



City of Westminster

2012 Air Quality Action Plan Progress Report

City of Westminster

In fulfillment of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995
Local Air Quality Management

June 2013

Westminster City Council
2012 Air Quality Update and Screening Assessment
June 2013

This report will be available on the Westminster City Council web site at:

<http://www.westminster.gov.uk/airquality>

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1 Introduction

1.1 Description of Local Authority Area

Westminster is home to a growing resident population of over 220,000 swelling to more than 1 million during the day with the influx of workers and visitors. All or most of five Royal Parks are within Westminster, as are 21 historic squares and gardens, over 11,000 listed buildings and 75% of the City is covered by Conservation Area designations.. The River Thames forms the southern boundary of the City.

Westminster has four of London's main line railway termini with two, Paddington and Victoria, having direct connections to airports and ten out of twelve London Underground lines, including the network's busiest underground station at Victoria. Commercial activities can be found throughout the City but are concentrated in the Central Activities Zone and in the Paddington Opportunity Area. To the north and west of the Central Activities Zone and to its south as far as the River Thames, housing, in a wide variety of built forms, is the principal land use.

In common with many other urban areas Westminster suffers from poor air quality. This is a result of the millions of vehicles that travel through the area and the dense network of roads and buildings which not only emit pollution, but also prevent pollution from dispersing. In addition to pollution from transport, domestic and commercial sources such as heating contribute greatly to the overall levels of pollution. Background pollution generated elsewhere also contributes to the concentrations that are measured in Westminster. Sources can be both man-made and natural, and are closely linked to weather systems and the geography of the area.

1.2 Purpose of Report

This report fulfils the requirements of the Local Air Quality Management process as set out in Part IV of the Environment Act (1995), the Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland 2007 and the relevant Policy and Technical Guidance documents. The LAQM process places an obligation on all local authorities to regularly review and assess air quality in their areas, and to determine whether or

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not the air quality objectives are likely to be achieved. Where exceedences are considered likely, the local authority must then declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and prepare an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) setting out the measures it intends to put in place in pursuit of the objectives.

The objective of this Air Quality Action Plan Progress Report 2012 is to report on the progress made with the delivery of the Air Quality Action Plan. Information on monitoring data can be found in the Update and Screening Assessment 2012.

2 Air Quality Action Plan

During 2012, Westminster City Council was in the process of adopting a new Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) to update the successful, largely completed Air Quality Strategy and Action Plan published in 2001.

In 2012, progress was made on a number of air quality actions from both the original 2001 plan and the, then draft, revised plan. Due to this crossover period, Action Plan progress in 2012 has been reported in a more general way as opposed to the tabulated method proposed in 'Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance LAQM.TG(09)'¹, The Progress Report for 2013 will fully report against newly revised AQAP which was formally adopted in April 2013.

2.1 Background

Improving air quality in Westminster is an important challenge that the City Council is determined to meet. Developing solutions to improve air quality requires balance between national, regional and local measures, but local authority actions are important in delivering the improvements needed to meet objectives. Since the declaration of an air quality management area in 1999, we have implemented a raft of measures to improve air quality such as the promotion of sustainable forms of transport through measures which include Car Clubs and our Electric Vehicle Recharging Scheme with on-street and off-street electric charging points to encouraging use of alternative fuels.

Westminster City Council has been committed to taking action to improve air quality for over a decade and was the first local authority in the UK to declare an 'Air Quality Management Area' in 1999 and was the first to adopt an 'Air Quality Strategy & Action Plan' in 2001. This plan implemented a raft of measures to improve air quality such as pioneering the concept of a Low Emission Zone for London, encouraging the use of alternative fuels through electric vehicle on-street recharging points,

¹ Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance LAQM.TG(09) – Defra, 2009

significantly improving Westminster's own vehicle fleet emissions, and establishing residential Coach and Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) Ban Areas to protect local residents from the impact of heavy through traffic.

A significant portion of our poor air quality is as a result of the high density of traffic within the City and the high number of buses and taxis that cross London every day. Tackling air pollution is not something that one local authority can achieve in isolation, but requires working together at local, regional and national levels and the City Council works closely with its neighbouring boroughs and the Mayor of London to meet the challenge of improving air quality.

2.2 Key Action Areas

Whilst the following sections are by no means an exhaustive list of the air quality work the Council has undertaken in 2012, they provide some detail on the key, progressive projects on which resources have been focused.

2.2.1 Business and Schools Engagement

We have been working closely with a number of Westminster's Business Improvement Districts, to increase awareness and understanding of the impacts of businesses, with the aim of lowering air quality impacts associated with transport, business services and buildings. We also work closely with schools to facilitate the development of sustainable travel plans to help improve air quality and congestion at the school gates and to increase understanding and knowledge of air quality and its impact on health.

