

**QUESTION TO BE ASKED BY COUNCILLOR HARTSHORNE OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY AT THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL TO BE HELD ON 8 MAY 2017**

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Does the Portfolio Holder think the government has been straightforward in its publication of an air quality strategy?

Written response

Thank you Lord Mayor and I thank Councillor Hartshorne for his question. Although an apparently straight forward question I know that Councillor Hartshorne appreciates that air pollution and its health impacts are a complex matter and that there are no simple and straight forward solutions. The Government's consultation on its draft UK Air Quality Plan for tackling nitrogen dioxide (published at noon on Friday 5 May 2017) recognises this. At first sight the draft plan appears to continue to place a significant amount of the task of reducing air pollution with those local authorities originally identified as requiring 'Clean Air Zones' (including Nottingham) and their businesses and citizens. However, the consultation details revised air quality modelling that predicts that nitrogen dioxide levels will, without additional measures, exceed the air quality objective of 40 ug/m<sup>3</sup> in an additional 34 cities and urban areas in 2020.

However, I am pleased to say that here in Nottingham we have always had a strategy and plans to tackle congestion and reduce air pollution from a range of sources including traffic and particularly private motor cars.

Our long-term transport strategy to encourage the use of good alternatives to the car, including electric trams and buses, has constrained traffic growth in Nottingham to below the national average rate, without which air pollution in Nottingham and the conurbation would be much higher.

However, while nitrogen dioxide levels are reducing in some parts of the city, there are some hotspots, identified by air quality modelling carried out by the Government, which requires Nottingham to take further additional action. Part of this potentially involves the introduction of a Clean Air Zone, as soon as possible, and we will be carrying out our own analysis to understand the scope of any CAZ in Nottingham.

DEFRA and DfT has awarded Nottingham over £6,000,000 to reduce emissions from cars and vans and encourage and facilitate the long term transition to Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (you will all be aware of Nottingham's Go Ultra Low programme), and a further £200,000 to pilot an innovative project to replace gas fired boiler plant with fuel cells, which also reduce emissions of nitrogen dioxide, and if successful will lead to a significant reduction in nitrogen dioxide emissions from stationary sources such as industrial and commercial gas boiler plant.

I am also pleased to advise that Nottingham along with a number of other Cities is promoting and participating in the first National Clean Air Day on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> June and I urge all Councillors, citizens and businesses to do their bit to reduce emissions on the day and thereafter.

We will of course respond to the latest draft consultation once fully examined and understood ensuring our local issues, concerns and other potential solutions are brought to the government's attention, and have already called on the Government to provide more help for councils to tackle air pollution, expressing concern about the inadequate level of funding and for Government to take action such as introducing a diesel 'scrappage' scheme.