



# City Management and Public Protection Policy and Scrutiny Committee

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<b>Classification:</b>	General Release
<b>Title:</b>	Progress report on Air Quality and the council's Clean Air Action Plan 2019-23
<b>Report of:</b>	Andy Durrant, Director of Community Services
<b>Cabinet Member Portfolio</b>	Environment and City Management
<b>Wards Involved:</b>	All
<b>Policy Context:</b>	Greener City
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## **1 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report updates the Committee on the council's actions to improve air quality across the city. Air quality is one of residents' top concerns, and cuts across work undertaken by all areas of the council. This report highlights recent major policies and projects implemented by the council, and previews Westminster's forthcoming 2019-2023 Air Quality Action Plan, which is in development and will be publicly consulted on later this year.
- 1.2 Air Quality was also the subject of a Scrutiny Committee Task Group in 2016-2017. The final report of the Task Group includes a variety of actions and recommendations for the council, and the report was intended to inform the council's next Air Quality Action Plan. This report summarises the council's response to the Task Group's work, and highlights recommendations and actions made by the Task Group which are likely to be included in the new Action Plan.

## **2 Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration**

- Does the committee have any comments on the council's current approach to tackling air quality across the city?

- Does the committee have any comments on the measures proposed by the 2016 Air Quality Task Group being taken forward as part of the council's draft Air Quality Action Plan?
- Are there any new actions that the committee would like the council to consider in the drafting of the new Air Quality Action Plan?

### **3 Background**

#### **3.1 Air quality in the city**

- 3.1.1 Westminster suffers from some of the worst pollution in the country. Westminster was the first local authority in the UK to establish an Air Quality Management Area and implement an air quality action plan, and the council has been at the forefront of taking action on the important issue for over two decades.
- 3.1.2 In Westminster, as across London and in a number of UK urban centres, levels of the noxious gas Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) are well above legal limits set by the EU and enshrined in UK law. The other key pollutants of concern in Westminster and London are a fine dust of varying sizes known collectively as Particulate Matter (PM). While Westminster currently meets EU Objective levels for PM, there is no safe level of these pollutants where there is no adverse impact on health, so as a council we are trying to reduce PM levels as far as possible.
- 3.1.3 The sources of pollution in Westminster are emissions from road transport, emissions from existing building stock (mostly gas combustion) and emissions from development (demolition and construction). Road transport accounts for around 58% of NO<sub>2</sub> emissions and 65% PM<sub>10</sub> emissions; commercial and domestic heating is the source of around a third of NO<sub>2</sub> emissions, while PM emissions are produced in larger amounts by construction work. Larger vehicles and diesel vehicles produce disproportionately larger amounts of pollution compared to the number of KMs and number of vehicles using Westminster's roads.
- 3.1.4 The health impacts of air quality are increasingly well understood. Pollution also disproportionately affects the young and old, and there is a correlation between income inequality and pollution levels. Addressing the detrimental effects of air pollution poses a unique opportunity to achieve multiple co-benefits to health such as reducing obesity, physical inactivity, social isolation and inequality. As a result, air quality is increasingly being framed as a public health issue, as well as (or even superseding its status as) an environmental issue.
- 3.1.5 Work on air quality is being undertaken across the council. As well as the council's current Air Quality Action Plan, our 10 key priorities for our work in this area were set out in the April 2018 Air Quality Manifesto. Air quality work is also captured within a variety of other council policies and strategies, including the Local Plan, Active Westminster Strategy, Greener City Action Plan, Westminster Walking Strategy, Electric Vehicle Strategy, and more. There are

also air quality actions within the council's overarching City for All objectives for 2018/19.

- 3.1.6 Further details of the council's work on air quality can be found in the Year 3 report for our Greener City Action Plan, which is the subject of another paper on this Committee's agenda at this meeting. That report includes more details on the scale of work being undertaken across the council in this area.

### **3.2 The 2016 AQ task group – context and recommendations**

- 3.2.1 In July 2016, the then Environment and Customer Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee decided to launch an investigation into air quality in Westminster. In recognition of the cross-cutting nature of the issue, membership of the Task Group was also drawn from the Adults, Health and Public Protection Policy and Scrutiny Committee and the then Children, Sports and Leisure Policy and Scrutiny Committee. The Task Group's core objectives were 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. The findings/recommendations of the Task Group were designed to be able to inform the refresh of the Westminster Air Quality Action Plan.”*

- 3.2.2 The Task Group heard evidence from experts in the air quality field, as well as from local residents interested and affected by pollution in Westminster. The Task Group also commissioned the Policy Institute at King's College London to conduct an independent review of initiatives to improve air quality in other cities globally, and in other London boroughs, with a view to exploring whether there are lessons that can be applied to Westminster.

- 3.2.3 The final report of the Task Group, published in June 2017, is included in the background papers to this report. The final report contains 48 actions and recommendations for the council, across three key themes:

- Health impacts and recommendations
- Impact of transport and recommendations
- Impact of buildings and recommendations

- 3.2.4 The King's College London work commissioned by the Task Group, Air Quality Improvement Initiatives in Other Cities (2017), focused on actions being taken in London and further afield to tackle air pollution. In London this included Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, the London Borough of Camden and the City of London Corporation. The international search for ideas focused on six cities: Copenhagen, Los Angeles, Paris, New York, San Francisco, and Singapore. This report was published alongside the final report of the Task

Group and has added to the evidence base informing policies and interventions in this area across London.

### **3.3 Action undertaken since the publication of the Task Group report**

- 3.3.1 Since June 2017 the council has implemented a number of policies and projects to reduce pollution in the borough; this section summarises the key activities. Several of these actions follow recommendations made by the Task Group, including the proposed expansion of the diesel parking surcharge, which is a major environmental policy for the council.
- 3.3.2 In April 2018 the council published its Air Quality Manifesto, a public facing document highlighting our 10 key priorities for action on air quality. This is an aspirational document, setting out where we have got to in our work on reducing pollution and setting out some short- and medium-term targets for further policies. Its aim is to ensure that Westminster remains at the forefront of tackling pollution in London and beyond. The policies range from tackling emissions from transport and the built environment, further raising awareness and engaging with the public on air quality, and maintaining our position as a thought leader in this area and ensuring we have robust and effective lobbying positions to Government.
- 3.3.3 The updates below reflect some of the major policies and campaigns the council is undertaking; however a large number of additional projects and policies are being implemented across all areas of the council. The council's 2019 Annual Status Report to Defra and the final Air Quality Action Plan will cover the full range and breadth of this work.

#### The diesel parking surcharge

- 3.3.4 The diesel parking surcharge is a 50% surcharge for older diesel vehicles using pay to park bays; upon its introduction as a trial in the Marylebone area of the city, it was the first policy of its type in London. After a 12 month trial of the surcharge in parking Zone F, a 16% reduction in older diesel vehicles parking in the zone had been observed. As a result, from July – September 2018 we undertook a major public consultation exercise on the expansion of the surcharge across the rest of the city. This was a recommendation of the Task Group report. We received over 1300 responses, which shows the level of interest and engagement in this issue. We are expecting to make a formal announcement on how we will take this policy forward in Spring 2019.

#### Schools' Clean Air Fund

- 3.3.5 In June 2018 we announced a £1m fund for Westminster's primary schools to help them tackle localised air pollution. This policy is a reflection of the disproportionate impact pollution has on young people, and represents a major collaboration across a number of council service areas. It is expected each primary school across the city will be able to apply for up to £30,000 in grant funding to undertake a variety of measures in their local areas, from green screening and planting, to changes to local road layouts and timed closures, to

energy efficiency upgrades and ventilation to reduce pollution levels inside school buildings. This project will be the largest borough fund of its type to tackle pollution across London.

#### The Marylebone Low Emission Neighbourhood (LEN)

3.3.6 The council's flagship Marylebone LEN has continued to see new projects and policies trialled in it with a view for them to be then adopted across the rest of the city. The diesel surcharge is one such policy, however others have included road signage encouraging behaviour change around vehicle idling, a school street at St Marys Bryanston which will see local roads closed at the start and end of the school day, and new air quality and flood resistant planting being incorporated in urban realm improvements in the Marylebone High Street area. The final work of the LEN before the project ends in April 2019 includes completing the urban realm improvements and producing guidance for schools, businesses and residents on indoor air quality.

#### #DontBeldle phase 1 and 2

3.3.7 In 2018 the council's nationally award winning behaviour change project #dontbeidle surpassed its goal of 10,000 signatories to the air quality action pledge. The second phase of the project will launch in January 2019, with a focus on working with and lobbying businesses with large fleets to take more action on idling and other polluting behaviour. Tackling emissions from vehicles is not something the council can solve on its own, so taking a partnership approach to this problem will enable us to embed the behaviour change messages of the campaign at the management level of major business stakeholders, as well as influencing the behaviour of their workforces.

