

# Supplement for

# Cabinet

On **Wednesday 16 October 2024** At **6.00 pm**

## Agenda Item 7 - Scrutiny Reports

### Contents

#### 7. **Scrutiny Reports**

3 - 12

The Scrutiny Committee met on 8 October 2024, the Climate and Environment Panel met on 10 September 2024, and the Housing and Homelessness Panel met on 10 October 2024. The following reports and recommendations have been published as supplement:

- Annual Air Quality Status Report
- ZCOP Expansion Plans
- ~~Local Government Association Corporate Peer Review~~
- ~~Housing Complaint Handling Annual Report 2023/24~~

The agenda, reports and any additional supplements can be found together with this supplement on the committee meeting webpage.

This page is intentionally left blank

**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 16 October 2024  
**Report of:** Climate and Environment Panel  
**Title of Report:** Annual Air Quality Status Report

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To present Panel of the Scrutiny Committee recommendations for Cabinet consideration and decision
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Scrutiny Lead Member:</b>	Councillor Emily Kerr, Panel Chair
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Anna Railton, Deputy Leader (Non-Statutory) and Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Zero Carbon Oxford
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Council Strategy 2024-28
<b>Recommendation(s): That the Cabinet states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations in the body of this report</b>	

<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Appendix A</b>	Draft Cabinet response to Scrutiny recommendations

## Introduction and overview

1. The Climate and Environment Panel met on 10 September 2024 to consider the Annual Air Quality Status Report. The report fulfilled the Council's statutory obligation to review and assess air quality in the city to report on whether the legal air quality limit values had been met.
2. The Panel would like to thank Councillor Anna Railton (Deputy Leader (Non-Statutory) and Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford) and Pedro Abreu (Principal Air Quality Officer) for attending the meeting to answer questions.

## Summary and recommendations

3. Pedro Abreu, Principal Air Quality Officer introduced the report. The report provided an update on air quality in Oxford in the past year.

4. The Panel asked a range of questions, including questions relating to the anticipated impact on air quality of the reopening of Botley Road; site-specific air quality action plans; future plans for communications campaigns; monitoring and reporting on air quality; Central Government funding; and emissions breakdowns.
5. In particular, the Panel considered that funding from Central Government in relation to air quality had previously not been adequate. Noting the recent change in Government, the Panel agreed that the Council should ensure it made representations to the new Government in relation to the need to ensure future additional funding to adequately resource measures related to air quality.

***Recommendation 1: That the Council writes to Central Government to make representations in relation to securing future additional local government funding to adequately resource the Council's statutory air quality obligations.***

6. The Panel also noted that Botley Road had seen improvements in air quality (in relation to NO<sub>2</sub> emissions) as a result of the road closure. The road was due to reopen in the not too distant future and the Panel was keen that improvements in air quality during the closure should not be reversed when Botley Road reopened. The Panel agreed that the Council should develop a plan so that it could take a proactive approach in retaining the air quality improvements achieved during the closure.

***Recommendation 2: That the Council develops a clear plan to mitigate against reversing the improvements in air quality achieved as a result of the Botley Road closure, when the road is reopened.***

7. There was a suggestion that the Council should seek to invest in air quality display boards to be installed across the city setting out information such as current air quality, travel route management and number of local deaths per year as a result of poor air quality. The Panel was of the view that measures such as this would help effect the behavioural change required at the personal level to support efforts across Oxford to improve air quality.

***Recommendation 3: That the Council explores investment in air quality display boards to disseminate key messages to the public related to air quality.***

8. In discussion, the Panel also suggested that the Council could explore other tools to improve air quality locally which it had direct control over. For example, the Panel suggested that the Council should consider capping the number of licensed vehicles in the city, which would reduce the emissions from Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles.

***Recommendation 4: That the Council considers setting a limit for the number of vehicles it licenses in the city (i.e. Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles).***

<b>Report author</b>	Alice Courtney
Job title	Scrutiny Officer
Service area or department	Law and Governance
Telephone	07483 010160
e-mail	<a href="mailto:acourtney@oxford.gov.uk">acourtney@oxford.gov.uk</a>

This page is intentionally left blank

**Appendix A**  
**Draft Cabinet response to recommendations of**  
**the Climate and Environment Panel of the Scrutiny Committee**

The document sets out the draft response of the Cabinet Member to recommendations made by the Climate and Environment Panel on 10 September 2024 concerning the Annual Air Quality Status Report. The Cabinet is asked to amend and agree a formal response as appropriate.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Agree?</b>	<b>Comment</b>
1) That the Council writes to Central Government to make representations in relation to securing future additional local government funding to adequately resource the Council's statutory air quality obligations.	Yes	A letter will be written to DEFRA seeking a reversal of its April 2024 decision to withhold Local Air Quality Grant Scheme funding - the first time the Scheme has been withheld since its inception in 1997.
2) That the Council develops a clear plan to mitigate against reversing the improvements in air quality achieved as a result of the Botley Road closure, when the road is reopened.	In part	Oxford City Council will continue to deliver its Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2025, which has seen a significant improvement in air quality across the city to date, working in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council, the Highways Authority and other relevant stakeholders. Any future air quality measures to be delivered in the city (past 2025) will form part of the statutory process of developing the city's future air quality action plan (2026-2030). This work will start in 2025 and will involve engagement and partnership work with relevant external and internal stakeholders and public consultation for the agreement of the next set of air quality measures and initiatives for the city.
3) That the Council explores investment in air quality display boards to disseminate key messages to the public related to air quality.	Yes	Oxford City Council officers are working in partnership with Oxfordshire County and District Council officers and will explore whether live data on the <a href="http://www.oxonair.uk">www.oxonair.uk</a> website could be linked with highways traffic display boards.

<p>4) That the Council considers setting a limit for the number of vehicles it licenses in the city (i.e. Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles).</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Oxford City Council currently is in the process of reviewing Hackney Carriage Quantity Control Policy, which limits the number of Hackney Carriages (Taxis) to 107. However, Hackney Carriage Vehicles (HCV) are also subject to Emission Standards requiring all HCV to be ULEV's by January 2026, currently 33 of those vehicles already meet these criteria.</p> <p>The Council has no legal power to limit the number of Private Hire Vehicles licensed in the district. PHV's are subject to five (5) year age restriction for licensing of new vehicles, as well as subject to the ZEZ pilot requirements, which are expected to continue with the expansion of the ZEZ.</p>
---	-----------	---



**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 16 October 2024  
**Report of:** Climate and Environment Panel  
**Title of Report:** Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership (ZCOP) Expansion

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To present Panel of the Scrutiny Committee recommendations for Cabinet consideration and decision
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Scrutiny Lead Member:</b>	Councillor Emily Kerr, Panel Chair
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Anna Railton, Deputy Leader (Non-Statutory) and Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Zero Carbon Oxford
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Council Strategy 2024-28
<b>Recommendation(s): That the Cabinet states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations in the body of this report</b>	

<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Appendix A</b>	Draft Cabinet response to Scrutiny recommendations

### **Introduction and overview**

1. The Climate and Environment Panel met on 10 September 2024 to consider a report on Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership (ZCOP) Expansion. The report set out the work of the ZCOP and ambition of its corporate members to expand focus from a City to an Oxfordshire scale.
2. The Panel would like to thank Councillor Anna Railton (Deputy Leader (Non-Statutory) and Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford) and Mish Tullar (Head of Corporate Strategy) for attending the meeting to answer questions.

### **Summary and recommendations**

3. Mish Tullar, Head of Corporate Strategy introduced the report. The report set out the work of the ZCOP and ambition of its corporate members to expand focus from a City to an Oxfordshire scale.

4. The Panel asked a range of questions, including questions relating to the goals of other local authorities and members of ZCOP; ensuring that ZCOP membership had representation from the most significant carbon contributors in Oxfordshire; ZCOP membership of organisations outside of Oxfordshire; and ZCOP engagement levels in different sectors.
  
5. In particular, the Panel noted that there were organisations which were not located in Oxfordshire, but that had an operational footprint in Oxfordshire through supply chain or other means. Examples of this were identified as catering and cleaning businesses which were employed by the university colleges and/or private schools. The Panel was advised that some companies, such as the energy company SSEN, were already actively engaged in ZCOP despite not being directly located in Oxfordshire, however the Panel agreed to formalise its discussion as a recommendation.

***Recommendation 1: That the Council works with the expanded ZCOP to explore the feasibility of there being a mechanism by which organisations that are not located in Oxfordshire, but that have an operational footprint in Oxfordshire, can engage with the ZCOP.***

<b>Report author</b>	Alice Courtney
Job title	Scrutiny Officer
Service area or department	Law and Governance
Telephone	07483 010160
e-mail	<a href="mailto:acourtney@oxford.gov.uk">acourtney@oxford.gov.uk</a>

**Appendix A**  
**Draft Cabinet response to recommendations of**  
**the Climate and Environment Panel of the Scrutiny Committee**

The document sets out the draft response of the Cabinet Member to recommendations made by the Climate and Environment Panel on 10 September 2024 concerning the report on Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership (ZCOP) Expansion. The Cabinet is asked to amend and agree a formal response as appropriate.

<b><i>Recommendation</i></b>	<b><i>Agree?</i></b>	<b><i>Comment</i></b>
1) That the Council works with the expanded ZCOP to explore the feasibility of there being a mechanism by which organisations that are not located in Oxfordshire, but that have an operational footprint in Oxfordshire, can engage with the ZCOP.	Yes	There are already organisations not located in Oxford but with an operational footprint in Oxfordshire among ZCOP's members, such as Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks. It is expected that other similar non-Oxfordshire-based organisations may be invited to join the expanded countywide ZCOP.

This page is intentionally left blank