

Air Quality Steering Group – Meeting 4

Parking Strategy and Air Quality

Present:

Cllr James Byrnes	(JB)	Portfolio Holder
Cllr Eleanor Bell	(EB)	Shadow Portfolio Holder
Sam Clarke	(SC)	HCC Strategic Transport
Phil Gagg	(PG)	WinACC
Dan Massey	(DM)	WCC Engineering and Transport
David Ingram	(DI)	WCC Environmental Health and Licensing

Apologies:

Cllr Frank Pearson	Portfolio Holder
Cllr Angela Clear	Shadow Portfolio Holder
Phil Tidridge	WCC Environmental Health and Licensing

1. Minutes of the last meeting

- DI gave a brief overview on the last set of minutes focusing on the four recommendations.
- There was some discussion on Recommendation AQ3/2 regards ensuring that LPP2 has specific reference to 'future proof' air quality as a material planning consideration and that detailed supplementary planning guidance on air quality is required to provide developers with a definitive set of expectations for the Winchester District, especially where a development affects air quality within the AQMA.
- JB queried whether this was already covered in an Environmental Impact Assessment and DI countered that an EIA encompassed a broader raft of environmental matters and was only required for significant planning applications.
- PG stated that the new City development was subject to its own consultation process WIN4 and that air quality needed to be an aspect of this. DI acknowledged this, but stated that AQ3/2 sought to lay a hook for air quality in the wider district planning position with specific mention in LPP2 the detail for which would then be set out in the air quality SPG. All agreed.

2. Setting the Scene

- DI gave some clarity of expectation for the meeting in light of previous email communiques within the group. This was that whilst all matters to do with parking and its impact on air quality are open for discussion, there needed to be a realistic understanding of expectation on what can be achieved in the short term. Notwithstanding, whilst the group may pass on its recommendations it was clearly down to political debate as to which recommendations would likely be adopted going forward.

- PG stated that WinACC has no absolute expectations aside from the fact that there are no limitations on the debate and that we start with a 'blank sheet of paper'.
- JB agreed but he wanted to be clear in saying that there are some 'red lines' of expectation and that should these become recommendations then he would clearly state that they would not be supported by the current administration right from the start. JB also made the point that the current agency agreement between HCC and WCC is under review with a clearer position expected by 31/12/16, coming into place in April 2017.
- EB stated that there was no need to take absolute positions at this time and that there may be scope for some specific trials on any proposals to determine how they may work in practice.
- DI reminded the group that in accordance with Defra's Technical Guidance any recommendations arising need to seek to identify how they would affect air quality and where possible empirically model such improvements in terms of absolute reductions in NO₂.

WCC Car Parking Strategy - DM

DM gave a sit rep on the strategy that it was going through a 'light touch' review, in advance of a full strategy review in 2018. A consultation has already been undertaken, the findings of which will be reported in October.

However some of the salient points are as follows:

- 200 consultations received;
- Some 100% occupancy in some central car parks which could either mean, depending on your view point, that there is either not enough parking or the parking pricing too low;
- Plan for further detailed occupancy audit covering more parts of the year.
- Need to develop a model showing air quality impacts from parking spaces that are under WCC control in order to inform to what extent parking affects air quality;
- JB the 2018 Strategy will offer a much more comprehensive review in view of various changes such as a greater uptake in ULEV's and more developments in parking charging technologies.
- EB mentioned Sundays being unmanaged and Saturday are managed. And that Xmas was a real concern for congestion.

WinAcc Position - PG

- WinACC wants to set an air quality debate which places health impacts at its centre with its modelled 40 premature deaths per annum. WinACC believes that health agenda is more important than the economic agenda and the debate should be set in that context.

- Cars are the overwhelmingly the main contributor to poor air quality and he cited the BV data. Also suggested that Winchester has a higher than average 4x4 vehicle profile, which further contributes to the problem;
- WinACC believe most cars do visit the City i.e. not through traffic, a position based upon the peak traffic hours being consistent with half day full day visits.
- Showed Bureau Veritas pollution 'heat map' evidenced that the one way system being a culpable issue and suggested that whilst Southampton has poor air quality across the city that actually Winchester's air quality is worse albeit in the relatively concentrated location of the city centre;
- The one way system requires unnecessary mileage in order access most of the centre car parks that these car parks account for only 30% of all the parking in the City but account for disproportionate air quality impacts. DI queried whether this anecdotal position was the fault of the car park or the road system.
- Made various WinACC recommendations as follows:
 - Signage that encourages cars to park at car parks adjacent to the roads they use to come to Winchester (at Coach Park, Pitt Manor, Chesil, Durngate, Cattle Market, Worthy Lane, Tower Street, Station West, Winchester South) and does not mention other car parks (there really is no need to tell people about Chesil when they are in Sussex Street)
 - The abandonment of the misleading terms 'short stay' and 'long stay'. The cheapest car parks for many short stay periods are 'long stay' car parks.
 - A general term for the level of car park charges, well-advertised at the entrance (through colour coding?) such as 'premium', 'standard', 'economy'.
 - Clear zoning of car parks to reflect the charging scales into 'central', 'gateway', 'park-and-ride'
 - A revision of charging levels to reflect likely pollution impact (for example a 'pollution surcharge' of at least £1 on all visits to the most polluting car parks)
 - A redesign of the Parking Website that encourages cars to use the least polluting car parks
 - By establishing good and enjoyable pedestrian links between 'gateway' car parks and the city centre (routes are possible from Barfield, Cattle Market / Worthy Lane / Coach Park, Chesil, Station West, Gladstone Street, Durngate)
 - Improving and developing a 'pedestrian spine' between the railway station and the city centre to make the growing use of trains as access to Winchester even more marked, as an alternative to driving
 - General support for a coherent policy for developing public transport, in particular active participation in devolution that would qualify Winchester for the power to franchise bus services, and enjoy the level of investment promised by the recent SLEP Transport Investment Plan

