

# Place Scrutiny Commission

**13<sup>th</sup> February, 2017**



**Report of:** Zoe Wilcox, Service Director Planning Services

**Title:** Air Quality Grant Update

**Ward:** Citywide

**Officer Presenting Report:** Kathy Derrick, Sustainability Manager

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## **Summary:**

The paper gives a brief overview of national air quality policy development.

It provides a brief overview of applications made by Bristol City Council to Defra. Those applications were for:

- Feasibility and design for a Clean Air Zone
- Communication and engagement work.

A decision on the grants is expected in February 2017.



## **UK Government Policy Development**

BCC monitors air pollution in the city to protect health. Monitoring shows that pollution levels are higher than health based government standards, causing around 300 early deaths per year in the city. The government has proposed mandatory Clean Air Zones (CAZ) for six cities (excluding Bristol) to deal with the breaches. Bristol can elect to have a CAZ which could entail introducing charges for categories of vehicle.

In April 2015 the government's plans to improve air quality were found to be inadequate by the Supreme Court. The updated plans, which proposed CAZ's for six cities were found to be inadequate again by the High Court on 1st November 2016. Government has indicated that it will not appeal, but will bring further improved plans for consultation.

No mandated CAZ was proposed for Bristol in the original plan. The modelling used by government did not identify problems in the city. BCC officers have shared our monitoring data with Defra which show widespread breaches of air quality standards. Following the recent court case, it is likely that Bristol will now have a mandated CAZ.

A CAZ offers potential to improve air quality by introducing charging for certain vehicle types, among other measures. An extensive feasibility study will be needed to determine the appropriate arrangements for a CAZ in Bristol.

## **BCC Air Quality Grant Applications**

An air quality grant application has been submitted to Defra, in partnership with South Gloucestershire Council, to cover the cost of carrying out this feasibility study. Another key element of the process of implementing a clean air zone is a communications element to ensure citizens and other stakeholders in the city understand why it is necessary, highlighting the public health issues that air pollution causes and a discussion on potential solutions. A separate air quality grant funding application has been submitted to carry out this work.

CAZ charging categories and classes of vehicles are prescribed nationally. In summary, Class A only restricts buses, coaches and taxis/private hire, and requires Euro 6 except for Petrol taxis/private hire (Euro 4 minimum). Class B then adds HGVs, Euro 6 and Class C adds light goods vehicles and mini buses at Euro 6 except for petrol (Euro 4). Class D adds cars at Euro 6 for diesel and Euro 4 for petrol.

Defra have stated that the decision of the grant funding awards will be made in February 2017.

## **Meeting with Defra Minister**

Bristol MP Thangam Debbonaire secured a meeting on 24th Jan 2017 with Dr. Therese Coffey, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Environment and Rural Life Opportunities to discuss air pollution and Bristol.

The meeting was attended by Thangham Debbonaire MP, Karyn Smith MP, Charlotte Leslie MP, Kathy Derrick, Sustainability Manager Bristol City Council. The Minister Therese Coffey was accompanied by Defra officials.

Bristol was able to demonstrate:

- a high level of cross-party support for action to improve air quality

- good knowledge of the air quality problem and viability of potential actions.
- our role in helping to co-ordinate the view of Core Cities'

We stressed the value which the Air Quality Grants would provide for Bristol to make progress with our air quality action plan. We also stressed that government investment was needed to help local authorities develop the right transport infrastructure and measures to enable significant improvements alongside measures such as Clean Air Zones.

**Next Steps:**

Await the results of the Air Quality Grant applications.

Dialogue with Defra will continue.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**Background Papers:**

**Appendices**