### **3.4 Westminster's draft 2019-23 Air Quality Action Plan**

3.4.1 As part of Westminster's statutory duties as an Air Quality Management Area, the council is required to publish an Air Quality Action Plan, which sets out the current context of pollution levels within the city and contains a series of actions to be undertaken to tackle the problem. Westminster's Action Plan (2013-18) is now up for review, and officers are working on a new 2019-2023 Air Quality Action Plan for the city. The current Action Plan is included in the background papers to this report.

3.4.2 The council also must provide annual updates to Defra on actions undertaken, monitoring results recorded, and progress towards meeting our air quality objectives. The most recent Annual Status Report (May 2018) submitted to Government is included in the background papers to this report.

3.4.3 The new Action Plan is currently being drawn up and officers from across a variety of directorates within the council will be involved in this pre-consultation phase. Westminster has a statutory duty to publicly consult on the draft plan, and this will take place later this Spring with the adoption of the new Action Plan expected in Summer 2019. As well as inviting views from members of the public on the new Plan, other stakeholders including the GLA, TfL and neighbouring

boroughs, local businesses and landowners, and other major council stakeholders will be approached directly to input into the Plan.

- 3.4.4 The Plan will utilise a shift in council policy that can be seen in our approach to the new City Plan. We are moving from overly prescriptive and detailed policies towards a more holistic approach to policy making. This fits in well with the close connections for air quality between Public Health and environment, and the cross-cutting work that is being undertaken across the council on this issue. The need for a more holistic approach was a strong recommendation of the Task Group and one that the council is taking forward in the drafting of the new Action Plan.
- 3.4.5 The Committee's responses and comments to this report will be taken as pre-consultation comments and will feed into the draft version of the Plan. Members will be invited to make comments individually on the Plan during the formal consultation phase.

### **3.5 Task Group recommendations taken forward by the council**

- 3.5.1 A variety of the comments and recommendations made by the Air Quality Task Group have either been taken forward by the council since the Task Group's report was published in June 2017, or will be adopted by the council in the new Air Quality Action Plan. This section highlights some of these actions and recommendations for each of the three areas of focus set out by the Task Group (public health and awareness raising, emissions from transport, and emissions from buildings).
- 3.5.2 A key overarching recommendation of the Task Group report was to emphasise the holistic nature and need for joined up working on air quality not just among council departments, but in partnership with external stakeholders and partners. This collaborative and holistic approach to air quality is one that is being taken forward at the heart of the new Action Plan, and is one key area where the steer of the Task Group has helped inform and steer council policy.
- 3.5.3 The Task Group report and commissioned work from King's College London reflected Westminster's position as a leading local authority on air quality. We were the first local authority in the UK to have an air quality action plan, and it is work like that of the Task Group that will inform the new Air Quality Action Plan and help maintain Westminster's position as a thought leader and innovator in tackling this crucial environmental and public health issue.

#### *The Health Impacts of poor air quality*

- 3.5.4 This section of the Task Group report focuses on the close links between air pollution and health, and the increasingly important role of Public Health functions and partnership working to reduce pollution.
- 3.5.5 Key recommendations in this section included lobbying Public Health England to work with the GLA to issue complementary public awareness raising alerts when pollution is forecast to be high, and for the council to look at targeted measures to reduce pollution in areas where vulnerable people (such as the young and elderly) are regularly exposed to high pollution.
- 3.5.6 Lobbying Public Health and central Government to improve the quality and effectiveness of large-scale public awareness raising related to pollution and the actions people can take to reduce their exposure when pollution is forecast to be high is a key action being taken forward in the new Action Plan. With regards targeted measures, the council's 2018 Air Quality Manifesto sets out how the council is focusing more attention on reducing emissions around primary schools across the city. The council has announced a forthcoming £1m Schools' Clean Air Fund to support schools in this work. The council is currently scoping its Dementia strategy and we are working with colleagues to look at the impact of poor air quality on this demographic (or something)

