

CABINET**7 Decmber 2016****Minute Extract****422. APPROVAL OF KEY MEASURES FOR WINCHESTER AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN**

(Report CAB2869 refers)

Councillor Pearson introduced the Report and set out the history since the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) had first been declared in Winchester in 2003 until the current time.

The Assistant Director (Economy and Communities) advised that the Report responded to the Notice of Motion by Councillor Bell to Council on 20 July 2016 which stated:

“This Council notes:

- The serious health consequences of poor air quality – including exacerbation of asthma, reduced lung function, increases in hospital admissions for respiratory and cardiovascular problems and increases in mortality;*
- Public Health England’s estimate that 51 Winchester residents a year over the age of 25 die prematurely as a consequence of air pollution – with 520 years of life lost;*
- that the 2016 Air Quality Annual Progress Report shows parts of Winchester continue to exceed the annual mean NO2 Air Quality Strategy objective and that the Air Quality Management Area should remain in place.*

Ahead of any further review of the council’s Air Quality Action Plan, this Council therefore re-commits itself to the Actions and Priorities outlined in the 2006 Air Quality Action Plan – as updated by the 2012 Air Quality ISG – with particular focus on:

- keeping our parking policies, availability and charges under review to maximise the use of existing and future Park & Ride Facilities;*
- linking the car parking price structure with distance from the town centre with air quality impacts being a demonstrable consideration built into the pricing structure;*
- ensuring that all existing and forthcoming plans, policies and strategies affecting the City take due account of air quality issues and the AQMA;*
- ensuring that new developments and transport schemes take account of their effects on Air Quality and the Air Quality Management Area*
- supporting the County Council in its aim to achieve traffic reduction by encouraging sustainable travel and reducing the need to travel by car.”*

The Assistant Director drew Members' attention to Paragraph 8.7 of the Report which responded to the actions set out in the Motion, including reference to the Parking Strategy. In addition, Paragraph 8.10 of the Report set out a series of measures proposed as the core of the new AQAP.

During public participation, Chris Gillham (Winchester Friends of the Earth) and Phil Gagg (WinACC) addressed Cabinet and their comments are summarised below.

Mr Gillham acknowledged the Report went some way to tackling the problems caused by air pollution but believed it did not show any real commitment on the part of the Council and was too little too late. He highlighted the numbers of deaths and years lost as a result of air pollution, both in previous years and into the future on current predictions, and therefore did not consider the Council's stance of balancing air quality requirements against other priorities (such as economic viability) was appropriate. He also highlighted the potential impact of the High Court decision on the Client Earth case.

Mr Gagg welcomed the initiatives proposed in the Report as a starting point and emphasised the importance of addressing air quality issues in terms of saving lives. He also highlighted that a recent survey conducted in Winchester High Street had shown that approximately 97% of people favoured measures to tackle pollution. He believed that as the Council had control over city centre car parking, it should be introducing measures to reduce the number of vehicles driving into the centre, which it was not currently doing. In addition, he suggested that Planning Policy should be redrafted to include reference to reducing pollution, for example in relation to any future development at Silver Hill. Finally, he requested that the recommendations be amended to include two additional measures recommended by the Air Quality Steering Group.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Bell addressed Cabinet as a member of the Air Quality Steering Group and welcomed the comprehensive response in the Report to her Notice of Motion (referred to above). She highlighted the increasing awareness by the public about the dangers of high NO₂ levels and, whilst acknowledging that some of the measures required to address this were difficult, public attitudes were changing and the Council should press ahead with measures that they had control over. Therefore, she requested that the further possible action detailed at Paragraph 8.11(b) should be included within the agreed actions in Paragraph 8.10. She noted that the other three possible actions in Paragraph 8.11 relied on other bodies input (such as Government or other Councils), whereas development of Air Quality Supplementary Planning Guidance was within the Council's own control.

Councillor Pearson thanked Mr Gagg and Councillor Bell for their positive contributions to discussion and highlighted that the Report outlined work in progress.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the Report.

RECOMMENDED:

THAT THE COMMITMENT TO THE MEASURES SET OUT IN SECTIONS 8.7 AND 8.10 OF THE REPORT BE REPORTED TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND COUNCIL AS THE RECOMMENDED RESPONSE TO THE NOTICE OF MOTION PRESENTED BY COUNCILLOR ELEANOR BELL TO FULL COUNCIL ON 20 JULY 2016.

RESOLVED:

1. That the measures outlined in section 8.10 of the Report be approved as the basis of the new Air Quality Action Plan for Winchester.
2. That the Assistant Director (Economy and Communities), in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Environment, Health and Wellbeing, Transport & Business Services and Economy & Estates, be authorised to finalise the draft AQAP and invite further stakeholder discussion on it during January 2017.
3. That an annual review of the Plan be carried by the Assistant Director, (Economy and Communities) in consultation with the above Portfolio Holders, to assess progress in meeting statutory targets and to bring forward additional measures if they are considered necessary to meet the statutory deadline.
4. That the support and insights of local stakeholders contributed through the steering group meetings be recognised, and their ongoing assistance in delivering and monitoring the AQAP invited.