

Executive Member for Environment and Transport

Meeting of:	Date:	Ward(s):
Executive	17.10.19	All

Delete as appropriate:		Non-exempt
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SUBJECT: AIR QUALITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2019-2023**1. Synopsis**

- 1.1 The Council is required to regularly produce an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP). The Action Plan is a statutory requirement and part of the Council's continuing Local Air Quality Management responsibilities under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995.
- 1.2 The Council's new Air Quality Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2023 (attached at Appendix 1) sets out a series of actions that will help reduce exposure to pollution and the production of pollution in the borough with a view to improving health.
- 1.3 The emphasis within the Action Plan is two-fold:
 - To develop measures that will provide the necessary emissions reductions to achieve the UK air quality objectives within specified timescales
 - Act as a live document which is continually reviewed and developed, to ensure current measures are progressing and new measures are brought forward.
- 1.4 The Environment Act 1995 requires the AQAP to include statements on standards relating to the quality of air, and objectives for the restriction of the levels at which particular substances are present in the air. This Act describes the purpose of the Action Plan as outlining measures "in pursuit of the achievement of air quality standards and objectives in the designated area, of any powers exercisable by the authority".
- 1.5 Islington is committed to improving air quality and continues to take the lead in reducing pollution harmful to health.

The Council produces the Action Plan in partnership with other stakeholder organisations and for that purpose is working closely with other agencies.

- 1.6 The new Air Quality Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2023 will replace the previous one. Most of the actions from the previous action plan are considered to have been achieved, though a number of are built upon in the new strategy e.g. tackling transport emissions and increasing uptake of public transport.
- 1.7 A public consultation on the draft Strategy and Action Plan was held between the 27st May to the 23rd June 2019.

Over this four-week period 286 responses were received on the online survey platform (survs.com) with a questionnaire completion rate of 87%. For each survey question at least 85% of respondents were positive.

Full details of the survey responses are given in the Consultation Summary Report at Appendix 2.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the changes to the draft Strategy and Action Plan as a result of the public consultation, and as set out below in paragraph 3.8.
- 2.2 To agree to adopt the new Air Quality Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2023 as at Appendix 1.

3. Background

- 3.1 In 1997, the Government produced a National Air Quality Strategy (NAQS) with the aim of reducing air pollution. The NAQS requires all local authorities to review and assess air quality in their areas against set objectives for seven pollutants.

Where a local authority considers it unlikely to meet one or more of the objectives an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) must be declared and an action plan produced describing the steps to be taken to meet the air quality objectives. In Islington, this work is done by the Environmental Pollution Team.

The seven pollutants are:

- Benzene
- 1,3-butadiene
- Carbon monoxide
- Lead
- Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂)
- Particulate (PM₁₀)
- Sulphur dioxide (SO₂)

- 3.2 In August 2000, the Council completed a review that showed that despite an expected steady improvement of air quality in Islington, the objectives for two pollutants, nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter of 10 microns diameter (PM₁₀), were not likely to be achieved. As a consequence, the Council declared an Air Quality Management Area across a large part of the borough on 19 January 2001, which was expanded to the whole of the borough in 2003.

- 3.3 In 2015 the council undertook a source apportionment study so that there was a greater understanding of the various sources of pollution in the borough. Largely it showed that transport was the most significant contributor to pollution in the borough followed by domestic & commercial heating and construction sites.
- 3.4 Road transport remains the most significant contributor to air pollution in Islington and many actions are focused on tackling this. However, road transport emissions are going down and it is important to also tackle other sources of pollution.
- 3.5 Many of the actions recommended in this report also benefit other areas of the councils work and in particular tackling the climate emergency. Moves to reduce the pollution from vehicles, generators and heating systems also reduce our impact on the environment.
- 3.6 Islington has earned a reputation as a borough which takes poor air pollution seriously but there is much more we can do. Our Air Quality Strategy, which incorporates the Action Plan, goes into detail about the measures we must take to achieve a healthy and clean borough.

3.7 **Legal requirements**

Every local authority that has an active Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) is required under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 to provide an Air Quality Action Plan as a means to address the areas of poor air quality that have been identified within the AQMA.

Islington's AQMA is still in place and there is therefore an obligation to supersede the old Strategy and Action Plan with a new one that will cover the period 2019-2023.

3.8 **Islington Air Quality Strategy (AQS) 2019 - 2023**

The new Air Quality Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2023 outlines the measures that will be taken to improve air quality in the borough. It is divided into two main sections. The first part details the legal framework and policies, local monitoring of pollutants in Islington for the past 10 years and trends of pollutants during those years. The second section talks about our current priorities and includes the most recent proposals to improve air quality in Islington.

