

## **Introduction**

This note covers:

- a. Local Authority plans to reduce nitrogen dioxide in the West Midlands**
- b. West Midlands bus fleet improvements update**
- c. West Midlands Combined Authority Low Emission Strategy Progress**

### **A. Local Authority plans to reduce nitrogen dioxide in the West Midlands**

**First Wave Authorities (UK Government highest priority areas to reduce Nitrogen Dioxide)**

#### **Birmingham**

Birmingham City Council is progressing with a Class D Clean Air Zone (CAZ) for central Birmingham in 2020. This will cover all roads within the inner ring road. This is supported a number of additional measures including parking measures, network changes, traffic management and signing and routing strategies and public transport improvements.

A Class D CAZ includes charging cars not meeting Euro 4 petrol or Euro 6 diesel standards. The Full Business Case has now been submitted to Government following Cabinet approval in December 2018.

Birmingham's bid consists of £17.85m from the implementation fund (for physical implementation) and £50.8m from the Clean Air Fund (to provide mitigation to the most affected groups).

The package of exemptions and mitigations includes exemptions for:

- Commercial Vehicles registered within the CAZ
- Commercial Vehicles with an existing finance agreement
- Private vehicles registered within the CAZ
- Individuals travelling into the CAZ for work.
- Visitors of key hospitals
- Community and schools and disabled vehicles

Support measures funded through the Clean Air Fund are for:

#### **Individuals who work in the CAZ**

- Choice of mobility credit or scrappage scheme offered to non-compliant car owners working within the CAZ. Key workers will be prioritised and the remaining availability will be prioritised by those of low income.

#### **Residents of areas outside of the CAZ**

- Scrappage scheme offered to non-compliant car owners in West Midlands, allocated by distance to the CAZ and income

#### **Hackney carriages**

Birmingham licenced Hackney carriage drivers can:

- Purchase an EV taxi to receive an operational financial support package;
- Receive funding towards retrofitting an eligible vehicle.
- Birmingham City Council plan to purchase 50 ULEV taxis to lease out to the most vulnerable taxi drivers.

#### **Private Hire Vehicles upgrade support**

- Private hire vehicle owners who upgrade to a compliant vehicle which goes beyond the minimum BCC's 2020 licencing criteria (i.e. is

a hybrid or ultra-low emission vehicle) and is under 3 years of age will receive financial aid.

### Van/LGV

- ULEV van drivers can register to receive credit on Birmingham's public charging network.

### HGV/Coach

- Fleet operators within the West Midlands will be able to apply for a cash payment towards retrofitting technology/compliant vehicle.

### Residents located around the CAZ

- Parking measures implemented to manage any displacement parking around the outside of the CAZ. This scheme will be introduced on an 'as required' basis.

### Second Wave Authorities

#### Coventry

Coventry City Council is currently seeking views on its draft Local Air Quality Action Plan (LAQAP) setting out how the Council will achieve the legal limits for NO<sub>2</sub> in the shortest possible time.

An outline business case with the draft plan was submitted to Government in February 2019. There is now a six week consultation phase from 18 February to the end of March. The Full Business Case will be submitted by the end of June 2019. Bids for Clean Air Fund and Implementation Fund monies have also been made for measures needed as part of the Plan. £70- £75m is being sought from the Implementation Plan and £6-8m through the Clean Air Fund.

Coventry City Council has previously obtained Government funding for early measures which include:

1. £2.021m 'early measures' funding for the A4600 corridor (Ball Hill)
2. £1.5m 'clean bus technology' fund for retrofitting over 100 National Express buses to make them Euro 6 compliant
3. £300,000 for the introduction of residential on-street electric vehicle charging.

The further measures proposed as part of the Local Air Quality Action Plan are fleet upgrades (buses, taxis), travel planning, new cycle infrastructure for four cycle routes and dynamic traffic management and improvements to the B4106 Spon End.

WMCA allocated £5.8m for this B4106 scheme at its meeting on 9 November 2018 from its Transforming Cities Funding pot.

### Third Wave Authorities The Black Country

On 5 November the Government (DEFRA) issued a Ministerial Direction to Dudley, Sandwell and Wolverhampton to deliver measures to achieve compliance for Nitrogen Dioxide levels. This was for six locations where levels were forecast to be higher than the exceedance level in 2021.

The measures for the six locations are improvements to traffic signal timings and bus retrofits for buses using the affected roads.

