

GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 8
28 SEPTEMBER 2020	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Steve Cox, Executive Director; Place & Economy, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Peter Hiller, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Commercial Strategy and Investments	
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REVIEW – TASK AND FINISH GROUP TO INFORM THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN AIR QUALITY AMBITION STATEMENT ACTION PLAN

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S	
FROM: Steve Cox, Executive Director; Place & Economy, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	Deadline date: N/A
<p>It is recommended that Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review and comment on the report. 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 At Annual Council on 21 May 2018, Cllr John Holdich OBE, Leader of the Council requested that a cross-party scrutiny Task and Finish Group be established to inform the development of the Council’s air quality ambitions and make recommendations for specific actions that should be taken by the Council and partners to achieve such ambitions. The Group was established by the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 5 September 2018. The recommendations of the Group were endorsed by this Committee on 8 January 2020 and subsequently approved by Cabinet at a meeting on 13 January 2020, tasking officers with delivering them. This report provides an update detailing progress made to date.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 This report provides an opportunity for the Committee to review progress and ask questions of relevant officers.

2.2 This report is for the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference No. Part 3, Section 4 - Overview and Scrutiny Functions, paragraph 2.1, Functions determined by the Council:

3. Environmental Capital;

2.3 The outcome of this work has the potential to directly and indirectly support all of the Council’s corporate priorities.

2.4 The recommendations referred to in this report are designed to improve air quality across the city which will therefore also have a corresponding benefit for children in care.

3. TIMESCALES

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
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4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 At Annual Council on 21 May 2018, Cllr John Holdich OBE, Leader of the Council requested that a cross-party scrutiny Task and Finish Group be established to inform the development of the Council's air quality ambitions and make recommendations for specific actions that should be taken by the Council and partners to achieve such ambitions. Subsequently Cabinet, at a meeting on 13 January 2020, agreed to endorse the recommendations made by this Group and tasked officers with delivering them. This report provides an update detailing progress made to date.

4.2 **Recommendation 1: Work with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) to encourage them to use their Passenger Transport Powers to secure air quality benefits. This should include: supporting the Council and Stagecoach to relocate the bus depot; improve vehicles to reduce emissions from the fleet; ensure the lowest emission vehicles only are used in areas of poorer air quality; and, encourage young people to use public transport.**

All aspects of this recommendation have been significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Since the lockdown measures were introduced there has been significant pressure on commercial bus operators and understandably their focus has been on delivering their local operations to the best of their ability. As the country comes out of lockdown discussions are taking place between the Council, the CPCA and local operators to discuss how patronage may be increased but social distancing measures continue to make this challenging. Early discussions have taken place with the Council, the CPCA and Stagecoach to discuss the requirements for a new site and potential locations. However, these discussions have stalled recently due to the impacts of the pandemic. Officers will continue to progress this item of work in due course.

The CPCA continue to undertake work in relation to a bus reform project that commenced in 2019. Its aim, in line with the Local Transport Plan, is to look at different ways in which bus services can be drawn together into a well-functioning integrated transport network. The project is led by the Mayor, who chairs a Bus Reform Task Force. This is supported by an officer team which brings together officers the Council and the Combined Authority.

As a result of initial work, four options were identified: Deregulated bus services – the current structure for bus services; Advanced Quality Partnership Scheme (AQPS); Enhanced Partnership (EP); Franchising. The different options were assessed, and a public consultation exercise was held between September and December 2019. Over 5,000 people participated either face to face or on line, with statistically significant numbers of bus users and non-users across the two larger cities and four districts. A Vision for Buses was devised to capture these views about the status quo and to develop a vision of what the public want for the future. Work is now underway to produce an Outline Business Case (OBC) which involves gathering data, assessing, and considering what the implications of an enhanced bus network are. This is due to be produced later this year. Each part of the appraisal process needs to differentiate between the different options and consider any complimentary measures such as parking policies or land use changes. However, whilst this work continues, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and government messages to avoid using public transport, have severely reduced ridership. The fiscal sustainability of any concept of new bus service networks therefore faces significant challenge in an audit, which is due to take place later this year.

The Mayor has discussed the Combined Authority's bus reform proposals with the Minister of State for Transport and agreed that we should seek to coordinate plans with the work DfT have under way to prepare a new National Bus Strategy. Officers of the Combined Authority are meeting senior officers at the Department for Transport for discussions about how to achieve that. In the meantime,

the Combined Authority are keen to trial new models of service, which may include both Demand Responsive Transport and more conventional services, in response to the changes in market conditions to inform reform proposals. The details of those trials, as they emerge, will be shared accordingly.