(see http://solentlep.org.uk/uploads/documents/TIP_FINAL_-_Web_Version.pdf)

- The selective closure of the most polluting car parks, starting with the smallest car parks that are most likely to encourage 'car park hopping' as cars try places already full (Jury Street, Colebrook Street, Cossack Lane, Upper Brook Street).
- Acknowledged that local business places a high level of importance on parking and its influence on retail. However PG queried their understanding of the issue and stated that in this they are wrong. Referenced European documentation which states that there is no evidence to state that parking affects shopping, if the shopping environment is at the same time made more attractive to shoppers.
- Mentioned that EU research (see Car Dependency Rankings) which he says shows that in city centres where parking has been reduced in favour of positive measures to create a pleasant shopping experience, there is a positive impact for retail. DM acknowledged that whilst this might be the case, for those areas with lesser parking provision there is also a correlation with a high provision on public transport / accessibility.

BID Position – DI

DI gave a summary of Catherine Turness' BID paper from July on Parking which set out BID's position on Parking in support of business perception that insufficient parking and an aggressive pricing policy was a barrier to growth. The following is a summary of Catherine's Paper and DI's presentation to the group.

Here is a summary of the BID report:

- Business perceives insufficient parking as a barrier to growth;
- Current provision in the Shopping Quarter is insufficient with a reduction of 251 spaces with a further reductions 309 spaces planned, plus 82 lost to Chesil Surface car park;
- Makes the case that shoppers need short term convenient parking and cannot be expected to use the park and ride in these circumstances;
- Pricing should not necessarily be increased in central car parks to deter customer use, nor should it be used to meet air quality levels;
- Users of central car parks should not be punished with an extortionate charge;
- Parking should be available and priced so as to be competitive with regional shopping area (Basingstoke and Southampton). PG made the point that currently Winchester's parking is cheaper than both these locations;
- Business that rely on transport during the day cannot be 'penalised' by using P&R;

- BID report acknowledges the Air Quality Agenda but counters the parking concerns by recommending intelligent car parks to reduce unnecessary congestion and mileage. Also mentions P&R Euro VI engines in use;
- The Three ringed approach should be re thought, suggests 're branding'
- There be more investment in the car parks to ensure customers can navigate to the right car park
- Car parks should not exceed 85% occupancy at any time to ensure a user perception of availability;
- Xmas Parking should have a separate strategy including the use of currently unavailable office space at the weekends;
- There be better signage and live car parking counting technology be employed to ensure quick and easy access to parking and reduce unnecessary track miles in the AQMA.

BID recommended that WCC

- Undertake an assessment for a 2nd tier on the Middlebrook Street Car Park to offset the loss of Friarsgate
- Obtain up to date occupancy studies
- Create a separate Christmas Parking Strategy to ensure adequate parking to enable an 80% occupancy objective
- Re vamp and market the car parks towards visitors
- Review the pricing strategy to allow for better navigation across the city.

3. Suggested Matters For Consideration

WCC parking Controls

- Charging Policy. Is the current charging regime based on the three ringed approach of outer, middle and inner car parks sufficient for purpose? If the inner parking is regularly exceeding the 85% capacity does this mean that it is too cheap or that there are not enough spaces as purported by the BIB?
- EB made the point that outside of the Christmas period, there is always space in 'inner ring' Chesil car park, which reflects the position that city centre car parking is too cheap. This generated some discussion and it was agreed that there needed to be a greater differential between the inner ring and city centre parking charges in order to maintain the below 85% occupancy objective for the city centre car parks.

Recommendation AQ4/1

The group agreed that there needs to be recommendation for a greater pricing differential between the city centre and inner ring car parks in order to nudge users towards favouring the use of the inner ring over the city centre parking.

- PG suggested that the way the car parks are marketed i.e. short stay or long Stay is not relevant and should instead reflect the pricing structure. If branded correctly e.g. colour coding according to price, this would in his view better inform users of their options.
- DM acknowledges this and stated that Parking Strategy could consider this together with whether there needs to be additional parking revenues can be used to develop infrastructural changes towards the improvement of air quality;

Recommendation AQ4/2

The group recommended that there be work to look at the way city centre car parks are branded to better reflect the Car Parking Strategy's three ringed pricing structure.

