

Children, Environment and Leisure Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	Monday May 15 th 2017
Classification:	General Release
Title:	The Report of the Air Quality Task Group
Report of:	Julia Corkey- Director of Policy, Performance and Communications
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Cabinet Member for Environment, Sports and Community: Councillor David Harvey and Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services and Public Health: Councillor Heather
Wards Involved:	All
Policy Context:	Creating a Greener City Building Homes, celebrating neighbourhoods
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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report presents the final report of the Air Quality Task Group. The Task Group has been meeting from July 2016 to March 2017 and this final report draws on all the evidence heard including that commissioned from King's College London. The penultimate version of the report and its recommendations was considered at the last meeting on 23rd March.

2. Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Consider, comment on and agree the report and its recommendations
- Consider options for a launch in June 2017 and
- Recommend the report to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Sports and Community and where appropriate the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health for the recommendations to be incorporated into the next Greener City Action Plan.

3. Background

3.1 The Work of the Air Quality Task Group

3.1.1 The Air Quality Task Group was originally a task group of the then Environment and Customer Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee under the Chairmanship of the Councillor Ian Adams. However, the cross-cutting nature of the topic was considered and there was also representation on the Task Group from the Health and Public Protection Committee and the Children, Sports and Leisure Committee. Following the change in the Council's leadership, recent changes to the Scrutiny Committees has led to the Council's Environment portfolio falling under the remit of the new Children, Environment and Leisure Policy and Scrutiny Committee. The Chairmanship of the Task Group therefore passed to Councillor Andrew Smith as chairman of this committee and the work of the Task Group was incorporated into the committee's work programme.

3.1.2 The Task Group was established in response to growing concern from the public, business and other stakeholders about the impact of poor air quality in Westminster and to develop recommendations about what the City Council should do to respond, both directly and by using its voice to influence other bodies in both the public and private sectors to take action. The Task Group met five times and considered evidence from a range of external stakeholder around the three themes of; health impacts of poor air quality, emissions from transport and emissions from buildings. Early on in the work of the Task Group, they commissioned an evidence review of interventions from other boroughs and other cities to see if there were any lessons for Westminster. The Terms of Reference are attached as Appendix 1 and the ambition of the Task Group has always been wider than those things within the Council's control. This is because the Task Group was keen to mobilise our lobbying power and our influence with other stakeholders.

3.1.3 There are two innovative elements of the Task Group's work:

- The collaboration with King's College London where we have received a significant piece of academic independent contribution for a very small budget has been possible by lending them officer time from our performance and evaluation team to join their research team.
- The Task Group has appreciated the engagement from cabinet members and senior officers with relevant portfolios with its work. One of the Task Group's aims has been to provide an evidence base to inform the development of the next Air Quality Strategy and Action Plan, due to be reviewed in 2018.

3.2 The Report and its recommendations

3.2.1 The report is now substantially complete following the last set of comments from the Task Group. However, there are still a few stages to tidy it up. The final report will contain an executive summary; it will be proof-read and

designed. Interventions by the City Council and the Mayor of London have been successful in delivering a reduction in emissions from transport. While there are a number of steps that could be taken to accelerate progress, the report shows that air pollution from transport is set to decrease due to interventions introduced by both the current and previous Mayor.

- 3.2.2 Transport is the source of the majority of both NO₂ and particulate pollution which have the most impact on localised air pollution and its health impacts, so it is right that action has focused on this area. Buildings are, however, a major source of pollution, more than a third of NO₂ emissions in the City come from the burning of gas and other fuels to heat domestic and commercial buildings in the City come from the burning of gas and other fuels to heat domestic and commercial buildings in the city and nearly 15 percent of particulate pollution is from buildings. Unlike the transport sector, the amount of pollution from buildings is not falling. The report therefore calls on the City Council to consider ways to reduce the impact of buildings on the City's air quality by recommending:

“The Council should identify opportunities to deliver an improvement in the impact of the City's building stock on air quality.”

3.3 A proposed launch

- 3.3.1 Once the Committee has commented on and approved the report, the Task Group have indicated that they would like a stakeholder launch of some sort. This would take place after the General Election. The options for a launch would seem to be:

- Launch by press release and photo call
- Launch via a policy roundtable with key stakeholders to both inform them of the recommendations and act as a call to action or
- To be launched alongside another air quality event- one possibility is the launch event for the Low Emission Zone year 2 taking place on 15th June with Councillor Harvey.

- 3.3.2 The Committee's views are sought on these options or any other methods they would like to consider.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact Muge Dindjer x2636
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APPENDICES:

Appendix 1-Task Group Terms of Reference
Appendix 2- Task Group Report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Air Quality improvement initiatives in other cities-A brief review of evidence to inform Westminster City Council's Air Quality Task Group. A report prepared in partnership with Westminster City Council.

Terms of Reference for the Air Quality Task Group

The task group comprises Members; from the Environment and Customer Services Committee, one Member from the Adults, Health and Public Protection Committee and one from Children's , Sports and Leisure Committee. The task group will run for approximately 9 months and started in July 2016.

Purpose

To further develop understanding of the issue of air quality citywide in Westminster and to identify what additional steps can be taken if necessary to focus on it. To feed into the review/refresh of the Westminster Air Quality Strategy.

Objectives

1. To increase understanding of Air Quality issues in Westminster by examining the causes and impacts of poor air quality in order to take effective action towards clean air
2. To understand the actions already being taken to improve air quality in Westminster.
3. Learning from best practice, to identify additional ways of improving air quality in the City now and for future generations
4. To understand how planning policy can be used to improve air quality
5. To understand how transport planning can be used to improve air quality
6. To collaborate with key strategic partners and partnerships to improve air quality
7. Using this evidence base and galvanising the Council's leadership role, to influence partners/stakeholders to play their full part in delivering identified measures in order to improve air quality and thus improve the health of adults and children.

Methodology

The Air Quality Task Group will:

1. Commission a review which will compare and contrast Westminster City Council's actions/interventions aimed at improving Air Quality with other boroughs, and cities including internationally. This will include a comparison of planning policies and their impact on air quality. This will focus on delivery and actions and seek to identify successes from elsewhere. This will give us an understanding of our place amongst our peers and identify which international city is a good comparator.
2. Issue a call for written evidence which would focus on emissions from buildings, transport and health impacts
3. Invite expert witnesses to give evidence to three hearings.
4. To invite residents and amenity groups to provide evidence via Open Forum on the website

5. Identify best practice.
6. Produce a report of findings and recommendations for action by central government, the GLA, the Council, business and industry, organisations and residents. These could, where appropriate feed into the next update of our Air Quality Strategy. The report would need to include a communications/ influencing strategy.
7. Some of the meetings will be held away from City Hall in order to engage with communities.