
ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Communities, Housing and Infrastructure
DATE	25 August 2016
DIRECTOR	Pete Leonard
TITLE OF REPORT	Air Quality Update and Eco Stars Fleet Recognition Scheme
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/16/132
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to:-

- a) Advise the Committee of the Eco Stars Fleet Recognition Scheme and seek approval to implement in Aberdeen;
- b) Advise the Committee of additional grant funding and the information within the 2016 Air Quality Progress Report;
- c) Advise the Committee of progress in the implementation of the national Cleaner Air for Scotland strategy and future local authority implications.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- a) Approve the Council's participation in the Eco Stars Fleet Recognition Scheme;
- b) Note the content within the 2016 Air Quality Progress Report;
- c) Note the Cleaner Air for Scotland strategy implications and instruct officers to report annually on air quality in Aberdeen and progress in the implementation of any local authority responsibilities within the Clean Air for Scotland strategy.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Cleaner Air for Scotland (CAFS) strategy will require all Local Authorities with Air Quality Management Areas to undertake a Low Emission Zone (LEZ)/Clean Air Zone (CAZ) Feasibility Study. The Study will have limited financial implications and costs will be met from existing Council budgets or Scottish Government grant. However, there may be significant implications should the study recommend the implementation of a LEZ/CAZ in Aberdeen or other air quality improvement measures. The management and resourcing of any potential LEZs/CAZs in Scotland will be considered nationally by a

CAFS working group. Aberdeen City Council is represented on this group.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Participation in the ECO Stars fleet recognition scheme should support the reduction in both health and greenhouse gas emissions from freight and bus fleets operating in Aberdeen and the measures within the 2011 Air Quality Action Plan.

The UK government is required to meet legally binding EU air quality objectives. The annual mean nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) objective is currently exceeded across a number of geographical areas in the UK and infringement actions against the UK government commenced in 2015 due to predicted continued non-compliance by 2020. While the northeast of Scotland was not a specified region, current predictions indicate the objective will continue to be exceeded in Aberdeen by 2020 unless mitigation measures are implemented.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

5.1 Eco Stars Fleet Recognition Scheme

5.1.1 Eco Stars is a national fleet recognition scheme managed by Transport and Travel Research Ltd (TTR) and currently operates across a number of local authorities including Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, Fife, North Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire. The scheme is free and aims to help fleet operators, including HGVs, buses, coaches and vans, improve efficiency, reduce fuel consumption and emissions and make cost savings. Specialists from the TTR Eco Stars team provide practical technical advice and support to operators. Each registered operator is rated according to current performance and contact is maintained with participants to support progression through the star ratings.

5.1.2 Aberdeen City Council received a £27,000 grant from the Scottish Government for 2016/17 to implement the scheme across the north east region in partnership with Aberdeenshire City Council and NESTRANS. A working group has been set up with representation from the partners and TTR to develop and launch the scheme locally. The scheme will be managed by Aberdeen City Council, however as many of the major freight and bus operators passing through the City are based in Aberdeenshire, fleet operators across the wider area will be encouraged to participate. Both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Council fleets will be assessed, providing opportunity for expertise external advice on measures that could be implemented to improve performance.

5.1.3 Vehicles from a number of fleet operators regularly pass through one of Aberdeen's 3 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA).

Participation will support the reduction in emissions within the AQMAs, the aims of the 2011 Air Quality Action Plan and the Carbon Management Plan. A number of national fleet operators with local representation currently participate in the scheme, including Tesco, Sainsbury, Boots, First Group, Langstane Press and Malcolm Group. National freight distributors with local representation and local operators will be encouraged to participate.

- 5.1.4 There is no defined timeline for the scheme operation. Continuation through the next few years is anticipated provided grant funding is received, there is sufficient local interest in participation and the scheme is beneficial. The Scottish Government may co-ordinate the existing and proposed local authority operated schemes on a regional or national basis in the future since this would be a more sustainable use of resources. Local uptake of the scheme and related developments will be reported in future air quality update committee reports.