2.2.2 Sustainable Transport

The City Council is keen to encourage more of its residents, workers and visitors to cycle, thereby helping to reduce traffic/public transport congestion, enhance local air quality and improve their health. A Westminster Cycling Strategy has been drafted, which sets out how this vision will be achieved, and this will be consulted on soon. It will set out a range of proposed objectives and actions including ways of creating safer and more legible routes for cyclists, encouraging considerate interaction

between different road users, facilitating cycle access and storage and encouraging the uptake of cycling amongst a broader cross section of the community. A Walking Strategy will follow in due course.

2.2.3 Coach Parking and Engine Idling Emissions Reduction

Emissions for coaches parked within the City have been seen as a key source of exhaust emissions, capable of causing pollution, and noise nuisance to our worker, visitors and residents. The Council has recently updated a large number of 'no idling engine' signs in coach parking bay on the borough's major roads and is in the process of engaging with the Confederation of Passenger Transport to further educate coach drivers to switch off their engines when stationary to help improve our City's environment.

2.2.4 Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

The City Council has the lead the way with the delivery of electric vehicle recharging infrastructure in the UK, through installing the first publically accessible recharging point in a Council owned car park in 1999, and then the first public on-street recharging point in 2006. The City Council now has 42 electric vehicle recharging bays on-street and there are approximately 100 within the Council leased car parks. The City Council has also recently joined 'Source London', an electric vehicle recharging scheme administered by the Mayor of London. This will further enhance the electric vehicle recharging opportunities for our local residents and businesses.

2.3 Air Quality Action Plan 2013 -2018

The City Council has recently developed its revised Air Quality Action Plan to provide a robust and focused set of local measures and using planning policy to ensure development works in synergy with air quality improvement and provides infrastructure for sustainable travel. We aim to deliver real improvements in air quality and build on our successes to improve our environment and better equip ourselves for a sustainable future.

The Action Plan can be viewed at www.westminster.gov.uk/airquality/aqap

2.3.1 Summary of Actions

A summary of the positions and actions detailed with the Plan are given below:

Tackling Emissions from Transport

Position Statement TRAN 1 – Low Emission Zones

- Continue to be supportive of the LEZ and its future planned phases.
- Continue to lobby the GLA for the inclusion of NO_x in the remit of LEZ Phase 5 and support the Mayor in pressing the Government to implement an abatement certification scheme.
- Urge the Mayor to revisit further options associated with implementing an inner or targeted Low Emission Zone and undertake further assessment of feasibility.
- Continue to lobby the Mayor to request central Government introduce a national vehicle scrappage scheme.

Position Statement TRAN 2 – Taxis

- Support the Mayor in his aims to bring about improvements to the taxi and PHV fleet
- Support the Mayor in pressing central Government to introduce scrappage schemes for taxis
- Support and urge the Mayor to further reduce emissions and to find ways to facilitate and promote the use of low emission fuels and technologies, such as electric or hybrid technology, in the taxi fleet.

Position Statement TRAN 3 – Buses

- Support the Mayor in his measures to introduce hybrid and hydrogen buses to the fleet and urge him to look further at the use of other forms of low emission technologies, such as pure electric or compressed natural gas, in the bus fleet.
- Support the Mayor in his measures to reduce emissions from the bus fleet.
- Support the Mayor in his measures to place the lowest emission buses of the most polluted routes and urge him to continue with this action.
- Urge the Mayor to undertake a thorough review of the current bus route network and explore and assess options for change or rerouting with the aim of reducing congestion in key areas such as Oxford Street.

Position Statement TRAN 4 – Reducing fleet emissions

- Support the Mayor in developing a strategy aiming to achieve zero tail pipe emissions from public sector vehicles.

Position Statement TRAN 5 – Vehicle Excise Duty

- Support vehicle excise duty rates which would take account of and incentivise low air polluting vehicles.

Position Statement TRAN 6 – Rail emissions

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- Strongly support the policy for electrification of the rail network in London.
- Urge to TOC's to continue to take initiatives, review opportunities and push for continued emissions improvement.

Action TRAN 1 - Work with TfL to investigate options for reducing through-traffic in specific parts of Westminster, such as Oxford Street and Marylebone Road, and to examine the options for reducing air pollution at hotspots.

Action TRAN 2 - Examine potential options and implement actions to minimise pedestrian exposure to high levels of pollution.

Action TRAN 3 - Support car clubs with particular emphasis on the inclusion of low emission vehicles in the fleet.

Action TRAN 4 - Continue to promote and provide infrastructure for electric and low emission vehicles.

Action TRAN 5 - Continue to investigate ways in which freight consolidation can be developed and investigate and develop ways to reduce congestion from delivery vehicles.

Action TRAN 6 – Support and undertake local communication campaigns to raise awareness of the benefits of fuel efficient and smoother driving and evaluate the possibility of supporting providers of fuel efficient driver training through communication to Westminster residents.

Action TRAN 7 - Support schemes to encourage people to use other forms of sustainable travel such as walking and cycling.

Action TRAN 8 - Support and promote the implementation of travel plans for schools and businesses.

Action TRAN 9 - Ensure the use of low emission vehicles within the Westminster City Council fleet and those of its contractors and regularly review Fleet Policy and fuel hierarchy to ensure best possible effects for air quality.

