

Economic and Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny and Policy Development
Committee

Meeting held 28 November 2018

PRESENT: Councillors Denise Fox (Chair), Ian Auckland (Deputy Chair), Mike Chaplin, Adam Hanrahan, Mark Jones, Abdul Khayum, Cate McDonald, Mohammed Mahroof, Robert Murphy, Moya O'Rourke and Martin Smith

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lisa Banes, Neale Gibson, Ben Miskell and Paul Wood.

2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

2.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public and press.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 In relation to Agenda Item 7 (Sheffield's Clean Air Zone Proposal), (a) Councillor Mike Chaplin declared a disclosable pecuniary interest, as an employee of Royal Mail, and did not speak or vote on the item and (b) Councillor Rob Murphy declared a personal interest as owner, and/or director, of a small business in the City.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24th October, 2018 were approved as a correct record.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1 The Committee received the following questions and observations from members of the public in relation to the Council's Clean Air Zone proposals:-

5.2 Ibrar Hussain

- With regard to the Clean Air Zone coming into force by 2021, was there any possibility that the start of it could be delayed to allow for a phased-in approach to assist those who would be most affected, stating that the process will have a damaging effect on the taxi industry. By having a phased-in approach, the proposal would be more achievable for all.
- Was it possible to see an exemptions list, and would there be any flexibility with regard to Euro 6 vehicles?

- The push towards the electrification of vehicles would place a financial burden on taxi drivers, with brand new taxi cabs costing between £55,000 and £58,000, would taxi operators receive financial help to cover this?
- If a taxi is licensed outside Sheffield, would the driver be exempt from the charge? There was a need for clarity on this.
- The Taxi Trade Association was not against the Clean Air Strategy, however felt that if the proposals go ahead as they stand, the trade will be decimated.
- What will happen if there was a Judicial Review on this?
- What would happen to the Clean Air Strategy if the present Government lost power?
- With regard to private hire operators i.e. Uber in particular, what rules or conditions will apply to them?

5.3 Abdul Raheem

- With regard to electrification of vehicles, I understand the battery weighs 350kgs, and there are some issues around this, one being the radiation levels being emanated from this. Would it affect the health of the drivers?
- Uber is destroying the taxi trade industry by reducing its fares to their lowest level. With the introduction of the Strategy, the charges will finish it off. Also the majority of taxi drivers don't have the facilities to charge their vehicles at home.
- How will there be control over electric vehicle charging points in the city? For example in light of the news of BP taking over Chargemaster.

5.4 Abdi Malik – Taxi Trade Association

The taxi trade was in agreement with the need for clean air but felt that there should be better consultation on this between the Council and the Trade, and asked:

- Was there a better way for the proposals to be phased in?
- Hardly anyone can afford £56,000 for a new vehicle. What would happen if the Government don't provide the money to assist?
- The railway station is a pollution hotspot, particularly on Fridays and Sundays, mainly through bad highways planning. The Trade have asked on several occasions to hold meetings to overcome this but nothing has happened. Sometimes, due to congestion, it can take up to an hour to enter and exit the Station area. Will a meeting finally be arranged to

address this?

- For the safety of both drivers and passengers, vehicles need to be partitioned. How will the proposals affect rear loading vehicles?

5.5 Tariq Nazir

The problems regarding pollution have been known since 2010 but nothing has been done. Why are the Council and the Government acting now and wanting this to be pushed through as quickly as possible? In favour of something being done but it is the way it is being done.

