

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board Referral to Cabinet

At their meeting on 18th November 21, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board received an update on plans for the implementation of a Clean Air Zone for Bristol. Members were broadly supportive of the scheme, however, requested that the Cabinet take the following points into consideration.

- Members were concerned about the potential for displacement of air quality issues into the areas immediately adjacent to the Clean Air Zone. Whilst assurances had been provided that the affected parts of the city would be kept under close review, Members asked that this work be prioritised and that updates be provided to the Board in due course.
- The approach to enforcement was of interest to the Board and Members were keen to ensure that the arrangements worked well, and issues were swiftly resolved.
- It was positive to hear that several exemptions were planned as part of the Clean Air Zone, particularly in relation to patients and visitors to the hospitals. However, as some of these were temporary (due to expire in December 2022) Members agreed that additional consideration should be given to the impact of the scheme on residents. This was particularly the case for those on low incomes with work/caring/family commitments requiring them to frequently enter the CAZ (or move between the north and south of the city).
- Some details had been provided in relation to the funding arrangements for the CAZ, but Members requested additional information setting out how much was available and from which sources. Final details of the support package for residents should also be available as soon as possible to help those considering vehicle replacements to make informed choices.
- The positive net health benefits of the CAZ were important and should be communicated to residents more effectively.
- Members heard that several improvements were planned in relation to sustainable transport to complement the implementation of the Clean Air Zone, which were welcomed.
- Full details in relation to changes to road lay outs e.g., Cumberland Road and Park Street were requested as soon as possible.
- Some of the finer details of the scheme were not yet available and Members requested that information on those areas be provided at the earliest opportunity.
- Members were interested in the process for developing mitigations arising from the CAZ and requested that they be involved in shaping future amendments.

Appendix A – Draft Extract Minute from the OSMB meeting on 18th November 21 - Agenda Item 7 – Clean Air Zone

7. Clean Air Zone (CAZ)

Members received a brief introduction from officers setting out the current position in relation to the Clean Air Zone for Bristol, following which they asked for additional details in a number of areas. The discussion was as follows;

- The implementation of the CAZ would lead to improvements in air quality overall, but additional specific measures, such as bus gates at Cumberland Road and on Park Street, were needed to ensure the requirements around compliance were met.
- The 'background levels' of air pollution would improve across the whole city following the implementation of the CAZ. However, in a few areas, the pollution levels may slightly worsen (although not exceed the legal limit), and the affected places would be kept under close review.
- £42m of investment would be made to support the implementation of the CAZ e.g., to fund vehicle upgrades, make adjustments to roads, and implement new bus ticketing arrangements. It was agreed that full details of the breakdown of funding, including any monies ring fenced for local residents, would be provided following the meeting.
- The current estimate for income in relation to the CAZ (from charges) was £18m over the first three years, which would reduce over time.
- The Government were providing financial support to the Council for schemes directly related to the implementation of the CAZ. Should the government's position change and more funding be provided then the Council could look at additional measures. However, a number of complimentary projects to improve sustainable travel in the city using other funding sources were also being implemented.
- The West of England Combined Authority had submitted their Bus Service Improvement Plan at the end of October 21 from which they were hoping to secure additional funding for upgrades across the region.
- A scheme to assist (primarily) residents earning less than £27,000 per annum would be in place to help with the purchase of replacement vehicles. Around £2,000 would be available as a grant, and £5,000 via a no interest loan. Residents would need to demonstrate that they were travelling into the zone to qualify.
- It was estimated that around 70% of vehicles would be compliant with the CAZ requirements at the time of implementation. Of the remaining 30%, some people would look to replace their vehicles (potentially using the grants/loans available) and others would change their behaviour.
- A one-year exemption for residents from the CAZ requirements had been agreed with the Joint Air Quality Unit (JAQU), so charges wouldn't be made until 2023.
- JAQU had a list of other authorised exemptions from the scheme e.g., blue badge holders and blue light vehicles. Several exemptions had also been agreed with all the hospitals in the CAZ to ensure patients and visitors were not charged, which would be managed by each facility. Most other exemptions were local arrangements and therefore likely to be temporary (until December 2022).
- The situation regarding hybrid vehicles had been considered and full details could be provided to Members following the meeting.

- *When motorway closures were in place, the CAZ restrictions would be lifted. Hauliers would hopefully plan alternative routes where necessary.*
- *Signage would be in place at appropriate places to prevent issues, for example turning HGVs.*
- *Consideration was being given to ways to improve links between north and south Bristol, and additional funding was being sought for a support package.*
- *Bridge Valley Road was a wide gorge and therefore any additional pollution from non-compliant vehicles using the route would disperse quickly.*
- *Enforcement would be managed using Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras and be overseen by the Council's traffic teams.*
- *The suggestion to involve residents in shaping amendments and mitigations to the scheme, potentially using the generated income, was noted. It was agreed that a further discussion could take place at the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board once the scheme was operational and evidence on potential impacts had been gathered.*
- *Whilst mitigations could be considered, it was important to note that JAQU had instructed the Council to proceed with the scheme as set out.*
- *The final Full Business Case for the Clean Air Zone would be published alongside the papers for the Cabinet meeting on 14th December 21.*

Officers were thanked for their comprehensive response to queries from Members.

The Board agreed that a statement setting out their comments would be provided to the Cabinet meeting on 14th December 21.

RESOLVED; that a statement of comments from the Board in relation to the Clean Air Zone be referred for consideration by the Cabinet at the meeting on 14th December 21.