5.2 2016 Air Quality Progress Report

- 5.2.1 In 2015 the annual mean nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) level continued to exceed the national and EU air quality objective across the City Centre Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). However the general trend is that levels are reducing. Pockets of exceedances were also recorded within the Anderson Drive/Haudigan Roundabout/Auchmill Road AQMA. There were no exceedances of the NO₂ one hour objective at any of the monitoring locations.
- 5.2.2 The annual mean particulate (PM₁₀) objective was exceeded at the Wellington Road and Market St continuous monitoring sites, but met at the other monitoring sites. Again there appears to be a general downward trend in PM₁₀ concentrations.
- 5.2.3 Exceedances of the national PM₁₀ 24 hour objective were also recorded at Wellington Road, Market Street and King Street. The King Street site is outwith an AQMA and exceedances have not been recorded at this location in recent years. Meteorological conditions may have contributed to the exceedances both at this site and Market St. Many of the exceedances at Wellington Road were caused by dust emissions from the demolition of the nearby prison.
- 5.2.4 Legislation introduced in 2016 places a statutory duty on local authorities to achieve the annual mean objective for PM_{2.5} by 2020. Levels are monitored at 3 sites, Market Street, Union Street and Errol Place. The objective was marginally exceeded at Union Street and Market Street and it is suspected exceedances will also be experienced at Wellington Road.

Grant funding has been received to install monitoring equipment at this site. As there has been a downward trend in PM₁₀ concentrations, PM_{2.5} concentrations may also reduce in future years.

- 5.2.5 In addition to funding support for the Eco Stars scheme and new monitoring equipment, an additional Scottish Government grant of £20,000 has been received to implement actions to improve air quality, including support for the annual European Mobility event and other promotional campaigns, the Car Club and Schools liaison.

5.3 Cleaner Air For Scotland (CAFS)

- 5.3.1 Cleaner Air for Scotland – The Road to a Healthier Future is a national cross-government strategy that sets out how the Scottish Government and its partner organisations propose to reduce air pollution further to protect human health and fulfil Scotland's legal responsibility to meet EU air quality objectives. CAFS contains six main objectives with a common thread of sustainability: Transport, Legislation, Communication, Health, Placemaking and Climate Change.
- 5.3.2 Local authorities have a role in the implementation of various key actions within the Strategy, including traffic management, development management, communications and active travel. They will be expected to use a national modelling framework to assess the potential impact of new developments on air quality and ensure air quality is considered in the Local Development Plan and other related policies. An air quality model of Aberdeen is currently being developed.
- 5.3.3 Of major significance is the requirement for authorities with Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) to undertake a Low Emission Feasibility Study. National guidance on the study methodology is currently being developed and it is anticipated authorities will be required to complete the assessment process by the end of 2017. Specifically the potential for a Low Emission Zone (LEZ) or Clean Air Zone (CAZ) will require consideration. While an LEZ or CAZ may not be appropriate in all cases, authorities will be required to demonstrate a clearly defined business case for the implementation of actions to improve air quality. Potential LEZ/CAZs schemes will be considered nationally and final designated areas not determined until 2018 at the earliest with at least a 2 year lead in period. The outcome of the Aberdeen Feasibility Study and any subsequent recommendations will be reported in future Air Quality Update committee reports.

6. IMPACT

Improving Customer Experience – The adoption of the Eco Stars scheme and provision of free advice provides an opportunity for local businesses to reduce vehicle fuel consumption, reduce emissions and transportation costs. Implementation of CAFS will provide customers, including the public and local communities with greater awareness of the health impacts of poor air quality and the benefits of active travel and reduced emissions.

Improving Staff Experience – Improved awareness of air quality issues and our legal requirements provides an opportunity to improve joint working across services including planning, development management, transportation and sustainability.

Improving our use of Resources – Improved partnership working through the Eco Stars scheme and the implementation of CAFS provides opportunity to implement actions that should produce benefits across council services including health, the environment, transport and development management.

Corporate – This report is linked to the protection of the health of the people of Aberdeen. In terms of ‘Aberdeen the Smarter City’ the report relates to the commitment to promote a sustainable transport system, which also reduces our carbon emissions. The Eco Stars project and implementation of the CAFS strategy provide opportunities for joint working across various partners including NESTRANS, Transport Scotland, transport providers, local businesses and community groups. The Eco Stars scheme also links to the Sustainable Energy Action Plan – Powering Aberdeen aims to reduce emissions in partnership with Aberdeen stakeholders.

Public – Improved air quality will have a positive effect on public health, the environment and on mitigating the predicted impacts of climate change.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

There are no current risks associated with this report, however continued failure to meet mandatory European Union air quality objectives by may result in the imposition of fines on the UK government. Under the Localism Act the UK Government could require local authorities to pay all or part an infringement fines in England. While no such powers were enacted by the Scottish Government, there is potential for future similar measures should authorities fail to implement measures that will significantly improve air quality within the Air Quality Management Areas.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Cleaner Air for Scotland 2015, Scottish Government](#)
Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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