

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee

Date **15 October 2019**

Report of: **Head of Environmental Health**

Subject: **UPDATE ON AIR QUALITY AND THE TAXI INCENTIVE SCHEME**

The United Kingdom's revised National Air Quality Plan was published by DEFRA in July 2017. Fareham Borough Council was highlighted as one of the Authorities that must produce and implement a targeted local plan to improve air quality. This Plan was submitted at the end of 2018 and to achieve the required small improvement in air quality during 2019, four measures were identified as being necessary. One of these measures was to implement a taxi and private hire vehicle replacement incentive scheme for older diesel taxis. This report details progress with that measure.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee notes the content of this report.

INTRODUCTION

1. The United Kingdom's revised National Air Quality Plan was published by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in July 2017. This Plan identified 29 local authorities with likely pollution exceedances in 2021 (based on computer air pollution modelling).
2. Fareham Borough Council was highlighted as one of the Authorities that must produce a targeted local plan. The area of road identified is from the Delme roundabout taking in part of the A27 to Portchester, Eastern and Western way taking in part of the A32 and the A27 off of the Station roundabout. To that end, DEFRA issued a Compliance Directive on Fareham Borough Council, along with the other identified Authorities, requiring the plan and its implementation.
3. From March to December 2018 officers worked with Hampshire County Council and air quality consultants to identify exactly what the likely exceedance would be and also refining the option or options which will deliver compliance with the legal limit, $40\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in the shortest possible time. All of this work was funded by the Joint Air Quality Unit (JAQU)
4. The modelling was completed in November 2018 and predicted the worst point with an annual average NO_2 exposure of $40.55\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in 2020, becoming compliant in a 'do nothing' scenario in 2021. This point is located on the A27 where it crosses over Bath Lane in Fareham on Eastern Way. At this late stage, because of the "shortest possible time directive", 2020 became the year of focus, by which compliance should be aimed for. This meant any measures to achieve an air quality improvement must be put into place during 2019.
5. Some of the measures being considered were not deemed to be deliverable in 2019 and others ran out of time for further investigation.
6. However, 4 measures were identified which were evidenced to show some air quality benefit and could be delivered in 2019. These are:-
 - Incentivising the replacement of older more polluting diesel taxis with cleaner Euro 6 vehicles
 - ITS Review (signalling improvements at Market Quay roundabout)
 - Bus stop information improvements including Real time information (RTI)
 - Improvement s to the walking and cycling infrastructure
7. Fareham Borough Council are delivering the Taxi Incentive Scheme, Hampshire County Council are delivering the other three. All measures are anticipated to be delivered by the end of 2019.
8. The Authority submitted its Final Plan at the end of last year. The Final Plan detail was reported to the Executive at its meeting of 3 December 2018. The plan was approved by JAQU in March 2019.

TAXI INCENTIVE SCHEME

9. During the modelling exercise it was determined that 44% of the traffic passing over the A27 where it crosses Bath Lane were diesel cars. Although taxis made up a very small proportion of that total, with such a small improvement required, the incentive scheme was considered beneficial and was one of the final accepted measures.
10. At the time of drafting the Final Plan, licensing data showed that there were 225 pre-Euro 6 taxis and private hire vehicles in the Fareham fleet. Modelling on the point of concern showed that if these were all converted to Euro 6, this would reduce the marginal exceedance of the EU Limit value on the target road by up to 0.23 g/m³). However, this is a grant activity and is dependent on voluntary up-take by local taxi drivers.
11. In March last year Fareham was able to secure £150,000 from JAQU to implement an “Early Measures Scheme”. This scheme was aimed at owners of older diesel vehicles (pre-2015), they were able to receive a financial incentive to upgrade from their existing vehicle to an Ultra-Low Emission vehicle (ULEV) or a hybrid vehicle.
12. Owners of licensed vehicles that have had the vehicle licensed for the previous 12 months when applying could apply for financial incentives to replace their current vehicle if it was a Euro 5 diesel or earlier, to help with running costs. Owners could receive up to £2,450 in grant aid.
13. The Scheme ran from June 2018 up until the end of December during that period only 5 vehicles were replaced.
14. The feedback from the trade was that the cost differential between the resale cost of a pre-Euro 6 diesel compared to the cost of even a second handed ULEV or Hybrid, was too great for the incentive to be attractive. The trade has strongly lobbied for the scheme to include replacement of a pre-Euro 6 diesel with a Euro 6 Diesel.
15. However, in June last year the Conditions of licensing for taxi and private hire vehicles were changed to ensure that all vehicles plated for the first time had to be at least of the Euro 6 standard.

REVISED INCENTIVE SCHEME

16. Following extensive discussions with JAQU, the final plan that was submitted in December included a request for the remainder of the early measures scheme grant (£137,875), to be included in a new incentive scheme which would include an upgrade to a Euro 6 diesel and include another £150,000 of funding.
17. This was approved in March 2019 as one of the final plan measures. It was hoped uptake would improve dramatically. The revised Scheme was launched in April 2019 and is set to be open until December 2019.
18. Originally there were 225 older polluting vehicles in the Fareham taxi and private hire fleet. In total now there have been 22 vehicles that have been replaced using the scheme, another 37 older polluting vehicles have either been replaced outside of the scheme or not been renewed. That leaves 166 older polluting vehicles in the fleet and it is hoped that this number will reduce further before the end of the scheme. This

represents a decrease of 27%.

19. In discussions with JAQU, it is hoped that the scheme can be extended to June 2020 to allow time for further vehicle owners to take up the scheme.
20. JAQU have stated that any funding that is unspent at the end of the scheme can be used for other air quality initiatives, if this is still the case at the end of scheme any initiatives are likely to need JAQU approval.

RISK ASSESSMENT

21. There are no significant risk considerations in relation to this report.

CONCLUSION

22. The incentive scheme offered through the Early Measures opportunity last year had very poor take up as stated above. The revised scheme has been slightly more successful, although take up is still slow. Given the time constraints, each scheme could only be offered as an incentive rather than an absolute requirement. The changes to the licensing conditions has no doubt helped the situation and there is a natural fall away of older vehicles as well. All of this has led to the reduction of 66 vehicles so far, of the initial 130 targeted. The scheme now is still open until the end of this year and we have just written to all vehicle owners again to encourage take up. Every vehicle that is replaced up until the end of next year will positively influence air quality locally.

Background Papers:

None

Reference Papers:

None

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Ian Rickman. (Ext 4773)