

Question: PQ19.01

Cabinet – 13 July 2021

Re: Agenda item 19 - Quarterly Performance Progress Report 2020/21.

Question submitted by: Suzanne Audrey

Background

The Quarterly Performance Progress Report indicates that the target to 'Reduce the proportion of deaths attributed to particulate air pollution' is well below target; and the target to 'Increase the % of monitoring sites that meet the annual air quality target for nitrogen dioxide' has not been met and seems to be heading in the wrong direction. Nevertheless, implementation of Bristol's Clean Air Zone has been delayed again, with a new date of 'summer 2022'. (Summer is officially between 21 June and 22 September, and so this is a further delay of between 8 and 11 months).

The latest delay was announced in a celebratory press release. We were told that the overall compliance date would not be affected, and reminded of the measures to reduce the impact of any charges on low income groups. There was no mention of the ongoing health implications of poor air quality, which also disproportionately affect people from low income groups.

No specific reason was given for the latest delay.

Please note I am aware of the arguments about why the zone is necessary, concerns about the costs for some businesses and members of low income groups, and the mitigation measures that have been agreed. There is no need to reiterate those points. My specific question is about the reason(s) why implementation of the zone has been further delayed. Is it, for example, to do with signing off the plans with the government; getting local transport regulations and cameras in place; the hope that other measures for public transport/walking/cycling may reduce air pollution and make implementation unnecessary?

Question

Given the public health implications of poor air quality, please can you explain the specific reason(s) why implementation of Bristol's Clean Air Zone has been further delayed?

Reply:

We have always said that the zone would be implemented by October 2021 at the earliest. Although that date will change, we're still on track for compliance in 2023, five years ahead of the compliance date had we rushed through the early modelling of the scheme.

People are already upgrading to cleaner vehicles across the city region, the introduction of the zone and the financial support to help people upgrade their vehicle or switch to cleaner ways of travelling speeds this process up.

The change in go live date is not due to one particular reason. It is due to a combination of complex challenges aligning systems between government and the council as we await the final confirmation of the selected scheme.