

Ref: RDB/RP/SE.MM.CW/27.03.2018

28 March 2018

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



Dear Councillors Elsmore, Michael & Wild,

### **Environmental Scrutiny Committee – 27 March 2018**

On behalf of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee I would like to thank you and the officers for attending the special committee meeting that took place on Tuesday 27 March 2018. As you are aware the meeting received an item titled 'Pre Decision Scrutiny: Air Quality Cardiff'. The comments and observations made by Members following this item are set out in this letter.

#### **Pre Decision Scrutiny: Air Quality Cardiff**

- **DEFRA Modelling Data** - During the meeting it was explained that modelling undertaken by DEFRA indicated that Cardiff would be non-compliant beyond 2023 in terms of achieving the EU air quality directive limits, i.e. above the annual average nitrogen dioxide concentration air quality standard of 40 micrograms per cubic metre. The potential breaches were identified along sections of the A48 and A4232; two of the busier routes into and out of the city. A Member asked for confirmation of the values measured for both of these sites, and instead of being provided with actual figures was told that the feasibility study would revisit these values in an effort to establish the current position. The Committee acknowledge the importance of the feasibility study and its role in verifying the DEFRA modelled air quality results, however, they would like confirmation of the DEFRA results for both sites along with details of when the exercise was undertaken, the data sets used to simulate traffic flows and a breakdown of all other assumptions applied to this calculation.

- **Feasibility Study & Procurement Timescales** - Members of the Committee understand the exceptionally tight timescales placed upon the Council for delivering the feasibility study and indeed identifying a plan to achieve air quality compliance in 'the shortest possible time'. Completing the feasibility study by the 30 September is a significant challenge, particularly given that the 'Improving Cardiff's Air Quality' task & finish exercise identified that several comparable cities had taken in excess of two years to complete the same task. Concerns were raised that the short timescale might mean that the exercise is rushed to the potential detriment of achieving the best outcome for Cardiff, and that the formal procurement of an air quality consultant had yet to start. With this in mind I would be grateful if you could provide the Committee with assurance that:

  - The short timescale for delivering the feasibility study will not prevent the Council from achieving the best outcome for Cardiff in terms of achieving air quality compliance 'in the shortest time possible';
  - The time taken to procure a specialist air quality consultant has been built into the six month window for delivering the feasibility study in Cardiff. To support this assurance I would be grateful if you could provide details of the planned procurement timeline.
  
- **Regional Collaboration** - The Committee welcomes the comments of the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning & Transport in relation to working with neighbouring local authorities to identify the best solutions for dealing with Cardiff's air quality challenges, and in achieving the widest possible audience for the consultation exercise supporting 'Cardiff's Transport & Clean Air Green Paper'. Members firmly believe that improving air quality and transport solutions is a regional issue that can only truly be achieved through real regional collaboration.
  
- **Low Emission / Sustainable Fuels** – The Committee welcomes the commitment made by the Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling & Environment in terms of developing the use of low emission / sustainable fuels in Cardiff. It is clear that the use of low emission vehicles and

sustainable fuel sources will be a major contributing factor in improving Cardiff's air quality. Evidence gathered during the 'Improving Cardiff's Air Quality' task & finish exercise suggests that it is inevitable that this is the future direction of travel for the automotive industry. The Committee encourages you to be bold in your approach and consider all of the potential solutions available, for example, electric and hydrogen powered vehicles. The general view of Members is that there is no single option that will achieve compliance on its own, and that a sensible blend of technologies is the best way forward at this point in time.

- **Electricity Supply** – Several of the Members were a little concerned at the comment made by the Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling & Environment about the available supply of electricity in Cardiff being potentially insufficient to meet the future demand created by the growth of electric vehicles. If available, I would be grateful if you could provide details of the current electricity supply available to Cardiff; estimates for the increase in electric vehicles in the city and the projected increase in demand for electricity created by the new electric vehicles.
- **Planning Process & Low Emission Vehicle Refuelling Infrastructure** – Several Members were concerned that the new developments identified in the Local Development Plan would be created without providing the low emission vehicle charging infrastructure required to meet Cardiff's air quality challenges. I would be grateful if you could confirm the level of debate taking place between the developers and Council to ensure that low emission charging infrastructure is being built into the major new developments and the actions that have been agreed.
- **Finances** – The Committee welcomes the positive financial statement made in the letter from the Minister for Environment. It is reassuring to know that the Welsh Government is supporting the Council to address this challenge and that they have agreed to support the funding for the feasibility study and implementation of the scheme to be identified for improving Cardiff's air quality. Members are supportive of the Chief

Executives comments in that it is important that we now enter into a productive dialogue with Welsh Government to help achieve the best outcome for Cardiff.

- **Air Quality Compliance & Competing Demands** – The Committee is supportive of the approach being taken by the Council to ensure that air quality targets are met ‘in the shortest time possible’ in order to shape the urban environment in a way that delivers improved health benefits and supports economic growth. Members felt that delivering these outcomes was vitally important in terms of achieving the best long-term outcome for Cardiff.
- **Cardiff’s Transport & Clean Air Green Paper** – Members welcome ‘Cardiff’s Transport & Clean Air Green Paper’ and the consultation exercise that supports this piece of work. The document is well constructed and identifies a number of important ideas that are essential in transforming Cardiff into a modern sustainable travel city. Unfortunately, the timescales for achieving air quality compliance are in very short and some of the more significant projects (for example, the Metro) will be delivered outside of this period. This means that we have to focus on delivering as many of the short term measures within our immediate control as quickly as possible, for example, continued focus on 20 mph zones and parking restriction measures. At the same time we need to ensure that any major transport infrastructure projects due for completion within this timescale are delivered on time.
- **Clean Air Zones – A Temporary Measure** – A Member suggested during the way forward that if Cardiff is mandated to implement a Clean Air Zone then it should explore the option of making it a temporary measure that is only applied until air quality compliance is achieved, i.e. it is possible to reverse the position once the objective is achieved. I would be grateful if this suggestion could be considered and modelled when undertaking the feasibility study and identifying the final plan.

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

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ramesh Patel', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Ramesh Patel  
Chairperson Environmental Scrutiny Committee

Cc:

- Councillor Huw Thomas, Leader – Cardiff Council;
- Paul Orders, Chief Executive – Cardiff Council;
- Andrew Gregory, Director of City Operations
- Davina Fiore, Director of Governance & Legal Services
- Members of Cardiff’s Environmental Scrutiny Committee