Action TRAN 10 - Compel contractors and associates to reduce air pollution and carbon emissions through tender and contract specifications.

Action TRAN 11 - Continue to commit to the provision of Safe and Fuel Efficient Driving (SAFED) training for fleet drivers and evaluate the possibility of:

- extending Safe and Fuel Efficient Driving (SAFED) training to the City Council's contractors' fleet drivers;
- including criteria for Safe and Fuel Efficient Driving (SAFED) of the City Council's

- contractors' fleet drivers within specifications for the tendering process;
- Assessing the benefits of on-board driving monitoring systems with a view to installing them on fleet vehicles.

Action TRAN 12 – Undertake a review of the options and resource and emissions implications of utilising 'no idling' legislation to help improve local air quality.

Action TRAN 13 – Communicate the 'no idling' message to parked coach drivers on Westminster's streets by installing signs in coach parking bays on borough managed roads.

Action TRAN 14 – Work with the Mayor to develop procedures to press the operator companies of vehicles found with idling engines to take enforcement action on the drivers of those vehicles.

Action TRAN 15 – Improve public communications on air quality and no-idling messages by including information on the impacts of idling on the Council website and in Council publications.

Action TRAN 16 - Write to the Minister for Transport with responsibility for rail services and to local MP's setting out the air quality and other benefits that would be achieved by the earliest possible electrification of rail services from Marylebone seeking information on the likely timescales for this.

Action TRAN 17 - Maintain dialogue with TOC's to review opportunities for improvements in reducing emissions.

Action TRAN 18 - Communicate with government Ministers to make the case for stronger control of the environmental effects of rail services through existing mechanisms.

Action TRAN 19 - Raise with TfL and the GLA the importance of appropriate environmental impact assessments within consultation exercises when changes in rail services are proposed (e.g. High Speed Rail 2), and to consult the City Council respectively.

Tackling Emissions from Buildings and Development

Position Statement DEV 1 – Reduce emissions from boilers

- Support the Mayor in lobbying for the continuation of a boiler scrappage scheme for older and inefficient models.

Position Statement DEV 2 – Combined Heat and Power

- Support and work with the Mayor to implement CHP emission standards to ensure that there are no adverse impacts on local air quality.

Position Statement DEV 3 – Biofuels

- Support and work with the Mayor to implement biomass/biofuel emission standards to ensure that there are no adverse impacts on local air quality.

Position Statement DEV 4 – Modernisation of combustion regulations

- Support and press for modernisation of national regulations covering emissions from combustion processes in urban areas.

ACTION DEV 1 - Require developers to undertake an Air Quality Assessment (AQA) where a development may adversely affect local air quality and require developers to submit an air pollution abatement and mitigation plan where an air quality assessment shows that a new development is likely to have an adverse impact on air quality, or expose new air quality sensitive receptors to poor air quality.

Action DEV 2 - Strengthen and further develop air quality policy in the emerging local plan in order to develop transparent air quality assessment methodology for planning applications and support planning officers in the assessment of those applications.

ACTION DEV 3 - Include air quality requirements in Sustainable Design SPD to help reduce unwanted emissions from boilers through improved building efficiency, boiler efficiency, using renewable energy and supplying energy efficiently.

ACTION DEV 4 - Protect decentralised energy networks in order to provide efficient energy production and to minimise emissions from combustion.

ACTION DEV 5 - Adopt policy which ensures biofuel combustion does not negatively impact on local air quality.

ACTION DEV 6 - Prioritise low polluting transport options in development.

ACTION DEV 7 - Require major site developers to comply with the Westminster Code of Construction Practice and the GLA's 'The Control of Dust and Emissions from Construction and Demolition: Best Practice Guidance' to all development sites.

Increasing Awareness of Air Pollution

Position Statement COMM 1 – Pan-London communication

- Support the Mayor in a pan London communication campaign to raise awareness of air quality issues and health impacts.

ACTION COMM 1 - Publish high quality air quality information via the Westminster City Council website, and investigate new methods of informing and communicating with the public, especially vulnerable groups.

ACTION COMM 2 - Monitor air pollution across the City and periodically review the air quality monitoring network.

ACTION COMM 3 - Monitor PM_{2.5} air pollution across the City and periodically review our air quality monitoring network.

ACTION COMM 4 - Undertake communication campaigns to raise awareness of air pollution health impacts and minimise exposure to pollution, where possible linking with other complementary initiatives.

ACTION COMM 5 - Foster links with Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and Health Departments to aid public communication and understanding of how air pollution affects

ACTION COMM 6 -Continue to support and raise awareness about the AirTEXT air quality information service.

ACTION COMM 7 - Undertake business engagement to raise awareness of air quality and encourage reduction in emissions associated to business transport and buildings.

ACTION COMM 8 – Raise awareness of air quality within Westminster schools to increase understanding of issues, encourage more sustainable travel modes and minimise exposure.