- 5.6 Responding to the questions, Councillor Jack Scott (Cabinet member for Transport and Development) stated that he understood the pressures and frustrations of the Taxi Trades and its drivers and recognised that whilst they accepted the need for change, there was difficulty in accepting the charges and the costs involved to upgrade or replace the most polluting vehicles on the city's roads, but there would be a combination of targeted support packages available through Government funding. He said that air pollution was a major public health challenge, that it was damaging the health and life chances of people in Sheffield, contributing to the deaths of around 500 people a year in the city, so there was a need to improve the health for all by reducing emissions within the Clean Air Zone (CAZ), and ultimately the city as a whole. Councillor Scott made reference to the consultation process and said that he was more than happy to hold discussions with the Taxi Trade and will take on board their suggestions. He added that he would not support any rise in fees to recover the cost to drivers when they are required to invest in new low emission and/or electric vehicles. Councillor Scott said that he could not anticipate technological advances by 2021, or what the range of vehicles and the charging structure might be, but at present there were 55 charging stations around the city and this was set to increase. He added that if the City Council did not receive Government funding towards this proposal, then it would not go ahead. With regard to the pollution around Midland Rail Station, Councillor Scott said that it was private land and as such, the Council could do little to improve the air quality due to emissions from diesel powered trains as well as the taxis and private cars. He accepted that the Council had been in breach of the legal limit of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO²) emissions since 2010 and had fully supported Client Earth's findings with regard to public health, but without Government funding, it had not been possible to tackle the issue before. It was felt that with the introduction of the CAZ, air quality in other hotspots, i.e. Darnall and Tinsley, would significantly improve. He stated that buses, Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) and Light Goods Vehicles (LGVs), along with taxis, were also non-compliant and these needed to be brought in line to improve air quality.

6. **SHEFFIELD'S CLEAN AIR ZONE PROPOSALS**

- 6.1 The Committee received a summary presentation on Sheffield's Clean Air Zone Proposal from Tom Finnegan-Smith (Head of Strategic Transport and Infrastructure) and Laurie Brennan (Policy and Improvement Manager). Also in attendance for this item was Councillor Jack Scott (Cabinet Member for Transport and Development).

6.2 Due to the fact that Councillor Jack Scott could only stay at the meeting for a short period of time, and had already introduced the proposals in response to public questions earlier in the meeting, and due to the fact that everyone had had an opportunity to study the information circulated with the agenda, it was agreed by Members to forego the presentation and go straight to questions.

6.3 Members of the Committee raised questions, and the following responses were provided:-

- The sum of £40m was an indicative figure to be set out in the Outline Business Case (OBC) to be submitted to the Government by 31st December, 2018. It was felt that the figure could be more or could be less, but more would be known once the consultation process had been carried out, and the OBC submitted.
- The ring road around Nottingham is totally different to Sheffield, thereby having better air quality. Also the transport infrastructure of the city was that the bus and tram network are in the control of the City Council and are run very efficiently.
- A comprehensive statutory consultation process was to begin as soon as possible in 2019, seeking views on the proposals from a cross section of people that live, work and visit Sheffield, most importantly the views of those most affected, including taxi drivers, LGV owners, businesses and bus companies. It was hoped to get the right balance of views and Councillor Scott would be happy for a meeting to be arranged with Scrutiny Committee Members to develop the consultation framework.
- The Government had directed that Sheffield and Rotherham carry out a joint feasibility study, which commenced in 2017, to look at tackling roadside NO² concentrations, and to submit initial and final plans identifying the preferred option for delivering compliance in the shortest possible time, and the results of this study would form part of the OBC.
- CAZs were not intended to be revenue-raising mechanisms to be introduced solely to charge drivers to use the city's streets. The Zone was not a money making scheme and any income derived from the charge would be used to support further work to improve air quality in and around the city.
- It was intended that the CAZ would start at the last exit point on the inner ring road. The Council are striving to ensure that the city centre will be the best it can be, especially with the development of the Heart of the City 2 project. Evidence has shown a significant concentration of illegal NO² emissions within the city centre and the Lower Don Valley, so it was vital that these emissions are reduced within the shortest possible time.
- 29 other cities have been mandated by the Government to reduce NO² emissions and other cities and urban areas are to be added. Leeds and

Birmingham have developed their proposals, already having carried out the consultation process, as they were mandated to explore CAZ options in 2015 and it was felt that Sheffield could learn from their experiences so far. Leeds, for example, has different movement of traffic in and around the city than Sheffield, so their CAZ would be different to Sheffield.

