

REPORT OF THE LEAD CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

The Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment met on 18 June 2018.

Also present: Councillor Godfrey Daniel

1. Notice of Motion: Air Quality and Reducing pollution from diesel vehicles

1.1 The following Notice of Motion has been submitted by Councillor Grover:

“Air pollution from fine particles alone results in 294 premature deaths in East Sussex and causes many more to suffer ill health [1]. Children and people with respiratory problems such as asthma are particularly vulnerable. Road traffic is the biggest problem and diesels are the dirtiest vehicles. The public have been shockingly misled by the car industry cheating on emissions standards.

Therefore, East Sussex County Council calls upon the UK Government to:

1. Develop and deliver a strategy and action plan to phase out the use of diesel by 2025, including measures to help the owners of these vehicles switch to clean vehicles and alternatives to driving
2. Ensure that air pollution standards for new diesel vehicles are adhered to.
3. Ensure local authorities have the powers and resources necessary to reduce pollution from diesel vehicles, including the power to ban diesel vehicles and new powers to control emissions from buses

As there is no known safe limit for some pollutants, The Council will - working with others as necessary, including the Health & Wellbeing Board and the public, particularly those most affected by air pollution - continue to take action to further reduce pollution levels to at least recommended World Health Organisation levels, particularly in locations where there is a concentration of vulnerable people (e.g. around schools).”

1.2 In line with County Council practice, the matter was referred by the Chairman to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment for consideration to provide information and inform debate on the Motion.

1.3 The Notice of Motion identifies three elements, which outline the need for the Government to take forward and address the issues associated with air pollution

[1] Public Health England, 2014, Estimating local mortality burdens associated with particulate air pollution, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/estimating-local-mortality-burdens-associated-with-particulate-air-pollution>

from vehicle emissions, specifically particulate matter, and the impact on health. The evidence outlining the actions that are currently being taken by the Government, the County Council and the District and Borough Councils to reduce air pollution from vehicle emissions are discussed in more detail below.

1.4 Current evidence suggests that people living in urban areas near congested roads are often exposed to poor air quality. This can particularly impact on people who have pre-existing cardiovascular and respiratory conditions, including reducing life expectancy.

1.5 The action to manage and improve air quality is largely underpinned by European Union (EU) legislation. The 2008 ambient air quality directive (2008/50/EC) sets legally binding limits for concentrations in outdoor air of major air pollutants that impact public health such as particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). This directive replaced all the previous EU air quality legislation, and was made law in England through the Air Quality Standards Regulations in 2010. The commitment to meet these legally binding targets will not be affected by the UK's departure from the EU.

1.6 In addition, the UK is a signatory to four multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), which are used to manage and monitor worldwide air pollution.

A) Develop and deliver a strategy and action plan to phase out the use of diesel by 2025

1.7 There are a number of government policy documents, which include actions which will be taken to phase out the sale of diesel vehicles by 2040, reflecting that an appropriate period of time is required for the significant cultural, industry and infrastructure changes needed to achieve this. These include:-

UK Air Quality Plan 2017

1.8 The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), and the Department for Transport (DfT) published the UK Air Quality Plan for nitrogen dioxide NO₂ in 2017. The plan sets out how the UK will look to reduce roadside nitrogen dioxide concentration and how the government plans to meet the legal requirements, as set out in the Air Quality Standard Regulations 2010 (England, Scotland, Northern Ireland & Wales).

Clean Growth Strategy 2017

1.9 The Government's Clean Growth Strategy outlines policies and actions associated with the opportunities to grow a sustainable economy. It further reinforces the Government target for almost every car and van needing to be zero emission by 2050, and an end to the sale of all new conventional petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2040.

A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment 2018

1.10 The Government's strategy 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment', identifies the need to increase resource efficiency and reduce pollution

and waste. This also reinforces the governments proposed ban on the sale of new diesel or petrol vehicles by 2040, and the need to provide alternative modes of travel.

Draft Clean Air Strategy – published May 2018

1.11 The Government launched its consultation on a draft Clean Air Strategy in May 2018, which outlines the Government's ambitions relating to reducing air pollution with a focus on the most major pollutants.

East Sussex Local Transport Plan 2011 - 2026

1.12 From a local perspective, the phasing out of diesel vehicles will support the objectives of the ESCC Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2026, and the accompanying Implementation Plan 2016 – 2021. Through the Local Transport Plan Capital Programme we will continue to deliver a range of local transport infrastructure improvements that provide local people with a wide range of sustainable travel choices, along with developing an approach to delivering Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure.

1.13 Additional details on these policies are outlined in Appendix 1 which has been circulated separately.

1.14 As outlined above the Government is committed to the end to the sale of diesel vehicles by 2040, and there are numerous measures in place to achieve this at both a national and local level. The ability to do this by 2025 would be challenging, with significant changes required culturally and within the car industry. In addition to there being major financial costs in delivering the infrastructure for an expected increase in the number of electric/hybrid vehicles, and incentivising the purchase of these vehicles. Therefore, the Government's time horizon of 2040 is more realistic.

B) Ensure that air pollution standards for new diesel vehicles are adhered to.

1.15 The pollution standards for new vehicles are regulated by the European Union and are referred to as 'emission standards'. The aim of Euro emissions standards is to reduce the levels of harmful exhaust emissions, primarily, Nitrogen oxides (NOx), Carbon monoxide (CO), Hydrocarbons (HC) and Particulate matter (PM).

1.16 These have been imposed on the manufacturing industry developing new vehicles since 1992, with the first standard referred to as Euro 1, and the current standard referred to as Euro 6.

1.17 The standards are used by government and local authorities to influence vehicle tax, introduce charging regimes to enter cities and towns or fines on older vehicles, especially diesel vehicles. Therefore, there is an approach in place by Government to ensure that air pollution standards for new diesel vehicles are adhered to.

C) Ensure local authorities have the powers and resources necessary to reduce pollution from diesel vehicles, including the power to ban diesel vehicles and new powers to control emissions from buses

1.18 The monitoring of air pollution at a local level is determined by the Environment Act 1995, which requires local authorities to monitor air pollution against national targets. Where areas exceed the national pollutant levels, local authorities must declare these areas as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs), and develop a 'Local Air Quality Action Plan', with identified measures over a prescribed timescale.

1.19 In East Sussex there are two AQMA's, one in Lewes and one in Newhaven. The County Council has worked proactively with Lewes and Eastbourne Councils to identify and deliver transport infrastructure and initiatives to reduce air pollution in the two AQMAs in the county.

1.20 The County Council is also a key partner of Sussex Air, which is collaboration between local authorities across Sussex to manage air pollution. A key service which Sussex Air promotes is Sussex Air Alert, which sends free messages to vulnerable people informing them about air pollution levels in their areas.

1.21 There are already existing powers in place enabling local authorities to have the powers to ban diesel vehicles or to control bus emissions. In 2017 DEFRA and the DfT published a joint framework on how specified regions within the Country, are required to develop 'Clean Air Zones'. (Further detail is outlined in Appendix 1.)

1.22 In September 2017, the County Council and Wealden District Council submitted an expression of interest for £32m from the Housing Infrastructure Fund to support housing delivery in the Wealden area. Part of the funding being sought was for monies to mitigate the impacts of nitrogen deposition on Ashdown Forest, which could include the introduction on an Emission Zone or Clean Air Zone. In March 2018, it was confirmed that the Expression of Interest had been successful, and that a full bid and business case would need to be developed over the next 9 months for submission, at the latest, by March 2019.

1.23 There are currently no areas in East Sussex which are reported as exceeding the statutory PM₁₀ thresholds, and no area has been reported as exceeding these levels since 2006. Details of the PM levels measured and modelled in East Sussex can be found in the most recent reports on local air quality, by District and Borough, available on the Sussex Air website.

1.24 Although levels of PM in East Sussex currently meet statutory thresholds, the County Council recognises that there are health effects at levels of air pollution below EU and UK thresholds. The County Council is taking a number of steps to reduce air pollution and the exposure of those people living and working in East Sussex who are most at risk from the effects of poor air quality. (The details of the statutory air quality thresholds for particulate matter that the UK must comply with, and the measures that the County Council are taking are outlined in Appendix 1.)

1.25 The Government is driving a strategy for improving air quality, alongside sustainable growth through a number of different strategies and approaches as set

out in paragraphs 1.3 to 1.24 above. Whilst the majority of this is underpinned by European legislation, there is a commitment that this will remain following the UK's departure from the EU.

1.26 The principles of the three elements of the Notice of Motion are supported with the exception of the ban on diesel vehicles by 2025, which would be challenging to deliver due to the cultural, industry and infrastructure issues described in paragraph 1.14 above. Therefore the Government's time horizon for banning the sale of diesel vehicles by 2040 is more realistic. The County Council is actively contributing to these three elements by exploring the opportunities to develop measures which support cleaner, cheaper and easier travel, through the use of smart technology, the delivery of the improved travel choices which encourage public transport, walking and cycling and the development of a framework for the delivery of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

1.27 Therefore it is recommended that the County Council commits to continuing to embrace Government policy to tackle local air pollution to support healthier communities as the Government already has existing strategies in place to tackle the three elements set out in the Notice of Motion.

1.28 The Lead Cabinet Member recommends that the County Council –

☆ (1) notes the Government's actions to:

1. Develop and deliver a strategy and action plan to phase out the use of diesel by 2040, including measures to help the owners of these vehicles switch to clean vehicles and alternatives to driving,
2. Ensure that air pollution standards for new diesel vehicles are adhered to,
3. Ensure local authorities have the powers and resources necessary to reduce pollution from diesel vehicles, including the power to ban diesel vehicles and new powers to control emissions from buses; and

(2) As there is no known safe limit for some pollutants, the Council will - working with others as necessary, including the Health & Wellbeing Board and the public, particularly those most affected by air pollution - continue to take action to further reduce pollution levels to at least recommended World Health Organisation levels, particularly in locations where there is a concentration of vulnerable people (e.g. around schools).

18 June 2018

NICK BENNETT

Lead Cabinet Member for
Transport and Environment