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GOHEBIAETH YN DILYN CYFARFOD Y PWYLLGOR

Pwyllgor PWYLLGOR CRAFFU AMGYLCHEDDOL

Dyddiad ac amser y cyfarfod DYDD MERCHER, 12 MEHEFIN 2019, 4.30 PM

Gweler isod gohebiaeth anfon gan Gadeirydd y Pwyllgor ar ôl y cyfarfod , ynghyd ag unrhyw ymatebion a gafwyd

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Am unrhyw fanylion pellach, cysylltwch â scrutinyviewpoints@caerdydd.gov.uk

9 **Gohebiaeth yn dilyn y cyfarfod pwyllgor** *(Tudalennau 3 - 10)*

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol

Ref: RDB/RP/SE.MM.CW/12.06.2019

13 June 2019

Councillors Elsmore, Michael & Wild,
Cabinet Members – Cardiff Council,
County Hall,
Atlantic Wharf,
Cardiff CF10 4UW.

Dear Councillors Elsmore, Michael & Wild,

Environmental Scrutiny Committee – 12 June 2019

On behalf of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee I would like to thank you and the supporting officers for attending the meeting that took place on Wednesday 12 June 2019. As you are aware the meeting received an item titled 'Pre Decision Scrutiny: Air Quality Feasibility Study Final Plan – Full Business Case & City Centre Transport Improvements'. The comments and observations made by Members following this item are set out in this letter.

Pre Decision Scrutiny: Air Quality Feasibility Study Final Plan – Full Business Case & City Centre Transport Improvements'

- **'Improving Cardiff's Air Quality' – Cabinet Response** – At the beginning of the meeting I asked for confirmation of when a Cabinet response would be provided to the Environmental Scrutiny Committee report titled 'Improving Air Quality in Cardiff'. As you will be aware, this was received by Cabinet in September 2018 and to date no response has been provided. It would be appreciated if you could confirm when a response will be provided for this piece of work and to the letter sent to Cabinet after the air quality scrutiny item in March 2019.

- **Preferred Option Modelling** – At the start of the meeting there was some confusion around exactly what had been included in the modelling for the preferred option. For example, you explained that the bus station would not be complete by the start of 2021 and, therefore, it had not been

modelled into the overall scheme. This created some confusion since the new bus station was one of the main features on the map setting out the new City Centre Schemes. It would be appreciated if you could confirm which of the following developments have been built into the modelling, and which assumptions have been used in terms of number of people and journey movements:

- The new bus station;
- The new BBC offices in Central Square;
- The Quayside Quarter;
- The new Government Hub at Central Square.

- **Electric vehicles accessing to bus gates** – Some cities in the United Kingdom allow electric and other low emission vehicles to access bus gates. They feel that this encourages the public to switch to lower emission vehicles, which in turn supports wider air quality improvements. The current proposal in the city centre is to allow buses and taxis to access the bus gates, and to restrict privately owned vehicles. I believe that if we want to encourage Cardiff residents to switch to lower emission vehicles then we need to provide them with as many reasons as possible to make the shift, therefore, I would ask that you consider the option of providing bus gate access to private low emission vehicles.

- **Castle Street & Westgate Street** – Members raised some concerns about how the air quality improvements would be achieved in Castle Street and Westgate Street, given that the existing traffic would still have to pass through a narrower area. They suggested that a large volume of traffic would still try to access what is already a restricted area, which in turn would slow vehicles down and increase pollution. They were also concerned that some traffic would just be displaced to other parts of the city, resulting in the air quality problem just being moved. To respond to this I would be grateful if you could answer the following:

- If the preferred option (CASAP) reduces traffic into the city centre by 30%, given that the model only assumes a 3.5% modal shift where does the balance of the traffic go.
- If a clear air zone (CAZ) had been introduced, by how much would traffic entering the city centre have been reduced? Also, please confirm where the traffic displaced by the CAZ would go.

- **Proposed Consultation** – At the meeting Members were informed that the planned consultation for the City Centre Schemes would take place in June and July 2019. I was very concerned by the timing of this as consultation response rates are historically very low at this time of year. Given that this is such a significant proposal that will impact on thousands of people it is essential to get the consultation exercise right. I understand that the timing is being driven by the very short window to deliver the City Centre Schemes, therefore, it is important that the Council does everything that it can to engage with the widest possible audience. To help provide assurance that a through consultation exercise will take place, please provide the Committee with a detailed consultation plan.

- **Taxi Mitigation Schemes** – At the meeting Members were told that a proposed £1.86m had been allocated in the preferred option to support taxi mitigation schemes. An officer explained that the proposal would be available to taxi drivers who were registered in Cardiff and each application would be limited to a maximum contribution of £3,000 per driver. Members were also told that the £3,000 would be allocated to cover running costs and not a front loaded capital contribution to support the initial purchase of a low emission vehicle. The Committee was concerned by this as they believe that the main barrier to purchasing a low emission vehicle for most drivers is the initial cost of purchase and not the annual running cost. With this in mind, I would ask you to review this approach and consider the option of providing the grant as a front loaded cost to assist with the actual purchase. As a Committee we believe that a front loaded option would bring more low emission taxis onto the streets of Cardiff in the shortest time possible.

- **Queen Street Cycling Options** – While Members are very supportive of the introduction of more and better quality cycling lanes in Cardiff, they are not convinced by the 'City Centre Loop' that takes cyclists around the city centre via Boulevard De Nantes and Dumfries Place. The Committee felt that many cyclists who are looking to cross the city centre would ignore the new loop and simply cycle across Queen Street instead. With this in mind Members ask:

    - That the Council once again reviews the option of allowing cycling on Queen Street;
    - That you provide details of the consultation that has been carried out with cycling groups in developing this section of cycling infrastructure;
    - That you provide details of the modelling used to assess the number of cyclists using this scheme;
    - If the Council has been able to draw any information or data from the introduction of the nextbike scheme to help with the development of these proposals.

- **Clean Air Zone (CAZ) v Non Charging Zone (CASAP)** - During the way forward a Member asked if the comparison between the CASAP and CAZ was a fair one. He expanded this by asking why the CAZ had been modelled at all, given that the CASAP achieves compliance and that the government guidance states that '*a CAZ should only be implemented if non-charging alternatives don't achieve compliance*'. It would be appreciated if you could explain to the Committee:

    - If you feel the comparison between the CAZ and CASAP is a fair one, and if so why you believe that this is the case;
    - Why the CAZ was modelled at all, given that the CASAP achieved compliance.

- **Clean Air Zone** – A Member asked how the size of the Clean Air Zone (CAZ) was agreed. In response he was told that it was created to respond to the particular air quality challenge in the city, and that once compliance

was achieved in this area then the Council would roll out further initiatives to improve air quality across the rest of the city. Suggested mitigations included the creation of non-idling zones; living walls and other green infrastructure; EV infrastructure and Council fleet measures; air quality planning guidance and schools active travel. While these suggestions are all very positive, the Committee ask that when reviewing future options the Council does not automatically discount the creation of localised clean air or low emission zones, since these could help create further air quality improvements – particularly when delivered alongside the wide range of other mitigating measures.

- **Taxis Registered in other local authority areas** – At the meeting Members commented on the large number of taxis that are registered by neighbouring local authority areas and are freely operating in Cardiff. For example, there are currently a large number of taxis that are licensed in Newport operating in Cardiff. Newport, as an example, has a lower emissions standard than that being proposed for Cardiff, as a result the Committee was concerned that this might impact on achieving air quality compliance. Members understand that this is largely out of the control of the Council, and that a Welsh Government review of taxi services is ongoing – the hope is that this piece of work will standardise taxi licensing across Wales. With this in mind the Committee asks that you urge the Welsh Government to complete this piece of work so that it does not undermine the challenge of achieving air quality compliance in Cardiff.

- **EV Infrastructure** - During the meeting a Member asked for details of the proposals for the provision of public EV charging infrastructure in the city. Such charging infrastructure will encourage drivers to switch to lower emission vehicles, and without such provision it will be difficult for the change to happen. Please provide the Committee with details of the latest Council proposals for EV charging infrastructure.

- **SMART Corridors** – Members felt that the idea of introducing new ‘SMART Corridors’ was a positive step forward. Having intelligent traffic

lights that communicate seems to be a great idea, however, they believe that a regional approach is needed since Cardiff attracts large numbers of commuters into the city from neighbouring local authority areas on a daily basis and, therefore, congestion starts outside of the city. I would be grateful if you could confirm:

- If the Council is talking to neighbouring local authorities about the development of SMART Corridors, and if so what the feedback has been;
- A summary of how the corridors would actually work, where the new technology would be placed and the improvements that you feel will be delivered.
- How the scheme might work on the A470, given the volume of traffic that comes into the city along this road from other local authority areas.

- **Mandatory Retrofitting of Buses** - The preferred option assumes an 80% uptake of remaining non-Euro 6 buses to Euro 6. Some Members were of the view that mandatory retrofitting of buses should be set at 100%, assuming that the Council was agreeing to cover the cost (based on the £2.25million contribution). This would send out a clear message and would be consistent with the proposed changes to taxi licensing standards that would, over time, ensure that 100% of taxis achieve the Euro 6 standard.

I would be grateful if you would consider the above comments and provide a response to the content of this letter.

Regards,

Councillor Ramesh Patel

Chairperson Environmental Scrutiny Committee

Cc:

- Councillor Huw Thomas, Leader – Cardiff Council;
- Paul Orders, Chief Executive – Cardiff Council;
- Andrew Gregory, Director of Planning, Transport & Environment;
- Gary Brown, Operational Manager – Assets, Engineering & Operations;
- Jason Bale, Programme Manager, Clean Air;
- Dr Tom Porter – Public Health Wales / Cardiff & Vale University Health Board;
- Davina Fiore, Director of Governance & Legal Services;
- Members of Cardiff's Environmental Scrutiny Committee.

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol