

Statement to Cabinet from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – Clean Air Zone and the Forward Plan.

At its meeting on 18th January 2024, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) considered the following reports that would be taken to Cabinet on 23rd January 24:

Item 12 - Clean Air Zone (CAZ) Evaluation Report

Item 13 - Application of Bristol Clean Air Zone Net Proceeds

During consideration of these reports, Members made several comments that they would like to refer to Cabinet for consideration at their 23rd January 24 meeting. Details as follows:

- Members welcomed the improvement to Air Quality in the city that had been achieved through the implementation of the Clean Air Zone (CAZ) and expressed thanks to both Councillor Don Alexander, Cabinet Member for Transport and officers for their work on the scheme.
- The absence of detailed financial information in the report was a significant concern. The report referred to a sum of £81m income but it would be helpful to know how this figure had been calculated and the ways in which it would be utilised (including the £16m that had been spent to date). This information should be provided in advance of the Council's budget setting process.
- There was concern that the Council could become reliant on the income from the CAZ, yet the scheme was only anticipated to run in the short to medium term.
- It was acknowledged that there had been some issues in relation to the issue of fines for entering the CAZ due to a combination of administrative errors, faulty equipment and the period of leniency that had been applied to enforcement. Members would like some assurance that these challenges had now been rectified.
- The CAZ had led to traffic displacement in some residential areas causing reduced air quality and congestion. Steps should be taken to monitor and rectify this where possible. It was noted that the Area Committees would have a role in identifying and escalating issues to the Council.
- It was vital that work continues to improve public transport in the city, which was an important component to the ongoing improvement of air quality. It was noted that some funding had been secured in order to achieve this.
- The CAZ had been introduced to meet the air quality standards set by the Government e.g., to remove pollution from nitrogen dioxide, but other potentially harmful particulates would remain. It was hoped that in the future air quality requirements would be brought into line with the significantly higher standards set out by the World Health Organisation.
- The reports arrived late, which meant that Members of OSMB had insufficient time to fully consider the information in advance of their meeting. It was strongly requested that in future all reports comply with the statutory deadlines.

Members went on to consider the Forward Plan, which sets out the Key Decisions that would be made at future Cabinet meetings. As has been raised previously, OSMB Members would like to see more detail on the Forward Plan; most items are only added with the statutory notice period of 28 days, but they can be included in advance of this. Production of a Forward Plan that provides more notice of key decisions would greatly assist Councillors, Scrutiny, and the public to understand and prepare for items that will be coming forwards. Members hope this situation will be rectified in future editions.