These are:

Two sections of the A461 in Dudley:  
-A461 from Castlegate Island to Burnt Tree Junction/Birmingham Road  
-A461 from Cinderbank Island to Castlegate Island / Duncan Edwards Way

A491, High Street, Wordsley  
A457 Oldbury

A41, J1 M5 West Bromwich  
A4150 Ring Road, Wolverhampton

Following a bid in November by TfWM, Government has awarded WMCA £3.5m to deliver bus upgrades to achieve Euro VI standards in relation to this, based on retrofits of buses. Dudley MBC and City of Wolverhampton Council also received £1.2m for signal optimisation

### **Solihull**

Similar to the Black Country, Solihull has two locations in need of measures. These are two sections of the A45. A combination of behaviour change measures will be delivered to tackle the problem. This will include workplace Travel Plans, workplace Personalised Travel Planning, car sharing schemes, marketing and communications. Government will fund the improvements required.

## **B. West Midlands Bus Fleet Improvements Update**

### **West Midlands Bus Fleet (February 2019)**

As of February 2019, 600 buses in the West Midlands are Euro VI standard or better (31 % of the entire fleet). Funding has been secured that will see a further 1,043 buses upgraded to a minimum Euro VI standard by the end of 2020. This will see 83 % of the West Midlands bus fleet meeting at least Euro VI standard.

It is an aspiration in the West Midlands Vision for Bus, to have all buses operating in the West Midlands at least Euro VI standard by the end of 2020. To help achieve this, further funding opportunities are being pursued through the Air Quality Grant Scheme 2018/19, Coventry City Council's Local Air Quality Action Plan bids for funding and a bid for further Clean Bus Technology Fund monies.

### **Air Quality Grant Scheme 2018/19**

TfWM submitted two projects to the Air Quality Grant Scheme 2018/19 on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018. An award decision is expected soon.

Lot 1 is a project to deliver a reduction in NO<sub>2</sub> emissions from buses on supported bus services in the Black Country, by funding Euro VI standards for 11 vehicles across 5 contracts.

Lot 2 is a project to trial two types of innovative air quality sensor in 60 bus shelters across the West Midlands, for a minimum 12-month period. The outcome will be to show low-cost air quality sensors across the bus infrastructure estate are feasible for widespread use. Use that could allow such a system to be implemented regionally and nationally at a relatively low cost compared to other continuous monitoring

systems and without additional street clutter impact.

## C. West Midlands Combined Authority Low Emission Strategy Progress

The WMCA Board approved the production of the West Midlands Low Emission Strategy and Action Plan in July 2018 and delegated the draft scope to the WMCA Environment Board to approve in September 2018.

The final scope has included a re-emphasis on local 'added value', sharing of good practice, and local ownership raised previously by the WMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Environment Team also presented progress to the WMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2018. They raised the following additional issues for consideration:

- Focus on longer term health outcomes and roadmap to drive change and certainty for investors, rather than just short-term targets.
- Coordination and scaling up of good local practice.
- Focus on a selection of region wide actions that will accelerate local action e.g. region wide policy and rollout by local authorities and TfWM sites on charging points.
- Have clear annual success factors

A steering group has been appointed which met on 21<sup>st</sup> January to finalise the development and implementation plan. This group is made up of representatives from the WMCA constituent councils covering air quality and low emission issues, who will also liaise with non-constituent councils. The group also includes representatives from industry, public health, and Transport for West Midlands, and is led by the new WMCA Environment team. The group has finalised the scope and development plan for the strategy.

The original timescales have changed to allow time required for the approval process by the Environment Committee and Board and feedback from partners.

The latest indicative timescales are:

- March – Regional Stakeholder Workshop
- April / May – Meeting of Steering Group to finalise draft actions /recommendations
- June 7<sup>th</sup> – WMCA Environment Board agree final actions and recommendations within strategy for adoption by WMCA Board.
- July – WMCA Board approval of strategy
- August/September – formal launch of strategy and action plan. TDC Air Quality Lead Cllr Davis recently met WMCA Overview & Scrutiny AQ Lead Cllr Simkins (Wolverhampton CC), to share information. Cllr Davis also Met Dr Simon Slater, the WMCA Environmental Team Lead, who is leading the CA Low Emissions Strategy. The TDC Chair and the AQ, Congestion & Environmental Sustainability Lead Member will be invited to the upcoming Regional Stakeholder Workshop in March on the WMCA environmental strategy. Jake Thrush is on the Steering Group and provides a further link with the TDC Air Quality, Congestion and Environmental Sustainability Lead Member Reference Group, for which he provides officer support.

Jake Thrush

Associate Policy Advisor

[Jake.Thrush@tfwm.org.uk](mailto:Jake.Thrush@tfwm.org.uk)