

THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

12 December 2016

Minute Extract

498. **APPROVAL FOR KEY MEASURES FOR WINCHESTER AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN**
(Report CAB2869 refers)

Councillor Pearson drew Members' attention to the Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Bell to Council at its meeting on 20 July 2016, asking Members to 'recommit' to the actions and priorities outlined in the 2006 Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP), later updated through the 2012 Air Quality Informal Scrutiny Group, ahead of any planned review of the AQAP. He introduced the report which provided a response to the Notice of Motion, along with details of the ongoing work carried out with local stakeholders that had taken place this year to produce a new AQAP for the City Centre. The plan presented a series of measures to form the core of the new plan and Members approval was sought, prior to the development of the full AQAP.

It was reported that the Council had declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in the City Centre during November 2003, as outlined in Appendix 1 of the Report. Subsequently, it was noted that the current AQAP had been adopted by the Council in 2006 and consisted of 21 actions to meet the requirements of Section 84(2) of the Environment Act 1995. However, despite delivering many of its objectives, as set out in Appendix 2 to the Report, it still had not met its statutory obligations. It was anticipated that a new Plan, containing higher-impact measures to be delivered more directly by the Council, would help to ensure these obligations were achieved within the coming five years.

The Committee noted that a steering group had met regularly during the past six months, following a presentation and workshop at which findings of the 'Source Apportionment' study by Bureau Veritas were shared and discussed with an invited audience in February 2016. Stakeholders involved included Hampshire County Council Highways Team, Winchester Action for Climate Change (WinACC) and the Winchester BID.

In conclusion, Councillor Pearson reminded Members that the report was a record of the work in progress and not a finished article at this stage.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Bell addressed the Committee and responded to Members' questions thereon.

In summary, Councillor Bell made reference to how the points raised in her motion had been addressed and expressed concern that bullet point 3 (as set out in paragraph 8.6 of Page 9 of the Report) had not been addressed adequately by actions. She suggested that the wording contained within

paragraph 8.11(b), in relation to the development of an Air Quality Supplementary Planning Guidance required a stronger emphasis. Councillor Bell considered that all Council Policies, Strategies and Developments should have a statutory Air Quality element built into them and hoped that this had been applied within the Council's Parking Strategy with significant changes to be addressed in this area. Councillor Bell also made reference to what she considered to be a mismatch between the Air Quality and Car Parking Strategy.

In conclusion, Councillor Bell suggested an amendment to Recommendation 4 to Cabinet as set out in the Report to incorporate paragraph 8.11 within paragraph 8.10 and requested that an additional recommendation be added that, in future, all Council papers (with relevance to Air Quality) contain a mandatory section on Air Quality.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Bell for her attendance and informative representation.

The Committee asked a number of detailed questions and Councillor Pearson, Councillor Godfrey and the Interim Managing Director responded accordingly as summarised below:

- i. It was noted that gateway parking was a useful measure that and although there was insufficient space to physically expand most existing car parks on the periphery to the main Winchester Town Centre the Parking Strategy would address the way in which these are used.
- ii. Council would be considering its options regarding the Parking Strategy and Air Quality in due course to consider a list of priorities to be delivered within budget constraints, in accordance with the aspirations of the public and the Council's vision.
- iii. The Council had commenced the transitional process by switching to the use of Euro 6-engined vehicles for its Park and Ride bus services. Stagecoach were also in the process of upgrading its other buses. With the expansion of Park and Ride services since the initial Air Quality Action Plan 2006, it was noted that additional sites were now in use at South Winchester and Pitt, with another site also in development at Barton Farm. Major employers based within the City Centre were encouraging employees to use these services to support the reduction of carbon emissions for the City.
- iv. Measures were in place within the Car Parking Strategy to improve signage and technology to signpost the public to the installation of a smartphone app, currently in development, to enable the public to obtain 'live' parking information.

During debate, several Members considered that the Supplementary Planning Guidance would be extremely valuable but acknowledged that this would only be the case if this was available sooner rather than later.

A Member reiterated the point raised previously by Councillor Bell and suggested that an Air Quality Impact Assessment section be built into every relevant Council report in future for completion. Furthermore, it was considered that the final AQAP, planned for delivery in March 2017, laid out a full range of measures as goals to achieve in the report. In conclusion, these views were not supported by the majority of the Committee.

RECOMMENDED:

THAT THE POSITIVE ACTION TO IMPROVE AIR QUALITY BE WELCOMED AND THE FULL AND SATISFACTORY RESPONSE TO COUNCILLOR BELL'S NOTICE OF MOTION BE NOTED AND RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL.