

Ref: RDB/RP/SE.MM.CW/19.03.2019

21 March 2019

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



Dear Councillors Elsmore, Michael & Wild,

Environmental Scrutiny Committee – 19 March 2019

On behalf of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee I would like to thank you and the officers for attending the meeting that took place on Tuesday 19 March 2019. As you are aware the meeting received an item titled 'Air Quality – Progress Update'. The comments and observations made by Members following this item are set out in this letter.

Air Quality – Progress Update

- The Committee task & finish report titled 'Improving Cardiff's Air Quality' was presented at Cabinet on the 20th September 2018. To date we have not received a Cabinet response. I would be grateful if you could confirm when a formal response to this report will be published.
- Members understand that the purpose of the Cabinet report titled 'Air Quality Feasibility Study Outline Business Case – Welsh Government Direction' was to set out the Outline Business Case for '*the preferred option to demonstrate the steps the Council will undertake to ensure compliance with the legal direction*'. They are also supportive of many of the proposed measures that will be introduced to help achieve compliance in the '*shortest time possible*', for example, the introduction of 36 electric buses is very good news for Cardiff, as is the revised taxi policy and the ongoing commitment to improving cycling infrastructure in the city. All of this is very positive, however, during the way forward the following

concerns and suggestions were made by Members about the approach that the Council is taking:

- **Cardiff Wide Air Quality Improvements** - The Committee felt that the main focus of the report was achieving air quality compliance below the 40 µg/m³ target in the '*shortest time possible*', when instead it should have been about doing everything that we can to improve air quality across all of Cardiff in the '*shortest time possible*'. It is clear that urgency has been directed at achieving air quality improvements in and around the city centre, with a number of measures being removed from further assessment in the Outline Business Case as they were either not deliverable or in the vicinity of the immediate problem. For example, CASAP 1 included a new 50mph speed limit on the A4232 - Members believe that this would be very effective and relatively easy to implement, however, it has been removed because it has little or no impact on the city centre. Likewise, delivery of the much needed key infrastructure projects such as the rapid transport bus routes do not appear to be progressing. These and other public transport infrastructure schemes are essential if we want to persuade the public to leave the car at home and instead drive modal shift. Having cleaner buses is very important, but if bus journeys are not efficient and reliable then what is the incentive to change? In short, the Members feel that the motivation for this piece of work should have been to improve air quality across all of Cardiff to produce health benefits for all residents. It should have been supported by a clear commitment to drive modal shift and a citywide set of actions to help achieve this goal.
- **Particulate Matter** – The Committee believe that the main focus of the report is to reduce nitrogen dioxide emissions. This is clearly very important as nitrogen dioxide has a very negative impact on human health, however, other pollutants such as particulate matter are also a major health concern. Electric taxis and buses will significantly reduce nitrogen dioxide, but the mechanical actions of these vehicles (for example, braking) will still produce large quantities of particulate

matter. Members, therefore, believe that Cardiff's Air Quality Strategy needs to include a greater commitment to reducing particulate matter levels.

- **M4 Relief Road & Modelling Confidence** – During the meeting Members raised concerns about the air quality modelling that had taken place during the development of the Outline Business Case. In particular, they asked if future air quality projections included data for the proposed M4 relief road. An officer explained that it was unlikely that M4 relief road data had been included since an actual route has yet to be agreed. Members were concerned by this, as the Council has just signed a document supporting the development of the M4 relief road. There are concerns that the new M4 relief road will increase traffic levels accessing the city, which in turn will increase traffic related pollution. I would be grateful if you could confirm if M4 relief road data has been used when modelling the Outline Business Case. If such modelling hasn't happened then please provide the Committee with a summary of the likely impact of the proposed M4 relief road on air quality in the city.

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 Planning, Transport & Environment;
- Gary Brown, Operational Manager – Assets, Engineering & Operations;
- Jason Bale, Programme Manager, Clean Air;
- Davina Fiore, Director of Governance & Legal Services;
- Members of Cardiff’s Environmental Scrutiny Committee.