

Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee

BRIEFING NOTE – No. 02/16

Date: 18 February 2016

Briefing paper to: All Members of the Regeneration, Community and Culture
Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Purpose:

To inform Members of aspects in the Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) in relation to:

1. The Green Bus Fund
2. Reducing Pollution Certificates for HGV's
3. Achieving Euro 6 emission standard

Further to questions raised at the meeting of the Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10 December 2015, the following is submitted for information:

1. Green Bus Fund

The licencing and registration of HGV, bus and coach operators is the responsibility of the Traffic Commissioner.

The Traffic Commissioner has a number of priorities including to consider, and where appropriate impose, traffic regulation conditions to prevent danger to road users and/or reduce traffic congestion and/or pollution. This includes engaging with stakeholders such as the transport companies and the Local Authority.

However it is not clear whether a condition can be imposed and/or enforced in relation to the bus companies supporting bids by the local authority for funding from the Green Bus Fund. The Kent and Medway Air Quality Partnership is seeking clarification from the Traffic Commissioner on this point.

2. Reduced Pollution Certificate

A reduced pollution certificate may be issued to operator of a vehicle following modification of a vehicle to improve its emission standards. These are issued following tests by the Driver and Vehicle Standards

Agency (DVSA). These certificates may then allow the operator to use their vehicle in low emission zones and/or apply for a lower taxation class.

This certification scheme is available for all buses and coaches registered in the UK before 1 October 2009 (prior to the implementation of the Euro V standard)

This certification scheme, and the possibility of lower taxation, incentivises operators to improve the emission standards of their vehicles and therefore could assist in the achievement of Measure 2 in the AQAP as discussed below.

3. Measure 2 in the Air Quality Action Plan covers improvements to the emissions standards of buses in the local bus fleets. The action is:

Increase the proportion of Euro V, and Subsequent, (equivalent) buses in fleet.

This measure allows some flexibility in the approach by the bus operators whilst acknowledging that the euro VI standard will be beyond the financial and technical means of some operators. Achieving Euro VI for the fleet is the long term aspiration of the Council but had to accept that any measure in the plan needed to reflect the current, best available technology, to ensure that the measure was achievable.

Many older buses in the fleet that are currently only of euro I or II standard are able, with the application of current technology, such as retrofitted exhaust treatment systems, to greatly reduce the particulate and NOx emissions. The application of this technology is currently only able to achieve the equivalent of the Euro V standard.

Lead officer:

Stuart Steed - Environmental Protection Officer
Tel. No: 01634 331105 Email: stuart.steed@medway.gov.uk