

MINUTES OF MEETING OF WHITTLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15 OCTOBER 2018

PRESENT:

Members of the Committee:

Councillors Sandison (Chair), Bearne, Brader, Douglas, Gillias, Leigh Hunt and Ms Watson-Merret

Officers:

David Burrows (Regulatory Services Manager), Henry Biddington (Principal Environmental Health Officer) and Linn Ashmore (Democratic Services Officer)

10. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2018 were approved and signed by the Chair.

11. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillors Mrs O'Rourke and Roberts.

12. AIR QUALITY MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT – ANNUAL UPDATE

The committee received a report (Part 1 – agenda item 4) concerning an annual update on air quality monitoring. The Principal Environmental Health Officer attended the meeting to present the report and the Regulatory Services Manager was also present to answer questions.

The 2018 Annual Status Report (ASR) had been submitted to Defra for review and approval and the Council would launch a public consultation on the ASR and the Air Quality Annual Status Report. The key findings were:

- Improvements had been seen in some monitoring areas but there were still some exceedances in Dunchurch and at the gyratory.
- The levels at Dunchurch had reduced and were the lowest recorded since 2014.
- There had been exceedances recorded at Lesley Souter House (Whitehall Road). This could be an anomaly and the situation would continue to be monitored.
- The site at Shilton was no longer showing exceedances and the monitoring equipment had been removed.

During discussion the following points were made:

Reasons for the decreases could be due to improvements in vehicle technology, the increase in cleaner diesel engines and also the works carried out on the gyratory.

There was a wider public awareness and schemes to support sustainable transport, including car sharing would continue to be supported.

Although Dunchurch had seen reduced levels there were still exceedances against the air objectives and monitoring would continue. Some form of clear evidence, such as a graph or chart would be useful to share with local residents.

The results obtained from diffusion tubes could fluctuate and it was important to follow a pattern. Where results were compared with air quality objectives a correction factor was required. However, there was also evidence to suggest that the less polluting vehicle engines were responsible for improvements. The Euro 6 vehicle emission standard was 5-10 times less polluting than Euro 4.

The monitoring tubes were situated at the level of housing which was classified as the exposure point. This was around 2 meters from ground level which would also prevent people wandering into them.

As a result of the inspection of the draft Local Plan, the planning team had begun work on Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's) for matters of air quality to be considered as part of the planning process, focusing on mitigating impacts from development.

Rugby Borough Council were members of the Air Quality Alliance, a group made up of regional health, environmental and transport and highways professionals. The alliance meets on a quarterly basis.

Members asked about figures for local involvement in the car sharing scheme. This information was not available, but the situation could be monitored. This could form part of the mitigation action plan to encourage a modal shift. There were apps available for walking and cycling to support behavioural change.

WCC were responsible for installing crossings. These stop traffic flow and cause excess vehicle fumes. There was no receptor located near the crossing at the end of Whitehall Road although the crossing was close to a school and bus stops.

Road safety was key, and the crossings were installed to protect people when crossing the road and were situated at points where people prefer to cross. It was acknowledged there were significant levels of traffic at the junction of Whitehall Road and the roundabout, but the aim was towards a modal shift to discourage people from driving into the town centre and encourage pedestrians and cyclists.

Removing the crossings would generate more traffic and this would increase the negative effect on air quality.

The Committee was keen that members had a role in overview of the new SPD's through the Planning Services Working Party.

At its last meeting the Committee had raised concerns at the lack of progress or timescale on the Local Transport Plan. An update on progress had been received from WCC that it was to begin scoping the transport strategy for Rugby and a draft would be shared with officers towards the end of September/October.

The committee identified some suggested locations for air quality monitoring. These included:

- Butlers Leap – Houlton Way
- Newbold Road – site of new residential development
- Kingsway
- Coton Park
- Barby Road/Lawrence Sheriff Street
- Cock Robin Island

Monitoring on Ashlawn Road was already carried out in relation to the development at Houlton.

The ASR points towards key indicators based on increases in levels of housing and traffic movement. Monitoring sites were identified by the likelihood of exposure and were subject to continuous review.

The north side of the rail tunnel on Murray Road was an area of concern. Improvements to the roads would be very costly and would result in greater levels of traffic.

Members commented that the bus stops at the end of Murray Road were an issue and re-routing the bus would help.

It was important to continue to engage with WCC Highways, particularly in relation to the Local Transport Plan.

WCC work closely with bus companies, though it was acknowledged Stagecoach was a commercial operation and subject to its own legislation so it could be difficult to drive change.

Members raised concerns that Stagecoach had a local monopoly and was reducing the number of routes and using bigger vehicles. Smaller vehicles would allow greater flexibility and would be quicker and less damaging to air quality.

Some cities were banning vehicles from their centres. A suggestion was made that clean air zones could be considered for the town centre.

Technology was constantly evolving. Putting pressure on Government and the EU to invest in infrastructure and technology could result in environmentally friendly vehicles such as electric and hydrogen being more widely available.

RESOLVED THAT –

- (1) member involvement in the overview of new SPD's relating to air quality through the Planning Services Working Party be supported; and
- (2) engagement with WCC Highways in relation to the Local Transport Plan should continue.

13. REVIEW OF ACCESS FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

The committee received a report (Part 1 – agenda item 5) concerning the draft one-page strategy for the review.

The Chair had met with the Parks and Grounds Manager and the Property Services Manager to scope the review.

Members raised the issues of car parks and access into taxis. The Regulatory Services Manager informed the Committee that a lot of work had been carried out by the licensing service and the Council was proud of its taxi wheelchair accessibility policy. There were around 70 wheelchair accessible taxis and one private hire vehicle.

The review would consider access to parks and other facilities. Other areas to be explored included the opportunity to improve the information made available on car parks and to consider the wider aspects of a change of circumstances and future needs of council tenants including suitable property adaptations and location.

The Committee reviewed the draft one-page strategy and made the following additions to the areas relevant to the discussions:

- Car parks
- Licensing of taxis
- The change of circumstances and future needs of council tenants

RESOLVED THAT – the one-page strategy be approved subject to the changes minuted above.

14. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19

The committee received a report (Part 1 – agenda item 6) concerning the progress of scrutiny reviews and the overview and scrutiny forward work programme for 2018/19.

Progress on Scrutiny Reviews

The Committee were keen to commence work of the review of parking at the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Leisure Centre and agreed that the one-page strategy should be scoped for approval at the next meeting.

Future Work Programme

The Chair informed the Committee that the topic of Commercialisation, Collaboration and Partnerships, due to be considered by a joint committee, had

been put on hold. The review of the Special Expenses Scheme, scheduled into the work programme for Brooke, was a large piece of work that would benefit from being prioritised.

Council-Led Lottery Update

The Committee noted the update on the Council's Community Lottery. It was agreed that the role of scrutiny would be of more value in reviewing progress and outcomes at a future date.

Members raised concerns regarding gambling and were informed that the scheme was designed to attract people interested in supporting good causes and the rewards were modest.

RESOLVED THAT –

- (1) progress in the task group reviews be noted;
- (2) consideration of the one-page strategy for the review of parking at the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Leisure Centre be added to the work programme for the meeting on 10 December 2018;
- (3) a review of the progress and outcomes of the Council's Community Lottery be included in the future work programme for next year.

CHAIR