



Report of^[x1]: Environment Scrutiny Committee
To^[x2]: City Executive Board
Date^[x3]: 11th. June
Item No^[EM4]:
Title of Report ^[x5]: Low Emission Zone Recommendation



Summary and Recommendations




Purpose of report^[x6]: To present the Environment Scrutiny^[x6] Committee recommendation on the implementation of a Low Emission Zone to the City Executive Board.



Key decision^[x7]: No


Board Member^[x8]: Cllr. Tanner

Scrutiny Responsibility^[x9]: Scrutiny Committee B




Ward(s) affected^[x10]: Carfax and Holywell Wards

Report Approved by:
 James Pownell – Legal Services
 Andy Collett - Finance
 Paul Spencer –  Environmental Development^[EM11]



Policy Framework^[x12]: Corporate Plan priority to improve the local environment, economy and quality of life.



Recommendation(s)^[x13]: To inform the Executive Board that Environment Scrutiny Committee regrets the amount of time taken to implement a low emissions zone for Oxford and asks that Executive Board asks the County Council to implement as soon as possible, as many of the recommendations in the Air Quality Action Plan that it can.


1. Low Emission Zone


Environment Scrutiny Committee has been interested in the progress towards the introduction of a Low Emission Zone (LEZ) in Oxford. It received an update on this at its meeting on 14th April 2008.

- 1.2 The Committee appreciates that it takes time to complete the necessary modelling work to provide evidence that an LEZ is required. However, the Committee is frustrated at the length of time this work is taking and wishes to inform Executive Board of this concern.
- 1.3 Full details of the Committee's debate on this issue are included in the meeting minutes at appendix 1 to this report.

2. Comments from the Executive Director

The Scrutiny Report omits to say that the delay with the LEZ feasibility study has been the result of delays at the County in updating the traffic model for the City Centre. It has taken the consultants, working on behalf of the County Council, far longer than expected to complete this complex and detailed work. Updating the emissions model and the assessment of the various LEZ options by the City Council, could only be undertaken once the traffic model had been updated – which only occurred in early May 2008. At the time of writing, the County traffic model is still not fully complete.

3. Comments from the Board Member

I shared the scrutiny committee's frustrations at the delay in implementing a Low Emission Zone in the centre of Oxford when I was in opposition. As a new Board member I continue to share that frustration. I will do all that I can, as quickly as possible, to deliver cleaner air for all who live, work, study and shop in the centre of our beautiful city.

Name and contact details of author^[x14]:

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Appendix 1

Environment Scrutiny Committee Minutes – 14th April 2008

85. AIR QUALITY PROGRESS REPORT

The Head of Environmental Health submitted a report (previously circulated now appended) on progress with implementing a low emission zone in Central Oxford. Alex Colby from the County Council and Trevor Dixon were in attendance

In response to Members questions, Trevor Dixon said that the time taken to progress the scheme was due to the complexity of the issues involved and the need to carefully compile data to update traffic and emissions models. This stage had now been completed and the information passed to the consultants, AEA, to update the emissions model. This would lead to the formation of the various scenarios to establish cost benefit analysis and health and environment impact assessments. Councillor Fooks said that it was important to collect reliable data for the models to be able to determine emissions and build a sound scientific case on the need for an LEZ.

It was hoped to bring a further report to committee in July with the results of the analysis and presenting options for discussion. The next stage would be to go to consultation on the suggested options with the all of the parties involved.

A scheme to reduce pollution in Oxford would definitely be introduced, with the exact scheme being determined by the extent of the studies. The Air Quality Strategy had already built in the proposals to develop a city wide emissions zone. Any opposition to the project after the consultation stage would need to be determined by an inquiry conducted by the Traffic Commissioner.

A scheme to regulate taxi emissions was already operated under the taxi licensing system in connection with the age of the vehicle being declared. This could be developed further when the emissions scheme for Oxford was determined. Charges against drivers flouting the London Congestion Charge requirements referred to the fines imposed. The meeting noted that the Oxford Bus Company had invested in new buses with euro five plus engines and it was agreed that the bus company should be congratulated for this.

Members asked about the further implementation of recommendations made as part of the Air Quality Action Plan. Andrew Davies reminded the meeting that there had been a report to update the committee at its January meeting. Councillor Pressel said that there needed to be ongoing monitoring and updates on the implementation of the recommendations such as the pre-ticketing to speed the flow of buses through the city.

Trevor Dixon said that details on authorisation of officers to carry out the enforcement of fixed penalty notices were being finalised and would be reported to the next bus partnership meeting. Further to a question from Councillor

Huzzey, Trevor Dixon said that he had been in correspondence with All Souls College and reached an understanding on the need to maintain the air pollution monitoring box in the High Street for a while longer. The Committee also noted that options and costs for a sign showing existing pollution levels were to be determined and that a location could then be agreed.

Resolved:

- 1. To inform the Executive Board that the Committee regrets the amount of time taken to implement a low emissions zone for Oxford and to ask the County Council to implement as soon as possible, as many of the recommendations in the Air Quality Action Plan that it can;**
- 2. Ask the Scrutiny Manager to:**
 - a. continue to monitor and report on the progress the implementation of the recommendations in the Air Quality Action Plan;**
 - b. write to the Oxford Bus Company congratulating them on their investment in the euro five plus standard vehicles.**