4.3 Recommendation 2: Undertake a parking review with the aim of discouraging single occupancy car travel and prioritising Ultra Low Emission Vehicles.

A study into long term demand for car parking provision in the city has been commissioned by the Council jointly with the Peterborough Investment Partnership. The study is being managed by Royal Haskoning and will also explore issues including the need for electric vehicle charging points and the use of car parks as distribution hubs for a future in which autonomous vehicles may play an increasing role in urban mobility. The study is expected to conclude in October 2020.

4.4 Recommendation 3: Increase the activities undertaken to encourage residents to opt for active modes of transport including robust evaluation and monitoring.

The Council has received additional funding from the CPCA as part of the Department for Transport's Emergency Active Travel fund. This has allowed a number of measures to be brought forward. For example, the Council have offered all schools across the city the opportunity to undertake a School Streets project. To date Expressions of Interest have been received from 12 schools and the first scheme has now commenced at Lime Academy in Parnwell. School Streets involves closing the road outside a school to encourage walking, cycling, scooting or park and stride with careful monitoring undertaken to assess the overall impact. In order to implement schemes of this nature an Order under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 is required to allow roads to be closed and consultation is required to be undertaken with relevant stakeholders. Whilst this funding has not, to date, enabled the Council to increase the overall FTE in the Travelchoice Team discussions are continuing. A meeting with the Mayor and Leader of the Council is scheduled to take place in late September to identify how this work can be developed further over the coming months.

At this stage work has not been undertaken to identify the feasibility of introducing a workplace parking levy due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Monitoring of traffic data across the city shows that traffic patterns have not returned to pre-covid levels and more work is required over the next 6-18 months to understand more about the impact such a levy might have.

4.5 Recommendation 4: Identify the feasibility of introducing a new policy to ensure that all taxi and private hire vehicles use alternative low emissions fuels only by 2030.

The Licensing team can take actions, such as restricting the number of newly licensed diesel/petrol vehicles in the coming years and incentivising vehicle proprietors to licence Low Emission Vehicle's (LEV's) or Ultra Low Emissions Vehicle's (ULEV's)*, with a particular emphasis on the latter.

Since the 1st January 2020, 78 new private hire vehicles (PHV) were licensed for the first time by Peterborough City Council. These vehicles were all under 6 years old with mileage restrictions in place. Approximately 25% of these were either hybrid or electric vehicles, but all fall into the LEV category with the exception of one ULEV.

Diesel	Petrol	Hybrid/Electric
56	3	19
2 x Euro 6 compliant	1 x Euro 6 Compliant	1 x ULEV (18x LEV)

Since the 1st January 2020, 5 Hackney carriage vehicles (HCV) were licensed for the first time by Peterborough City Council. These vehicles were all 3 years or newer.

Diesel	Petrol	Hybrid/Electric
4	0	1
2 x Euro 6 compliant	0	1 x ULEV

Vehicles options – Hackney, People Carriers, Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs)

The current market for vehicle options that meet ULEV standards is very small. There is a much wider number of LEV's available with vehicles such as the older Prius' falling into the LEV category. There is a distinct lack of larger vehicles, such as those used by passenger transport and a concerning absence entirely of PHV wheelchair accessible vehicles. It may be therefore necessary to consider LEV's as an acceptable option until more WAVs are available on the market.

The Council's current policy for PHV's and HCV's imposes both age and mileage restrictions. This policy will need to be reviewed to ensure that drivers are actively seeking to licence ULEVs before it becomes compulsory and to ensure that older, higher polluting vehicles are leaving the trade in a timely manner. HCV's can be licensed up to 15 years old and PHV up to 10 years old. A tiered age restriction may be necessary to allow the trade to licence diesel/petrol engines but with a lower life span compared to LEV or ULEV until the motor industry produces a wider range of vehicles, especially PHV compatible WAVs. Some local authorities, such as Leeds and Oxford have successfully implemented this approach.

There are potential challenges to a full ULEV fleet in respect to HCV and PHV licensing which must be considered with any future policy changes, mainly;

- Limited HCV specific vehicles on the market - two
- Currently there are only 2 WAV vehicles on the market and both are HCV so could not be driven by PHD's
- Initial cost of vehicles even with government grant
- Limited public charging access
- Limited mileage range

Further research and engagement with vehicle owners and operators is required to ensure they are prepared for any future changes. The Council's policy will be subject to a full public consultation and ratification by the licensing committee and full council and we are currently in the process of preparing this revision to the policy.

4.6 Recommendation 5: Work in partnership with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) to develop a Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) proposal for the city.

A Council have commissioned and completed a Mass Rapid Transit study, funded by the CPCA. The CPCA are now in the process of identifying if and how elements of this study can be taken forward in line with the work they are undertaking on bus reform and the Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro. This meeting is due to take place in late September.

4.7 Recommendation 6: Support local businesses to make the investment necessary to encourage the transition to active modes of travel and alternatively fuelled vehicles.

The Council's Travelchoice team, funded by the CPCA, are working with 15 businesses across the city to encourage staff and visitors to travel to and from their premises more sustainably. Clearly the Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on how individuals undertake their employment with a substantial proportion of office workers, including council officers, still undertaking their roles from home, therefore reducing the need to travel. It is difficult, if not impossible at this stage, to predict how this situation will develop in the future but the Council are actively undertaking measures, supported by the Governments Emergency Active Travel Funding to introduce measures to encourage the use of active travel.

In addition, officers are supporting 3 local businesses to apply for Business Grants which will allow

them to install measures to encourage active travel.

4.8 Recommendation 7: Identify opportunities to install or maximise the benefits of green infrastructure to provide barriers between people and emissions.

No new schemes have been developed since this recommendation was made where this has been deemed to be appropriate. However, this is a regular agenda item at the Highway Services Project Board meeting to ensure any future opportunities are not overlooked. The Council is not yet in a position to review LP29 (Local Planning Policy) (Trees and Woodland) but will do so as part of the next iteration of the Local Plan.

4.9 Recommendation 8: Explore opportunities to for further pedestrianisation in all future public realm works.

No new public realm schemes have been developed since this recommendation was made however this is a regular agenda item at the Highway Services Project Board meeting to ensure any future opportunities are not overlooked.

4.10 Recommendation 9: Work in partnership with Fenland District Council to evidence the basis for revocation of AQMA No1.

A joint Peterborough City Council (PCC), Fenland District Council (FDC), Environment Agency and Forterra meeting was held on 17 March 2020, during which Forterra agreed to commission modelling and the process for reviewing monitoring data and modelling stack emissions for this AQMA was agreed.

Similar to previous modelling studies the proposed modelling will consider the impact of sulphur dioxide at relevant locations in Whittlesey and within Peterborough City Council's authority area. The study will focus on the 5-year operation period (2015-2019) of the kilns at Kings Dyke Brickworks (Saxon Brickworks is no longer operational) and compare this with monitoring data from the Bradley Fen and Saxon air quality monitoring stations (AQMS). The modelling will also include additional scenarios to assess the impact of future emissions, and a sensitivity analysis to determine the uncertainty in predicting exceedances of the 15-minute air quality objective. This modelling will only consider the impact of SO₂ emissions as the key pollutant emitted from the brickworks stack, with odour emissions (not part of the AQMA) considered in a separate study.

The modelling and report will serve two purposes. It will provide evidence to PCC and FDC to consider revocation of the AQMA's, as well as providing information to the Environment Agency required by the site's permit. Due to Covid-19 progress on this has been hampered. Forterra closed during the main coronavirus lock-down period and kiln three was not back in operation until the end of July 2020. Further updates to be provided as and when work progresses.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 No consultation has been necessary in order to prepare this progress report.

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

6.1 It is anticipated that members of the Committee review and comment on this report.

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

7.1 This report provides a report on progress that officers have been able to make against each of the recommendations accepted by Cabinet on 13 January 2020.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 Officers considered an alternative option, to delay preparing a progress report, due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic which has inevitably delayed progress. However, it was determined that although only limited progress has been made it would prove useful to provide an update.

9. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 9.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Legal Implications

- 9.2 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

Equalities Implications

- 9.3 There are no equalities implications associated with this report.

Rural Implications

- 9.4 There are no rural implications associated with this report.

Carbon Impact Assessment

- 9.5 There are no carbon/environmental implications associated with this report because it is an update on progress and nothing will directly change as a result.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 10.1 Report of the Task and Finish Group to Inform the Development of an Air Quality Ambition Statement and Action Plan:
<https://democracy.peterborough.gov.uk/documents/s40744/Item%204%20-%20Air%20Quality%20Task%20and%20Finish%20Group.pdf>

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 None