

**South Chichester County Local Committee
18 June 2019**

Talk with Us – Submitted Questions

Mr Bob Marson wrote in to ask the following:

The WSCC “Breathing Better” publication dated May 2018 was an excellent document which articulated the Local Authorities responsibilities in addressing environmental health and the associated Air Quality Objectives. Within the Governance and Reporting, the newly created IAAQ Group have within their TOR (Terms of Reference) an important role, especially as Chichester have the two-tier District and County Authorities.

My Question is therefore in two parts –

- (a) ***Does the Cabinet member for the Environment believe that the IAAQ are delivering value added inputs for proposals, issues and concerns to the West Sussex Leaders Board for resolution of the strategic needs of Chichester South? (This in light of the almost daily media attention on the impact to Public Health from Air Quality, taking cognizance of the limited mitigation diversionary routes through Chichester.)***
- (b) ***Does the Cabinet member believe that the IAAQ group should be taking a lead role in proposing that the West Sussex Leaders Board drive a policy that goes beyond statutory measuring of Nitrogen Dioxide only, ie introduce data gathering of factual data for fine particulates (PM2.5) in and around both the current and predictable new AQMAs ? (ie start now to get ahead with preventative action, rather than sit back and await new legislation as has been the case with CDC and, as reflected in a documented response stating quote, “ are satisfied they have all the necessary data at this time”.)***

In answering these questions, please be specific on the following concerns that surely must have been discussed at IAAQ meetings

CDCs decision not to declare Fast Track AQMAs in Westhampnett Road, The Hornet and Midhurst all of which have buildings entrapping Fine Particulates. (refer Govt Policy Guidance PG16.)

The impact to commuters from the Manhood, based on evidence that occupants are exposed to higher levels of pollution inside the car in the slow moving traffic during peak hours on a daily basis. This has been further exacerbated with the opening of the Free School with a knock on effect to Donnington.

The adoption/non adoption of PHEs Air Quality Toolkit made available from the UK Government Mid 2018.

The added traffic pollution that will emanate from the already approved housing developments eg Westhampnett (along Westhampnett Rd/Spitalfield Lane), Whitehouse Farm (increased traffic to the already slow moving traffic on B2178 at the south end of St Pauls road.)

The value of having factual base line data for PM2.5, costs impact to the NHS, the projected impact to our existing AQMAs and the likelihood of additional AQMAs emanating from the CDC Local Plan and, of course in Chichester, the A27 issue. This would surely help our MP in her efforts to secure RIS2 funding our LAs preferred option.

Robert Marson, Worcester Rd, Chichester 12th June 2019

The Committee agreed that this was a question for the Cabinet Member, who responded with:

The IAAQ is a Member-led strategic oversight group. The group does not discuss individual planning applications or the impacts of planning on certain areas; this is a matter for the District and Borough authorities as Strategic Planning Authorities. Nor does the group discuss or decide which areas should be an air quality management area as this is a matter for each District and Borough authority and Defra.

The County Council and the District and Borough authorities work closely across a number of work areas and we know that Chichester District Council is currently carrying out air quality modelling to help define the foot-print of a candidate AQMA at Midhurst and consider fully air quality on The Hornet and other locations. There is currently no evidence to support an AQMA on Westhampnett Rd.

The Local Air Quality Management regime does not require authorities to consider exposure within vehicles, but this is an issue that will be included in the IAAQ's public awareness raising campaign.

Neither Chichester District Council (nor the County Council) is funded to monitor PM2.5, though CDC monitors PM10 on the A27. The guidance TG(16) suggests a conversion factor for PM10 to PM2.5 and CDC is aware of the annual mean PM2.5 monitored by Adur and Worthing Council. Many actions seeking to reduce NO2 will also have a positive effect on PM2.5 concentrations. Defra Policy Guidance PG(16) suggests that authorities are not required to monitor PM2.5 but make use of national monitoring. We are aware of the importance of the issue and CDC's response will be further considered through the development of the revised AQAP, which will be adopted in 2020.

All the planning authorities (including the County Council when related to minerals, waste and the County Council's own development) must take regard of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which requires policies/development to take account of air quality in various ways including:

- supporting sustainable transportation (paragraph 103);

- preventing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable air pollution, and supporting development which improves air quality (paragraph 170); and
- ensuring development is appropriate for its location, taking account of the likely effects of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment (paragraph 180).

In determining planning applications, weight must be given to the impact on air quality, including cumulative impacts from other existing or proposed developments and extant (but not yet implemented) permissions. In assessing such impacts, the District and Borough Council's Environmental Health Officers (EHO) provide specialist air quality advice.

