
Meeting	Decision Session - Executive Member for Environment and Climate Emergency
Date	5 July 2023
Present	Councillors Kent and Ravilious
In attendance	James Gilchrist, Director of Environment, Transport and Planning Mike Southcombe, Public Protection Manager

1. Declarations of Interest (10:01)

The Executive Members were asked to declare, at this point in the meeting, any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests or any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests they might have in respect of the business on the agenda. None were declared.

2. Minutes (10:01)

Resolved: That the minutes of the Decision Session held on 8 March 2023 be approved and signed by the Executive Members as a correct record.

3. Public Participation (10:02)

It was reported that there had been three registrations to speak at the session under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Flick Williams spoke on agenda item 4 – Air Quality – Annual Status Report 2022. She spoke on the importance of clean air before commenting on the increased number of businesses using diesel generators and that their effects on the air quality were not monitored. She requested that the use of generators was considered in air quality assessments and also spoke on accessibility within the city centre.

Cllr Dave Merrett also spoke on agenda item 4. He praised the work completed by air quality Officers but then stated that maximum concentrations of NO₂ have plateaued in some areas, increased in others, and continued to be above the World Health Organisation Guidelines. He then questioned the effectiveness of the previous Air Quality Action Plan and called for an on-street electric vehicle charging pilot scheme.

Geoff Beacon also spoke on agenda item 4. He called for reports to have a note and graphs on the current status of the global climate. He then commented on the location of air quality monitoring stations and asked the Council to do some modelling on the pollution levels at a person level for a more accurate result.

It was reported that there had been one written representation received by the Executive Members.

Steve wrote in regard to agenda item 4. He expressed concerns over the plausibility of York's 2030 carbon zero target in respect of logistics congestion and ongoing delays of introducing a delivery hub operation. He also commented on the effects of heavy traffic across York, the need to repurpose buildings, and called for an increase in the scale of electric cargo bike use.

4. Air Quality - Annual Status Report 2022 (10:15)

The Executive Members considered a report which detailed the latest (2022) air quality monitoring results for York, the progress on achieving measures in York's current Air Quality Action Plan to deliver further improvements in air quality and provided an update on a successful funding bid made to DEFRA's Air Quality Grant Scheme.

The Public Protection Manager outlined the report and noted that:

- There has been a downward trend in nitrogen dioxide concentrations of the past 10+ years.
- There were improvements in air quality in some areas of the Air Quality Management Plan in 2022. Pollutant concentrations in most were broadly similar to 2021 but remained lower than pre-pandemic levels recorded in 2019.
- Most of York had good air quality and met the health-based annual average air quality objective for nitrogen dioxide but it was exceeded in the same three 'technical breach' areas within the city centre, which included the following roads: Gillygate / Bootham / St Leonards Place, Blossom Street and Rougier Street.
- The highest concentration of nitrogen dioxide recorded at a 'relevant location' was on Gillygate and concentrations of particulates remained well within the current health-based air quality objectives for these pollutants.

- City of York Council has progressed with the delivery of measures within York's Third Air Quality Action Plan through the support of electric vehicle infrastructure, amongst other schemes.

He concluded by outlining some of the priorities for the 2023/24 Action Plan and stated that there was a focus on raising awareness of the impact of poor air quality on health.

In response to questions from the Executive Members, the Director for Environment, Transport and Planning, and Public Protection Manager explained that:

- The draft consultation of the Air Quality Action Plan update (AQAP4) was completed but was tied in with other Council corporate plans and awaiting approval. The AQAP4 would also include additional measures, such as DEFRA's new air quality strategy, amongst others.
- Air quality was measured through 9 monitoring stations and around 234 diffusion tube monitoring sites across the city. The monitoring stations presented challenges associated with space/ownership of land and available electricity supply and also cost around £27,000 to purchase alongside the £3,500 maintenance and other service/audit costs.
- Some food street vendors in the city centre use electric supplies, as opposed to diesel generators, and there was a good network of diffusion tubes throughout the centre. There was a project to improve the electricity supply into the footstreets in the city centre, but this has been stalled due to unsuccessful funding.
- The Council have some key performance indicators on modal use in York, which were monitored over extended periods of time. The monitoring methods could also be developed in the future to improve the data that was collected.

Resolved:

- i. That the contents of the report were noted (and the submission of the Annual Status Report to DEFRA was approved), including the generally improving trend in air pollution in recent years, progress made with AQAP3 and progress with updating the current plan in line with the Environment Act 2021, to complement other key CYC strategies.

Reason: To ensure that the Executive Members were aware of current air quality position in the city including continued exceedances of objectives in some areas, progress made with air quality improvement measures and progress with AQAP4.

Cllr Ravilious, Executive Member

[The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 10.34 am].