- DI asked JB as to where he stood on the dichotomy of position between WinACC and BID and he stated that his roles was to 'finesse' both these positions and to seek common ground and derive an agreed set of aims. He went to say that he favours incremental change and wouldn't want to adopt large scale radical changes which will disenfranchise one or the other.
- EB educating the driver visiting Winchester is a key component is directing better use of parking.
- JB made the point that there is a threshold on charging after which it will become a material disincentive for people to visit Winchester and this was an important factor in setting charges.
- DI asked the group what data sets they think are required to best inform on what changes that should be considered for the 2018 parking review i.e. a gap analysis on what information we need and how we best interpret and use it?
- SC stated that HCC were proposing to undertake an 'origin and destination' study but that in advance of that they were asking questions as to the overall objective as this will set the parameters of consideration and ultimately what data to collect. In other words what do we want to know in order to best inform how we adopt measures of control on parking and destination planning?
- The group suggested the following:
 - Vehicle types, sizes and profiles
 - Survey asking where people came from using post code. Discussed how this be achieved i.e. via workplace surveys etc.
 - JB suggested that the Winchester District Transport Board may be a launching pad for such work through a Commissioning Process?

Residential Parking Controls

- DM outlined the resident parking scheme as being very generous scheme and cited 9000 resident and visitor permits;
- DM said that there is potential for abuse of the current system, where there is one resident and one visitor permit being allocated to each paying household, regardless of whether they have off road parking.
- In the 2010 review of the residents parking system, it was suggested that WCC adopt a scratch card visitor permit system much like many other LA's and revoke the use of visitors permits; this suggestion was opposed by the residents and not taken forward by cabinet.
- PG stated that there simply wasn't enough highway space in the town to accommodate the current number of permits and a sensible way forward would be to radically overhaul the current allocation system.
- JB mentioned that there was an ongoing agency review looking at the permit allocations, but also stated that the fairness of allocation was not in of itself relevant to air quality.
- PG made the point that there is no reliable way of determining the AQ impact from residential parking on the AQMA and that in all likelihood any such impact would be small when compared against visiting traffic;
- SC stated that the origin destination study could obtain resident data for traffic egress out of the AQMA, and that this may be used to model air quality impacts but further discussion would need to be had to know for sure.
- DM also raised the issue that inner city residents are allowed to park in premium car parks on a Saturday, which in effect means that they can park in a central car park all weekend thereby taking up spaces that could otherwise be used for shopping. This is not a significant material AQ consideration aside from tipping the 85% rule.

Recommendation AQ4/3

Undertake a thorough review of the residents permit scheme to eliminate abuse, encourage reduced car ownership and or an uptake in ULEV's.

Non Residential Parking

Workplace Levies

- DI said that this had already been discussed at the last meeting so was not really in scope for discussion again, beyond acknowledgment that it was a parking related measure;
- WPL are politically 'difficult' but there are a significant number of cars coming in from work force.
- JB stated he's happy to make difficult decisions but not where that decision will make it less attractive to do business in the city.
- EB need to do a study to identify the workplace car parking spaces and what this could realise is funding opportunity;
- EB stated potential for WPL funding to subsidise a Sunday service, and then charge for City Centre parking on a Sunday.

Work Place Travel Plans

- SC gave a historical context to WPTP's and that in 2010 HCC suspended workplace travel plan based on morale. Hospital and University have WPTP's, which are believed to be in place but there was some debate as to their efficacy;
- DM clarified that you can only require a WPTP for new developments under planning;
- JB stated that WCC has a good relationship with the University and to lobby the BID to engage with larger businesses to have a WPTP with assistance from WCC and the University;
- DI stated that in order for WCC to promote WPTP's they themselves needed a robust plan;

Recommendation AQ4/4

That Winchester City Council undertakes a review and update of its own Workplace Travel Plan.

Recommendation AQ4/5

Undertake to engage with Winchester University and the BID to encourage the uptake of Workplace Travel Plans in Winchester.

Car Park Signing Strategies

- The group had already agreed the need for a review of how WCC markets and brands its car parks based on the three ringed approach.

The relative numbers

- DI reaffirmed the point that there are in effect two types of recommendation. Those that affirm a desired 'direction of travel' towards air quality improvements e.g. Car park signage and branding improvements and those that are in and of themselves significant infrastructural changes that they must have evidence based modelling in support, for them to stand any chance of adoption e.g. a reduction in car parking spaces or capital investment projects to improve the one way system.

Other matters – The Growth Argument (Houses and Economy)

- DM raised the issue of how future and significant developments would affect air quality e.g. 2000 additional residences at Barton Farm plus other developments;
- DI responded by saying that this should already be addressed by AQ3/2 i.e. the need to have Air Quality adequately reflected in LPP2 and additional Supplementary Planning Guidance.
- EB mentioned the government's trend reverse the strategy on diesel uptake which would have positive impact on NOx.

AoB

- None

Date of next Meeting

- 12th October at 13:00 St Giles Room, Winchester City Council
- Topic 'Highways and Infrastructural Improvements' lead by Hannah and Sam