- 3.9 The priorities have been divided into three main categories to emphasize the key directions in improving air quality in Islington and align with most recent studies into health impacts of air pollution. Our current priorities are:

- 1. Protecting the vulnerable**
- 2. Keeping Islington moving**
- 3. Better air – Better health – Better environment**

- 3.10 The detailed Action Plan table at Appendix 4 of the new Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2023 contains all proposed actions and the relevant teams within the Council that will be responsible for successful implementation of measures to improve air quality in Islington.

3.11 **Changes following the public consultation**

Full details of the survey responses are given in the Consultation Summary Report at Appendix 2.

There were several representations regarding the monitoring of air pollution outside nurseries to compliment the work being undertaken at schools. Therefore, the action (action 1) regarding monitoring air pollution at schools has now been amended to also include nurseries.

The council also received representations regarding our lobbying efforts with TfL. These were around lobbying TfL and the Mayor for making the buses in Islington Zero Emission (at the exhaust) and making the ULEZ zero emission too. We have therefor made proposed changes to actions 22 and 25.

Several new areas were brought up by respondents that have led to new proposed actions.

Currently the council is working towards meeting the air pollution limits set out in UK law but the World Health Organisation recommends more stringent limits on particulate matter. Several respondents asked the council to consider adopting actions that would help to meet the WHO limits. Therefore, the council is proposing actions 63 and 64 which would mean the council would put together an evidence base around adopting the WHO standards and work towards adopting the WHO standards.

Another suggestion was around working towards eliminating diesel generators in the borough and in particular temporary generators used in our parks for events etc. We have included this as recommended action 65.

Whilst the council has been lobbying for greater powers to tackle pollution and in particular idling, given the feedback from residents and others it was felt that a separate action should be developed to lobby for greater powers to tackle engine idling. Idling was one of the subjects most brought up by respondents. This is proposed action 66.

It is often the case that by walking a back route as opposed to a main road can dramatically reduce exposure to air pollutants. It was felt by some respondents that Islington should promote its current 'clean air walking routes' and work with neighbouring boroughs and local groups to link up routes and create new ones. This is a sensible suggestion and has been included as proposed action 67.

Several responses to the consultation dealt with implementing healthy streets and encouraging walking and cycling. Healthy Streets are designed to encourage active travel, therefore the proposed action 68 seeks to accelerate the growth of Healthy Streets in Islington.

The provision of cycle storage for individual homes in new developments was also raised by some respondents and has been included as proposed action 69.

Also, since the original drafting of the Strategy and Action Plan some implementation dates have been able to be brought forward so that implementation will happen earlier and the benefits of the actions have an impact faster.

We have also made explicit that the pollution monitoring data will be made public, which was always the case but some respondents felt it was not clear.

On top of this some grammatical errors have been corrected.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial implications:

The cost of the consultation was met from existing budgets from within the service and actions detailed in Appendix 4 of the new Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2023 will be met from a mixture of existing in-house and external resources.

4.2 Legal Implications:

As the whole of Islington is designated as an Air Quality Management Area, the council is required to prepare a written action plan for the exercise of its powers in order to achieve air quality standards and objectives in the designated area (section 84 Environment Act 1995). The action plan must include a statement of any proposals submitted to the Council by the Mayor of London (section 86A of the 1995 Act).

In deciding whether to adopt the air quality action plan, the Council should have full and proper regard to the representation received from the statutory consultees.

4.3 Environmental Implications and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030

The Air Quality Action Plan puts forwards numerous actions that will have an environmental benefit, mostly focussing on transport, which accounted for 16% of Islington's carbon emissions in 2017. Emissions of pollutants including CO₂ and NO_x will be reduced both directly (e.g. by removing fossil fuel vehicles from the road) and indirectly (e.g. by reducing congestion). Some of these actions will have initial impacts such as buying new vehicles or installing new infrastructure, although the strategy also considers emissions from plant machinery and transport during construction. However, the longer-term impact – reduced emissions in most cases – is likely to be positive (full life cycle analyses would have to be carried out to confirm the net benefit for each action).

4.4 Resident Impact Assessment:

The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The Council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The Council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

An RIA has been completed and is attached at Appendix 3. It found that the actions contained in the Strategy and Action Plan will deliver health benefits for everyone who lives, works or studies in Islington and in particular for those with socio-economic disadvantage

5. Reason for recommendations

- 5.1 The proposals in this report will continue to reduce harmful emissions within the borough and thereby mitigate their adverse impact on the health of residents.

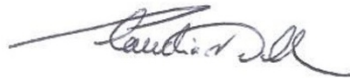
Appendices

Appendix 1 – New Air Quality Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2023

Background papers: none

Final report clearance:

Signed by:



9.10.19

Claudia Webbe, Executive Member for
Environment and Transport

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