory Services.

### **Cabinet Response**

This was not agreed in view of the significant cost implications.

### **Recommendation 10**

That Bromsgrove District Council sends a letter to the relevant Government Minister urging him/her to accelerate efforts to address problems with the higher emission levels from HGVs with a copy of the letter also being sent to the local M.P.

### **Cabinet Response**

This recommendation was agreed.

### **Recommendation 11**

That Bromsgrove District Council sends a letter to the relevant Government Minister responsible for DEFRA urging him/her to review the role of those responsible for Air Quality with a copy of the letter also being sent to the local M.P.

### **Cabinet Response**

This recommendation was agreed.

## **Recommendation 12**

The Overview and Scrutiny Board consider launching a separate review of CO2 emissions in the District.

## **Cabinet Response**

It was felt this was a matter for the Overview and Scrutiny Board to determine as part of their future Work Programme.

The Leader thanked the Task Group Chairman and Members for their work in producing the report.

Councillor Kit Taylor – Portfolio Holder for Planning, Core Strategy and Regulatory Services