

THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

MEETING 9

4 FEBRUARY 2016

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Item no 5.1

QUESTION NO 1

By Councillor Booth for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 4 February 2016

Question

What progress has been made in considering the introduction of low emission zones as a means of improving air quality in the city to within statutory limits?

Answer

On 4th November 2015 at Scottish Transport Emissions Partnership (STEP) Annual Conference in Edinburgh, Scottish Government launched its national strategy "*Cleaner Air for Scotland – The Road to a Healthier Future*" ('CAFS' - formerly known as Low Emission Strategy).

This strategy includes developing a National Low Emission Framework (NLEF) to guide the type of measures introduced by local authorities, across Scotland, needed to improve air quality. Clean Air Zones / Low Emissions Zones are measures to be considered and it is a key objective of the framework to ensure that consistent and robust assessment processes are available to Councils.

It is clear that if we decide to promote Low Emission Zones in Edinburgh that this will require close partnership working with the Scottish Government. This will also include a requirement for appropriate funding to be made available and I have already fed this message quite clearly to Scottish Government Senior Civil Servants.

On 11th December 2015 in Edinburgh, the Scottish Government hosted the third of three elected member stakeholder events to update Councillors and seek their guidance and input on the best way forward to implement the strategy, which I attended along with Cllr Rose. The other two events were held in Dundee and Glasgow.

It is anticipated that the NLEF will be finalised by April 2016 and a report will be sent to the Transport and Environment Committee, in summer 2016.

Item no 5.2

QUESTION NO 2

**By Councillor Nick Cook for answer
by the Convener of the Transport and
Environment Committee at a meeting
of the Council on 4 February 2016**

Question

To ask the Convener of Transport and Environment for a progress update on securing a public bike hire scheme for Edinburgh?

Answer

The Transport and Environment Committee has approved further work to undertake market engagement with potential operators and to issue a tender for a public bike hire scheme. Since then potential procurement options have been identified and the Council is now initiating work on the market engagement exercise. It is expected that the procurement exercise will be completed by late autumn 2016.

Taking into account the Council's current financial circumstances, any such scheme will clearly require to be self financing.

Item no 5.3

QUESTION NO 3

By Councillor Booth for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 4 February 2016

Question

How many a) fines for engine idling; and b) reports to the procurator fiscal for engine idling have been issued/made by the council in each of the last five years.

Answer

- a) There have been no Fixed Penalty Notices issued for engine idling over the last five years.

The experience of our authorised officers in Edinburgh is that when a driver is approached and the offence explained, in every instance the driver has either complied by switching off the engine or had a valid reason covered by the exemptions and considerations below.

In Edinburgh our approach uses a combination of educational and preventative signage in hotspot areas, as well as patrols and direct engagement by our Environmental Wardens. These methods are used both in response to specific complaints or enquiries, as well as proactively around specific events such as the Edinburgh Tattoo which can attract large numbers of visiting buses.

There is no statutory minimum time the engine must be idling, however, authorised officers are required to follow Scottish Government guidance when enforcing this offence. This requires that in any instance the authorised officer first approaches the driver of the vehicle they believe may be committing an engine idling offence, explain to the driver that engine idling can constitute an offence and request that the driver switches off the engine. The actual offence only occurs if the driver continues to allow the engine to idle without good cause for a period of time. The guidance and legislation lays out specific exceptions to the offence, as well

as other factors to be considered before deeming that an offence has occurred. Examples of these exemptions and considerations include:

- queuing at traffic lights,
- where an engine is being run so that a defect can be traced and rectified,
- where machinery on a vehicle requires the engine to be running,
- on a cold day at a taxi rank,
- if the driver is elderly to keep warm;
- if the vehicle is a recovery vehicle carrying out a recovery, and
- to help defrost a windscreen in very cold weather.

b) There have been no Procurator Fiscal reports made by the council for engine idling over the last five years.