#### *Reducing emissions from Transport*

- 3.5.7 Over half of Westminster's NO<sub>2</sub> and PM emissions come from road transport. A key issue for Westminster and other London boroughs is that to a certain extent road transport emissions are outside of our direct control. Emissions from black cab taxis and buses are directly controlled by TfL, who also manage and maintain the busiest roads in the city.
- 3.5.8 As a result, the Task Group's recommendations in this area focused not just on what the council can do themselves through our own fleet and contracts, and through managing our own highways networks, but also included actions related to lobbying and partnership working. Key Task Group recommendations included showing leadership through the council's own fleet and contractors, and to consider extending the diesel parking surcharge trial undertaken in Marylebone. Key lobbying recommendations included lobbying TfL for a quicker uptake of low emission buses across the city, and lobbying central Government for changes to Vehicle Excise Duty and for a new Clean Air Act.
- 3.5.9 The council recently consulted on expanding the diesel parking surcharge across the city; a decision on this is expected shortly. Equally, the council has taken up the committee's recommendation to show leadership through our own fleet – the council's waste vehicles are currently undergoing an innovative retrofit which is the first of its type in the country. Finalising changes to the council's procurement policies around vehicle usage and emissions in contracts will be a new and expanded action in the Action Plan. The recommendations of the Task Group align well with the council's lobbying positions to Government and to the Mayor of London.

#### *Reducing emissions from buildings*

- 3.5.10 The final section of the Task Group report focused on emissions from existing building stock and from new developments. Recommendations are therefore related to retrofitting and reducing emissions from existing buildings, as well as looking at the council's City Plan policies. Reducing emissions from construction and demolition work is also included in this section. Reference to the code of construction practice which will be updated shortly and further coming supplementary planning document
- 3.5.11 Several the recommendations in this section of the report have been taken into account in the drafting of Westminster's draft City Plan. Other recommendations relating to the use of offset funds (additional funds paid to the council by developers to support off-site projects to reduce emissions) and helping building owners tackle emissions from heritage buildings are new actions being included in the new Air Quality Action Plan. In particular, the focus on the heritage building sector is one that the Task Group helped place on the council's agenda; it is also one of the council's priorities set out in our Air Quality Manifesto. The council's code of construction practice document will also be updated in the near future alongside the introduction of supplementary planning documents to complement the City Plan; these documents will also utilise the Task Group findings.

*Formal inclusion of the Task Group recommendations in the final Air Quality Action Plan*

- 3.5.12 It is expected that a summary of the Air Quality Task Group and its key recommendations will be included in the Air Quality Action Plan. The feedback from the Committee and the council's scrutiny functions will also be included in the final version of the Action Plan.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact Adam Webber x4546 [awebber@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:awebber@westminster.gov.uk)**

## **APPENDICES:**

### **Appendix 1: Air quality task force recommendations:**

#### **Health impacts:**

1. Consider use of ward budgets for local, community-driven AQ initiatives in wards where pollution is high
2. Consider the results of the work commissioned by Public Health England which should provide a model to estimate the costs of air pollution on the NHS and social care system
3. Train staff in AQ messages as part of the "Making Every Contact Count" initiative
4. Public health to support NHS staff with advice/ messaging for the vulnerable groups in self-care and management

5. Through the Health and Wellbeing Board, bring a focus on AQ to all partners to identify additional interventions that services/staff or stakeholders could take which would be effective in improving air quality or mitigating its health impacts.
6. Lobby Public Health England to establish a system of communications jointly with the Mayor that will deliver complementary work when the Mayor issues AQ alerts to get information and advice to local schools, care homes and nursing homes.
7. Until PHE implement the above, WCC's Public Health team to encourage take up of the airTEXT service so that establishments of "at risk groups" receive direct alerts and health protecting action to take during periods of high pollution.
8. Support individuals to reduce their exposure to air pollution.
9. WCC to consider looking at targeted interventions to reduce exposure in areas of high concentration of pollution, such as greening measures.
10. WCC/CityWest Homes to consider AQ assessments when siting new playgrounds.
11. Public health to consider how they can advocate for air quality with NHS and other partners
12. Working to integrate health into every policy

## **Transport**

For Westminster City Council:

1. Agree a Target Date to ban High Polluting Vehicles from all contracts we procure and build this into our next AQAP and Strategy.
2. Once the Strategy is agreed, ensure effective communication with all commissioners to ensure this is built into future contract specifications.
3. WCC to work with the BIDs to raise awareness of the zero and low emission suppliers directory ([victoriabid.co.uk/work/zero-and-low-emissionsuppliers-directory](http://victoriabid.co.uk/work/zero-and-low-emissionsuppliers-directory))
4. Identify existing contracts and discuss improvements to emissions that can be achieved within those contracts.
5. Review the existing Fleet Policy to ensure it specifies the best standards in class for all vehicles.
6. WCC to work with the GLA to consider other solutions such as dynamic road pricing and an increase in the types of public transport and active travel such as walking and cycling and promoting more public engagement.
7. Whilst many of the ideas may already be under consideration in Westminster, the literature indicates the importance of using more ambitious targets (e.g. the WHO targets).
8. Consider the use of bay sensors for taxis to prevent them from roaming whilst plying for trade.
9. If the trial of the Zone F diesel visitor parking surcharge is successful, the Council should consider its extension to other areas of Westminster where air quality is a concern.
10. Evaluate the impact on air quality of our 30 trial 20mph zones.

11. Keep car clubs under review and seek to utilise changes to operations (flexible car clubs) if beneficial to air quality.

### Lobbying Priorities

1. Lobby TfL to speed up the introduction of zero emission buses and reduce the number of buses on routes travelling through Westminster and throughout London
2. Lobby TfL to use technology that can capture data on emissions from buses.
3. Lobby TfL so that their walking and cycling routes (on Journey Planner) provide the cleanest routes for pedestrians and cyclists to get from A to B.
4. Lobby Government to improve data availability from DVLA to allow LAs to identify the most polluting vehicles.
5. Lobby Government to introduce a 'scrappage' scheme which is targeted at taking out the most polluting vehicles in the areas with the worst air pollution problems.
6. Lobby for Vehicle Excise Duty Reform to bring in fiscal incentives to discourage diesel vehicles.
7. Lobby for a new Clean Air Act.

### Business, Council and Communities Supporting Change

1. Support Business and individuals to take action to reduce the demand for deliveries
2. Work with the BIDs to promote the switch to more sustainable vehicle types in commercial fleets operating in Westminster
3. The Council to demonstrate leadership, working with the BIDs to encourage a step change in the scale of freight consolidation initiatives. We want to deliver the greatest possible benefits using voluntary means and would only consider lobbying for sanctions if voluntary action was insufficient to achieve the required change
4. Support individuals to reduce their exposure to air pollution.

### **Buildings**

1. The Council should consider further work to identify the feasibility of different funding models to help accelerate the improvement of the current building stock.
2. Consider lobbying landowners regarding the boilers they fit, using learning from the Portman Green Club.
3. Promote more widely the Mayor's 'London Boiler Cashback Scheme' in Westminster to enable local people who qualify to access financial support to buy more efficient, lower polluting boilers.
4. Review how we manage the built environment to ensure that the best outcomes for air quality are built into City Plan revisions with the aim of leading the way in reducing the air quality impact of new development.
5. Undertake City Plan revisions to target new development so that it makes a positive contribution to the surrounding area e.g. district heating systems can negate the need for old boilers in surrounding buildings leading to a net positive impact

6. Promote best practice guidelines for retrofitting heritage buildings.
7. Raise awareness about the significant contribution of emissions from building to air pollution.
8. Ensure that we have sufficient resource/powers to enforce the policies within the City Plan and Code of Construction Practice both on construction sites and in refurbishments/new developments. There is a potential gap for smaller sites which are not covered.
9. Ensure that we have sufficient resource/powers to enforce the policies within the City Plan and Code of Construction Practice both on construction sites and in refurbishments/new developments. There is a potential gap for smaller sites which are not covered.
10. The Council's response to the Mayor's Environment Strategy should take account of the findings from this Task Group.
11. The Council should work with others to stop the use of diesel generators as part of commercial demand management other than for emergency use only during power cuts.
12. New development should encourage the use of car clubs rather than car ownership.
13. Lobby the Mayor to specify that all boilers in new developments must be ultra-low NO2 specification.
14. Consider whether WCC could use its carbon offset fund for upgrades especially if targeting large older boilers or even oil fired boilers.
15. The Council to ensure that its own building stock, including housing stock, reduces impact on air pollution, through retrofits and ensuring that new buildings are of the highest standards.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Air Quality Manifesto April 2018

Current Air Quality Action Plan 2013-18

Annual Status Report to Defra May 2018

Report of the Air Quality Task Group June 2017