- The decision taken by Government not to electrify the Midland Mainline rail network has had a significant an impact on the city. The Leader of the Council is involved in discussions with Network Rail, Transport for the North and HS2to develop a strategic outline case to present to central Government regarding the electrification of our rail network, not only to improve journey times but also reduce emissions from diesel trains.
- The City Council will seek a strong commitment from Government in order to support the scale of change that is needed to reduce NO₂ emissions, and without such commitment, the Council would be unable to fund the changes required.
- The City Council have been awarded £1.947m from the Government's Clean Bus Technology Fund (CBTF). This funding award will see 117 non-Euro VI diesel buses operating in Sheffield retro-fitted with technology which will improve their engine performance and reduce emissions to a compliant Euro VI standard.
- All work carried out to date has been entirely integrated between Sheffield and Rotherham, and the consultation process will also be carried out jointly.
- To enable hackney carriage drivers to test drive electric cab vehicles, 10 electric taxis will be available in Spring 2019. Also, 12 rapid charge points will be made available in the city to encourage drivers to switch to electric vehicles.
- Even if there was a change of Government, there needs to be a robust scheme in place due to the fact that the EU clean air standards would still apply.

6.4 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the presentation now submitted, together with the responses to the questions raised;
- (b) thanks Councillor Jack Scott, Tom Finnegan-Smith and Laurie Brennan for attending the meeting, and responding to the questions raised; and
- (c) requests that a report on the consultation proposals and Outline Business Case as submitted to Government, be submitted to the meeting of the Committee to be held on 30th January, 2019.

7. SHEFFIELD'S TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2018-35 - ASSESSING SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL OPTIONS - THE ROLE OF CYCLING

- 7.1 The Committee received a report of the Head of Strategic Transport and Infrastructure on Sheffield's Transport Strategy 2018-35 – Assessing Sustainable Travel Options – The Role of Cycling.
- 7.2 The report indicated that in July 2018, Cabinet had endorsed a new long-term Transport Strategy for Sheffield, setting out how the city proposed to deal with projected increases in population, homes and jobs to 2034 and the arrival of HS2. At the meeting of this Committee held on 24th October, 2018, Members expressed a wish that sufficient consideration was also given to active travel, in particular cycling, which had been the subject of an inquiry led by the Committee in 2013/14.
- 7.3 The report included an appraisal of outcomes anticipated by the Sheffield Cycling Inquiry in 2013/14 and how the newly endorsed Transport Strategy seeks to build upon or change them.
- 7.4 In attendance for this item were Tom Finnegan-Smith (Head of Strategic Transport and Infrastructure) and Nat Porter (Senior Transport Planner).
- 7.5 Members of the Committee raised questions and the following responses were provided:-
- Sheffield was among the first tranche of cities looking to develop a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan during 2018/19 and, with support from the Department for Transport, had been successful in its first round bid of £6m.
 - Having engaged with Cycle Forums and other local authority partners, it is expected, but as yet uncertain, that further consultation on the Strategy will be carried out.
 - Meetings have been held with officers from the other South Yorkshire Local Authorities to review the priorities and it was hoped to produce a coherent report to the Sheffield City Region Combined Authority in the near future.
 - It was estimated that it would cost approximately £28m, on infrastructure alone, for cycle lane provision across the city.
- 7.6 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-
- (a) notes the contents of the report now submitted, together with the responses to the questions raised;
 - (b) thanks Tom Finnegan-Smith and Nat Porter for attending the meeting and responding to the questions raised; and
 - (c) requests that this matter be retain on its Work Programme and considered again in the future, and that progress on the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan be shared with the Committee in March.

8. UPDATE ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICE CHANGES INTRODUCED IN APRIL 2018

8.1 The Committee received a report of the Director of Culture and Environment, providing an update on the changes to the street cleaning and grounds maintenance elements of the Streets Ahead contract which were proposed to promote efficiency and cash savings to the Council whilst delivering an acceptable level of service to the public. No further changes have been made to the Service since the proposals were approved in 2017.

8.2 A Member of the Committee asked what type of complaints had been received with regard to shrub beds along Hanover Way, and it was agreed that a written response would be provided to the Committee. With regard to problems in suburban areas regarding grass cutting, the Policy and Improvement Officer indicated that an explanation had been provided at paragraph 4.1.4 of the report.

8.3 RESOLVED: That the Committee notes the contents of the report now submitted.

9. WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19

9.1 The Committee received a report of the Policy and Improvement Officer, which set out its Work Programme for 2018/19.

9.2 RESOLVED: That approval be given to the Committee's Work Programme for 2018/19.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

10.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Wednesday, 30th January, 2019, at 5.00 p.m., in the Town Hall.

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