The IAAQ will produce an annual report with recommendations to the Leaders Board in Autumn of this year.

Mrs Mary Iden wrote in to ask the following 2 questions:

1. Road verges are a vital habitat for wild flowers and the wildlife that they support - given the commitments set out in the WSCC pollinator action plan, will the council be working towards adopting Plantlife's verge management in order improve the biodiversity of road verges?

The Plantlife Road Verges Officer, Kate Petty, would be very happy to speak to the council, whether that's highways or environment officers, and/or the councillors too, and share information and case studies about how are guidelines can be implemented.

Will WSCC also look into the way that their other green spaces such as school grounds are managed, taking advice from experts such as Plantlife and Buglife? As well as Plantlife's Good Verge Guide, the charity will shortly be publishing some 'Best practice grassland management guidelines'. Kate Petty would be very happy to share this and discuss it with the council. Buglife will no doubt have advice from the invertebrate perspective.

Finally, eg within the city of Chichester, is it really cost effective for CDC parks to be cutting some areas of grass, CDC car parks other areas, WSCC other areas, and housing associations yet other areas – areas which are often adjacent to one another? And could the cost of purchase (and the use of) machinery which may need to be bought to collect the trimmings for our now hopefully more biodiverse verges and park edges, be shared between CDC and WSCC?

The appropriate officer supplied the following response:

The County Council has a Pollinator Action Plan which shows what measures are being taken to help bees and insects successfully pollinate in West Sussex.

Please see the following link for more

information: <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/about-the-council/policies-and-reports/environment-planning-and-waste-policy-and-reports/pollinator-action-plan/>. As a Highway Authority we are carefully considering our role in the

promotion of biodiversity and we are currently in discussions with the Southdowns National Park on a trial project to create wild verges which will encourage pollination. The hope is that if this is successful and cost effective this would be rolled out more widely.

2. I recently travelled on the number 60 bus from Chichester to the Weald and Downland Living Museum for their 'Good Life Festival of Sustainable Living'. I was struck by the fact that on this of all days, the bus was nearly empty, while there were hundreds and hundreds of cars in the museum visitor car park.

One of the disincentives for using public transport is the high cost of fares; for example, a single ticket from Chichester to the museum at Singleton is £4.80, while a return ticket is £8.20. Using a car is far cheaper, specially for a group travelling together.

To encourage sustainable transport, would WSCC investigate the possibility of a trial scheme to reduce fares on a particular route eg Number 60, initially for a limited period, or possibly just at weekends? 'Go anywhere for £1' is the sort of ticket that would attract me!

I see that Weald and Downland already offer 2 for 1 entry for visitors with a valid Stagecoach ticket, but few people seem to know of this. With enough publicity of both the new reduced bus fares and the current 2 for 1 offer at Weald and Downland museum, and maybe working in conjunction with West Dean Gardens to arrange a similar deal for public transport users, bus fare takings might even go up. If revenues fell, perhaps Stagecoach could be guaranteed compensation up to the level of their normal takings for that particular month?

The Following officer response was provided:

Since bus deregulation in 1986 the majority of bus services are operated commercially without any funding from the County Council. In West Sussex this commercial network amounts to 86% of bus mileage operated and includes the whole of Stagecoach service 60 running between Chichester and Midhurst via West Dean. It follows that we have no control over timetables, routes or fares charged – these are all matters for Stagecoach alone based on their commercial judgement. In fact, under the 1985 Transport Act the County Council is not legally permitted to directly subsidise fares on commercially operated bus services. Publicising bus services is also a matter for the operators as they directly benefit from any additional revenue generated.

Mr Roy Briscoe wrote in to ask the following:

I'm a District and Parish Councillor from Westbourne, I would like to ask at the South CLC tonight; There are some temporary traffic lights in the Square at Westbourne severely restricting the parking and consequently the Businesses there. How long are they expected to remain and is there a way for the businesses affected to claim some compensation, this is only happened this last week and there is a significant drop in footfall as a result.

The Area Highways officer responded with the following:

In order to deliver the renovations works to Heather Cottage, whilst maintaining safety of the contractors and all highway user, the use of 2 way signals is required. The traffic management and parking bay suspension is also necessary to allow traffic to flow in both directions and avoid congestion within the village.

I can confirm that we have had a WSCC Enforcement Officer inspect the site and the site was passed as safe and set up as it should be.

The road space has been secured until 02/07/2019 and whilst we appreciate that this is frustrating, we have been advised this is how long is required to deliver the private works. In terms of compensation claims for loss of earnings, these would need to be made to the property owner where the works are being undertaken.