

Report to: Executive Board – 30th November 2004

JOINT CITY COUNCIL AND COUNTY COUNCIL SCRUTINY REVIEW OF AIR POLLUTION

<p><i>Report of: Strategy and Review Business Manager</i></p> <p><i>Report Authors: Andrew Davies, Scrutiny Officer and Roger Pitman, Scientific Officer</i></p> <p><i>Lead Member Responsible: Councillor Mary Clarkson</i></p> <p><i>Overview and Scrutiny Committee Responsibility: Environment</i></p> <p><i>Key Decision: Yes</i></p>	<p>WARDS AFFECTED</p> <p>All</p>
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SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report is submitted to the Executive Board for approval following the joint scrutiny exercise between the City Council and Oxfordshire County Council to investigate air pollution in Oxford.

The recommendations, which will be considered by the County Executive on 7th December 2004, are set out below:

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The joint Review Group **RECOMMENDS** the Executives to extend the Membership of the Bus Quality Partnership to all operators and to use it to set targets within two years for the minimum percentage of buses (for each operator) that conform to the highest emission standards (by being equipped with emission reduction technology (including retro-fitting of tail-pipe technology)); **AND** to include agreements on limiting the number of buses on competing routes.
2. The joint Review Group **RECOMMENDS** the Executives to ask bus operators to introduce pre-ticketing, greater through-journey ticketing, and cross-operator ticketing arrangements, especially using stored-value cards.
3. The joint Review Group **RECOMMENDS** the Executives to demonstrate in 12 months time how they have used a strengthened Freight Quality Partnership to reduce the congestion being caused in the city centre from large delivery lorries, by: -

- reducing the number of vehicles
 - ensuring deliveries only take place between 7 p.m. and 8 a.m.
 - encouraging increased use of transshipment to smaller vehicles at the edge of the City, and
 - increasing the proportion of delivery vehicles with reduced emission profiles.
4. The joint Review Group RECOMMENDS the Executives to use the Taxi Quality Partnership to require further emission reduction in return for granting taxis the ability to use Botley Road bus lane.
 5. The joint Review Group RECOMMENDS the Executives to recognise that the City Council already has targets in place to get all Council vehicles to conform to the highest emission standards, and to ensure that the County Council undertakes to: -
 - set targets for the percentage of its vehicles to be equipped with green technology
 - set targets for the percentage of current contracts to be renewed or replaced by contracts stipulating the use of green vehicles, especially school buses
 - reveal the level of improvement achieved every year through the establishment of a fleet emissions audit, as is done by the City Council
 6. The joint Review Group RECOMMENDS the Executives to ensure that periodic road-side emission testing is carried out, perhaps in partnership with other councils, in order to ensure greater compliance with emission standards.
 7. The joint Review Group RECOMMENDS the Executives to review the quantity and location of on-street parking in the city centre, especially where occurring on bus routes.
 8. The joint Review Group RECOMMENDS the Executives to work more closely with cycling and pedestrian groups, and to employ a full-time pedestrians and cyclists officer, in order to give fresh impetus to their walking and cycling strategies and achieve their stated targets
 9. The joint Review Group RECOMMENDS the Executives to run a campaign to raise awareness of air pollution issues and what the public can do to help.
 10. The joint Review Group RECOMMENDS the Executives to increase City centre parking charges at least in line with inflation so as to increase bus usage, especially Park and Ride.
 11. The joint Review Group RECOMMENDS the Executives to implement a policy requiring an environmental impact assessment, that specifically includes air quality, to be done for all proposed major

schemes and large developments (e.g. the Westgate and West End proposals). Travel Plans should be required for all major developments.

- 12. The joint Review Group RECOMMENDS the Executives to include statutory air quality targets in the new Local Transport Plan**
- 13. The joint Review Group RECOMMENDS the Executives to establish a joint process to manage further development and implementation of an Air Quality Action Plan, so as to guarantee a shared corporate approach now and in the future, and to report back to both Scrutiny Committees on their specific proposals for achieving this closer working between the Councils.**
- 14. The joint Review Group RECOMMENDS the Executives to strengthen the Air Quality Action Plan by including further options as listed in Appendix 5.**
- 15. The joint Review Group RECOMMENDS the Executives to ensure full public consultation on the Air Quality Action Plan and to include improving air quality as a priority in both the Oxfordshire Community Partnership and the City's Local Strategic Partnership.**

1.0 Report

- 1.1 The City Council and Oxfordshire County Council Environment Scrutiny Committee's have completed a joint review of Air Pollution in Oxford. The Review report is attached at Appendix 1. The Review Group and the County Council Scrutiny Officers have authored the report.
- 1.2 The Executive Board are asked to approve the recommendations contained in the Review report, taking into account the draft minutes of the City Council and County Council Environment Scrutiny Committees at Appendix 2 and the comments from Legal and Democratic Services at Appendix 3.

THIS REPORT HAS BEEN SEEN AND APPROVED BY:

Emma Griffiths, Legal and Democratic Services (Comments Attached below for information)

Alan Flockton, Financial and Asset Management

Oxford City Council Environment Scrutiny Committee and Oxfordshire County Council Environment Scrutiny Committee

Appendix 2

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE TO ACCOMPANY THE JOINT ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT “A BREATH OF FRESH AIR”

The Scrutiny Review was conducted jointly by both authorities – each nominating three Members to serve on the Review Group. The final report was NOT presented to a *joint* authority Scrutiny Committee for joint endorsement but to each authority's Environment Scrutiny Committee separately, despite some reservations from County Committee Services about this process being unconstitutional. Both the Committees' comments are appended to the report as follows. Please note these are draft forms of words, not yet formally agreed.

COUNTY ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE Wednesday 10th November 2004

DRAFT DECISION – PLEASE NOTE THIS IS A DRAFT DECISION, NOT YET FORMALLY AGREED

5b. AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY REVIEW

This item had been included on the Agenda to enable the Committee to agree the report or to make any additional points or comment before the final report was submitted to the Executive. Any comments would be attached to the final report to be considered at the City and County Executive meetings.

This item was dealt with in a one meeting session.

Panel Members presented the final report, highlighting the key findings and recommendations in the report. The Committee then evaluated the report paying particular regard to whether the review had achieved its objectives and if the findings and conclusions follow from the evidence.

The Committee AGREED to forward the report to the Executive and to advise the it that the Committee:

- (i) supported recommendations R1, R2, R3, R6, R7, R9, R11, R12, R13 and R15 set out in the report;
- (ii) did not support (on the casting vote of the Chair) recommendations R4, R5, R10 and R14 set out in the report;
- (iii) did not support recommendation R8, but supported the current work being undertaken in that area.

Officers undertook to replace the words 'tour buses' with the words 'open-topped tour buses' on page 17, paragraph 29 of the report and to add the following words 'This Strategy was adopted by Oxfordshire County Council as Highway Authority following local government reorganisation after 1974. The County particularly supported Park & Ride and explored road schemes and bypasses for example, Botley Road.' following the words '... of transport' on page 11, paragraph 11 of the report.

CITY ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE Monday 15th November 2004

DRAFT MINUTE – Please note that this is a draft minute, not yet formally agreed

45. AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY REVIEW

The Interim Legal and Democratic Services Business Manager submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended) of the Air Quality Management Review Group entitled 'A Breath of Fresh Air'. The Vice-Chair, Councillor Pressel, was joined by the other members of the Review Group, Councillors Fooks and Hollander. City Council officer Roger Pitman and Matt Bramall from the County Council were also in attendance.

Councillor Pressel introduced the report and gave a brief outline saying that the recommendations should be read in conjunction with the Action Plan and that further options were yet to be consulted on and agreed. Associated matters in the medium term were to encourage the bus companies to switch to cleaner fuel, and in the short term, to decrease the levels of traffic congestion in the City.

The Chair said that the report before them was an excellent one and on behalf of the Council he thanked everyone who had been involved in its production. He then invited members' questions.

Councillor Buckingham said that the requirement to prevent vehicles from letting their engines run while waiting should be extended to taxis. Councillor Fooks agreed and said that enforcement powers were required. The report aimed to make recommendations on what was possible, and the intention was that they would all be achieved.

In response to a question from Councillor Florey about traffic reduction, especially near the Watlington Road roundabout, Roger Pitman said that funding for traffic assessments was usually agreed when planning consent was granted.

Councillor Van Zyl asked about who would be responsible for ensuring that enforcement measures were applied, especially relating to penalties for emissions. The Chair agreed that this was important and asked for the matter to be taken up in the discussions on the report on Environmental Enforcement.

Councillor Fooks said more effort was required and suggested tying the issue into Local Performance Indicators.

Councillor Roaf asked about showing the costs of improving Air Quality. Members noted that it had been difficult to quantify from a health perspective but that hospitals then indicated that there were measurable benefits. Councillor Hollander recommended that while the report's intentions were undoubtedly worthy, they needed to be taken seriously and implemented.

The Chair asked about specific measures to regulate traffic flow especially the High Street bus gate. Mr Pitman said that they needed to be integrated into the County Council's traffic plan for maximum impact.

Going through the recommendations in detail, members noted that the County Council's Scrutiny Committee had not been able to endorse all of the recommendations and that there was concern about some measures not being fully implemented, especially with regard to recommendation 8 and the need for full time officers to deal with pedestrian and cycling issues. Councillor Pressel said that this was one area in particular where work was not being properly carried out due to lack of commitment to resources.

In drawing the discussion to a close, the Chair again thanked all involved in the production of such a thorough report and that it carried the Committee's full backing for endorsement by the Executive Board.

Resolved to ask the Executive Board to endorse all of the recommendations of the report on air quality and to note in particular that measures were required to ensure enforcement measures were implemented and to promote the work in relation to pedestrian and cycling issues.

Appendix 3

Comments from Legal and Democratic Services:

- The report is useful/informative but doesn't really take Oxford City Council any further forward in its duty to adopt an air quality action plan – the Environment Scrutiny Committee needs to focus on this work for the future as this joint report deals predominantly with the local transport plan.
- Most of the recommendations are not within the gift of this authority i.e. only the County Council has the power to implement recommendations 1-5, 7, 8 and 12
- There are no costings/implications set out for the recommendations that the City Council is being asked to look at.
- The Local Government Act 2003 is referred to, but it is not apparent how it is intended that it could be utilised - EB would have to give full consideration to the community strategy etc. before that power could be utilised and powers to trade are anyway tied to CPA results (the City Council doesn't qualify).
- Any increase in parking charges has to be dealt with sensitively.
- Environmental impact assessments already have to be carried out as part of the planning approval process for developments.
- There is DEFRA guidance about air quality and action plans etc. - the report focuses on the guidance issued re. local transport plans.