

Full Council

18 July 2017



Report of: The Mayor

Title: "Clean air now for Bristol" – Report back (for information) from Mayor on action taken in response to motion approved at Full Council on 8 November 2016

Ward: Citywide

Recommendation

That Full Council notes the progress made following their passing of the motion to support action to improve air quality in Bristol.

Summary

In November 2016 Full Council unanimously passed a motion calling for action on air quality in Bristol. This report provides a progress report on action taken by the Mayor following that motion.



Details of the motion

1. In November 2016 Full Council debated a Motion from Councillor Bolton entitled “Clean Air in Bristol”. The Motion was supported by all political parties represented on Council and was passed unanimously.
2. The motion stated:

Full Council notes that:

1. *Bristol’s air pollution urgently needs to be reduced.*
2. *In many parts of Bristol, especially near our busy roads and in the city centre, air pollutants exceed legal and safe European and World Health Organisation limits.*
3. *Air pollution impacts on the health of people in our city, especially the most vulnerable. It can cause permanent lung damage in babies and young children and exacerbates lung and heart disease in older people, leading to an estimated 300 premature deaths in Bristol each year.*
4. *Other English cities such as Southampton and Nottingham are introducing Low Emission Zones or Clean Air Zones to reduce the level of these pollutants to safe and acceptable levels. Bristol is not one of these cities.*
5. *National legislation is anticipated which could enable Bristol City Council to implement its own Clean Air Zone. In the interim there are other steps that could be taken to improve Bristol’s air.*

Full Council believes that:

1. *It is unfair for Bristol residents to be left behind breathing polluted air, when other major cities have Clean Air Zones planned.*
2. *A Clean Air Zone should be introduced in Bristol’s Air Quality Management Area to ensure Bristol’s air quality is within safe and legal limits by 2020.*
3. *Action on air pollution cannot wait for national legislation to be in place and we must take steps now.*

Full Council resolves to ask the Mayor to:

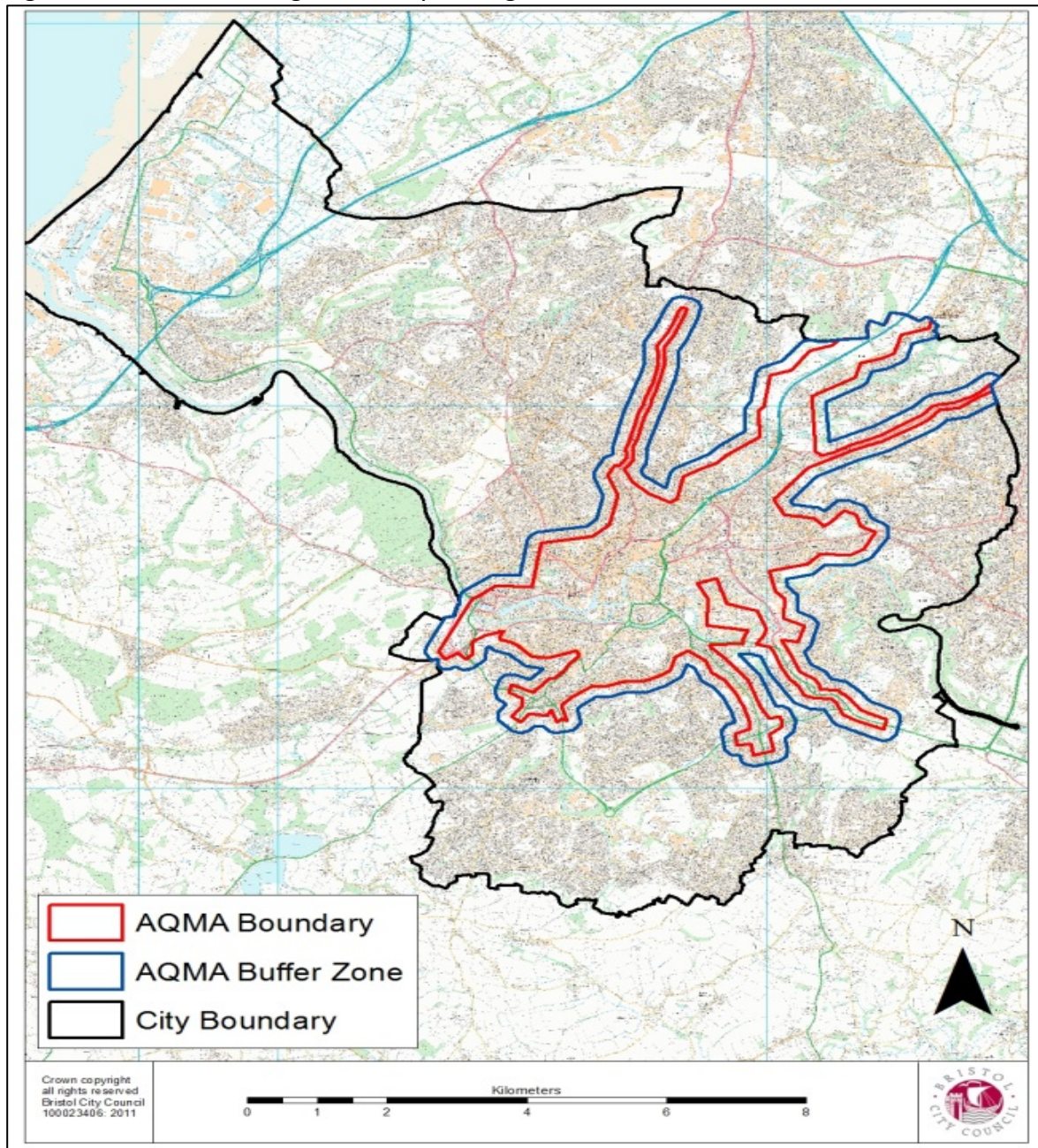
1. *Immediately take all steps needed to reduce deaths and illness linked to polluted air. This should include, but not be limited to:*
 - a. *restricting the most polluting vehicles from entering Bristol, and supporting transition of deliveries with freight consolidation centre;*
 - b. *cleaning up the bus fleet, working with Bristol’s major bus providers;*
 - c. *supporting taxis to meet clean emission standards;*
 - d. *promoting and incentivising the use of electric vehicles and car clubs, and ensuring that Council vehicles are electric where possible;*
 - e. *promoting walking and cycling.*
2. *Lobby the appropriate government minister to ensure that new air pollution legislation is introduced in a timely fashion to ensure that all affected cities can introduce Clean Air Zones.*
3. *Commit to implementing a Clean Air Zone in Bristol once the appropriate legislation is in place so that the people of Bristol are not left breathing polluted air.*
4. *Commit to immediately develop an updated Bristol-wide strategy to bring air quality within safe and legal limits.*

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- 5. Ensure work to bring dangerous air pollution within safe and legal limits is adequately resourced.*
 - 6. Include key air pollution targets in the development of Bristol's 50 year plan, including a target to ensure air quality is within safe and legal limits by 2020 at the latest.*
 - 7. Initiate an educational campaign to highlight to the general public the impact of air pollution on public health and the economy.*
 - 8. Report back to Full Council on the progress made on these actions by no later than May 2017.*

Background to Air Quality in Bristol

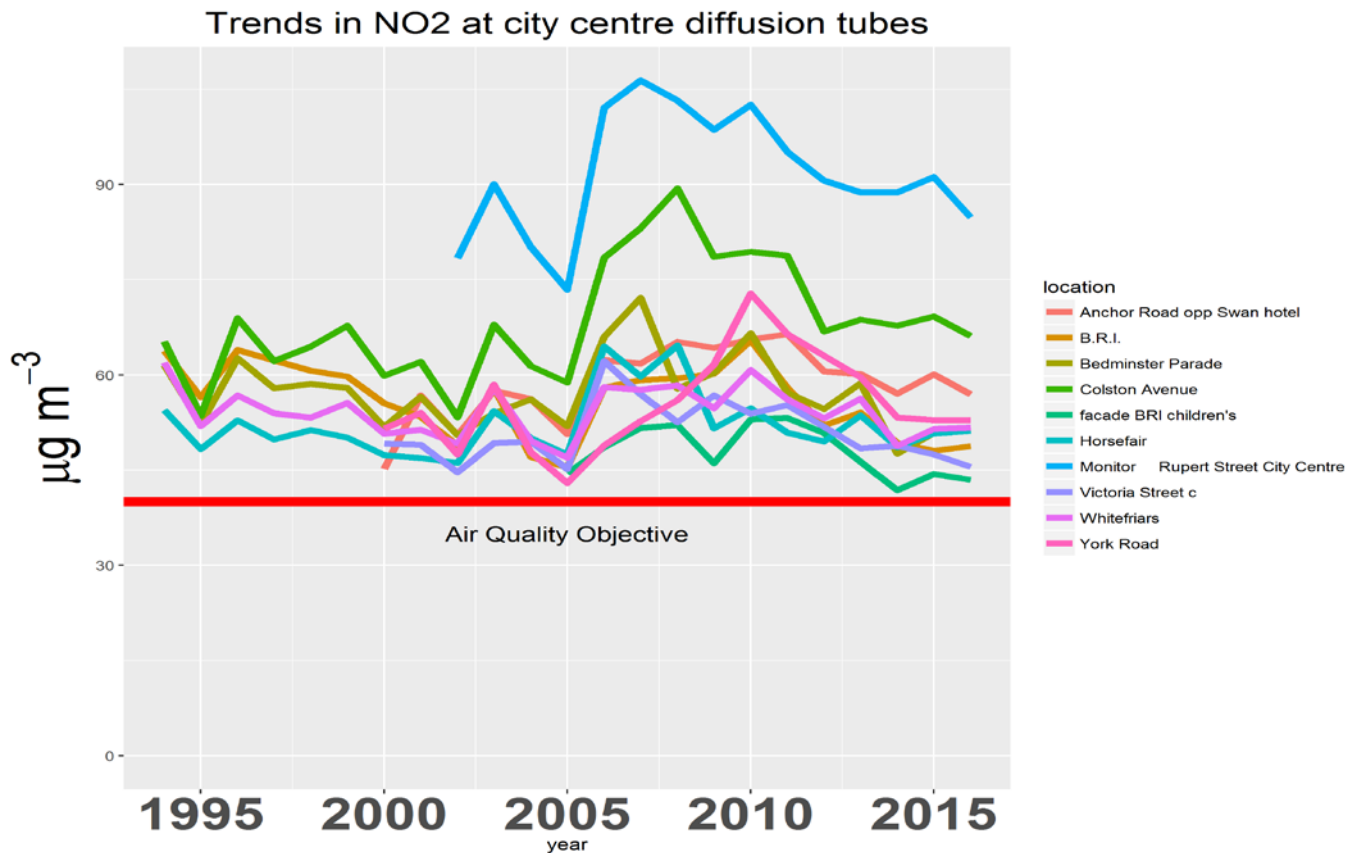
- 3.** Air Pollution is a long standing problem in Bristol, and all UK cities. In Bristol an Air Quality Management Area was declared in 2001 because of breaches in the legal standards of Nitrogen Dioxide. Nitrogen dioxide is limited under UK and EU law because of the impacts it has on human health.
- 4.** This Air Quality Management Area (shown in Figure 1) covers the whole central area of the city and all the major arterial routes. Approximately 100,000 people live within the AQMA and it includes the whole central business and shopping districts, major hospitals and dozens of schools and so many more people are exposed to the air pollution.

Figure 1: Bristol's Existing Air Quality Management Area



5. Levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) are affected by the weather and can change significantly from year to year. However looking at the overall the general trend of nitrogen dioxide pollution in the city we can see not significant improvement in pollution levels which remain above the legal limit values. Figures 2 shows monitoring results for central Bristol.

Figure 2: Trends in NO2 at city centre monitoring sites



6. During the last 20 years Bristol and the West of England have grown, economically and in terms of population and more people are travelling along our roads and into the city centre. Increases in walking, cycling and public transport has offset an increase in motor travel, so that car traffic on the roads has remained stable.

Progress since the motion

7. I have established a Mayoral Working Group on Air Pollution, which will work closely with the Congestion Task Force. The Working Group is chaired by Councillor Fi Hance. It has received expert advice from Council Officers and external experts on air pollution, transport and public health matters. This allows for an integrated approach to planning improvements in air quality which will be set out in an Air Quality Action Plan closely linked with emerging transport plans and will also feed into the findings of the congestion task group.
8. The motion requested action in several specific areas and these are reported below.
9. **Clean Air Zone:** The Mayoral Working Group sponsored a Bristol City Council bid to Government for funding for a feasibility study into establishing a Clean Air Zone(s). The bid was made jointly with South Gloucestershire Council to address air pollution across the whole Bristol/South Gloucestershire continuous urban area.
10. We were successful in that bid and were awarded £498,600 to undertake that study. That study is now underway and will conclude in March 2018. The study will examine the current situation, future scenarios and model a range of options for a Clean Air Zone(s). In the near future, I shall

consider the initial work of the study and determine options to progress for more detailed modelling. I will brief members in more detail as the work progresses.

11. This study will give us a firm evidence base to help inform future decision making.
12. **Freight Consolidation:** The freight consolidation centre was set up by the City Council in 2004 using European Union funding. Bristol City has supported this service and is working with the Operators, DHL for the service to continue without council funding from November 2017.
13. We are providing additional funding through the Go Ultra Low West electric vehicle project funded by the Office for Low Emission Vehicles. This is being used to provide a new electric vehicle to enable more efficient operation of the service.
14. **Improving the bus fleet:** Bristol's bus fleet is privately owned and operated. The City Council helped to secure funding from the Government Clean Bus Technology Fund. This has led to the retrofitting of 35 of the most polluting buses (emission standards Euro 2 and 3) to improve emissions of the bus fleet.
15. Government have announced that future funding for retrofit projects will be made available and BCC will consider applying for this at the relevant time.
16. First Bus is investing substantially in new clean buses which meet the latest Euro 6 emission standards. We will continue to work with Bus Operators to significantly improve emissions from the bus fleet.
17. **Improving the taxi fleet:** We have reviewed the Taxi Licencing Policy in early 2017 included changes to improve taxi fleet emissions. Under those changes, from 2018 all newly registered hackney vehicles will be required to meet the new Euro 6 emission standard. All newly licenced private hire vehicles will be required to be petrol, with the exception of some diesel vehicles for the 'executive' market where no petrol alternative exists. Other changes will also stop it being possible for very old taxis to be registered in the city with a 10/12 year age limit being implemented.
18. We submitted a bid for funding to support cleaner taxis but Bristol's was not selected for funding. We will continue to explore future Government funding opportunities to help taxi drivers make the transition to clean vehicles whilst maintaining a public service and their own livelihoods.
19. **Electric Vehicles:** We led a West of England bid to the Office of Low Emission Vehicles for £7m. The Go Ultra Low funding provides a range of measures included grants for businesses to install charge points, a doubling of the number of electric vehicle charge points in the city to make it even easy for drivers to re-charge their cars, and an increase in electric council fleet vehicles.
20. **Promoting walking and cycling:** We have a comprehensive package of measures to support walking and cycling. This includes promotion of sustainable travel through events in schools and businesses and the Travel West website.
21. We have invested in cycling infrastructure with a multi-million pound programme underway.

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- 22. Influencing Government:** With other Core Cities, Bristol City Council continues to respond to Government consultations on the national air quality action plans and the clean air zone framework and we look forward to the publication of the revised National Air Quality Action Plan in July. We remain the only core city without an effective mass transit system and we continue to consider aspirational solutions. This should be seen as key in improving both air quality and people flow and is a key priority for government engagement and inward investment.
- 23.** That National Action Plan will create the policy framework and will help to shape the emerging Bristol Air Quality Action Plan.
- 24.** Air pollution affects all citizens, and the strong cross party support for improving air quality has been key to the success of Bristol City Council in securing additional Government funding now and will be in the future.

RECOMMENDATION

Full Council is recommended to note the progress made and contribute to the on-going work to improve air quality for the people of Bristol.