



Environment & Climate Change Committee

Date 9th June 2022

Title	Air Quality Update
Report of	Chair of Environment and Climate Change Committee
Wards	All
Status	Public
Urgent	No
Key	No
Enclosures	None
Officer Contact Details	Deputy Chief Executive – Cath Shaw Cath.shaw@barnet.gov.uk Director of Growth – Stephen McDonald (stephen.mcdonald@barnet.gov.uk) (Interim) Assistant Director for Sustainability – Yogita Popat (yogita.popat@barnet.gov.uk)

Summary

This report sets out the approach to producing a new Air Quality Action Plan, and proposes joining the Idling Action London Campaign and participating in National Clean Air Day. It also provides the Committee with an overview of the findings of recent air quality monitoring.

Officers Recommendations

- 1. The Committee agree to produce a new Air Quality Action Plan, including the commitments set out in paragraph 1,3.**
- 2. The Committee agrees to the following immediate steps to be taken ahead of the development of the new Air Quality Action Plan:**
 - participation in National Clean Air Day on 16th June 2022; and
 - joining the Idling Action London Campaign.
- 3. The Committee instructs officers to draw up proposals to engage residents and community groups in development of a Clean Air for Barnet Pledge, and**

delegates authority to the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of the Committee to commence work to develop this Pledge.

- 4. Notes the consultation being undertaken by TfL on proposals to expand the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) London-wide on 23 August 2023, and authorises the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Environment and Climate Change Committee, to submit a response on behalf of the council.**

1. Why this report is needed

- 1.1 Barnet's Air Quality Action Plan 2017-2022 was produced as part of the council's duty to contribute to London Local Air Quality Management. It outlined the action the council would take to improve air quality across the borough between 2017-2022 and replaced the previous action plan which ran from 2003-2016. It identified actions under six broad topics:
- Emissions from developments and buildings
 - Public health and raising awareness of causes of pollution
 - Delivery servicing and freight
 - Borough fleet actions
 - Localised solutions
 - Cleaner transport
- 1.2 The Committee is asked to agree that a new Air Quality Action Plan should be developed to draw together and improve upon the various actions that will be taken to address air quality across the borough, as well as outlining the council's approach to air quality monitoring and reporting. Officers will develop this Action Plan throughout 2022 informed by engagement with residents and stakeholders. The Action Plan will be presented to Environment and Climate Change Committee for approval and adoption later in the year.
- 1.3 The Action Plan will encompass a wide range of actions undertaken by different services, and will have strong links to the emerging Sustainability Strategy. The Committee is asked to agree that it should include proposals to:
- **Increase the range and quantity of air-quality enhancing wildlife** by:
 - Creating a boroughwide biodiversity strategy
 - Looking at woodland and rewilding opportunities
 - Working towards zero neighbourhoods without greenspace
 - **Encourage active travel**, including by:
 - Ensuring that a new Long Term Transport Strategy focuses on encouraging walking and cycling and improved road safety
 - Supporting and promote park runs, walking groups, and cycling groups
 - Improving signage for walkways and green spaces
 - **Reduce the impact of vehicle use**, through measures such as:
 - Increasing the availability of electric vehicle car clubs
 - Increasing the installation of electric vehicle charge points
 - Joining the Idling Action London campaign
 - Introducing 20mph zones where residents want them

- Working towards 100% of schools with STARS (Sustainable Travel: Active, Responsible, Safe) accredited travel plans
- Introducing delivery hubs and a zero-emission last mile delivery service
- **Improve data collection and use**, for example:
 - Exploring boroughwide real time monitoring of air quality

- 1.4 The Action Plan will be developed working with residents and community groups. As well as informing development of the Plan, this this process of engagement will explore further ways in which the Barnet community are able to get involved and support a reduction in air pollution, including the development of a 'Clean Air for Barnet' pledge. Following Committee, further work will be undertaken to design this engagement process, and it is recommended that the once process has been developed the Deputy Chief Executive be authorised, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, to commence that engagement work.
- 1.5 It is recommended that there are some early actions that do not need to wait for the development of the Air Quality Action Plan to be implemented. The Committee is therefore asked to agree that the council join the Idling Action London Campaign and participate in Clean Air Day on 16th June 2022.
- 1.6 [Idling Action London](#), jointly led by City of London Corporation and Camden Council, is a multi-year Mayor's Air Quality Fund project currently involving 30 local authorities and the City Corporation working together to tackle engine idling as a source of avoidable air pollution. The project offers virtual and in-person education and targeted behaviour change interventions for schools, businesses, local authorities, hospitals and other organisations.
- 1.7 Clean Air Day is the UK's largest campaign on air pollution. In its sixth year, Clean Air Day helps to drive a positive shift in public knowledge and action; is a chance to find out more about air pollution, share information, and make the air cleaner and healthier for everyone. The theme for this year's campaign is: "Air pollution dirties every organ in your body. Take steps to improve your health this Clean Air Day."
- 1.8 On 20 May 2022, Transport for London (TfL) published a consultation document seeking views on proposals to expand the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) to the whole of Greater London, to help improve air quality, tackle the climate emergency and reduce traffic congestion. The consultation also seeks views on a range of related issues, such as the basis of future road user charging. The consultation can be found at <https://haveyoursay.tfl.gov.uk/cleanair>. As the consultation closes on 29th July, before the next meeting of this Committee, the Committee is asked to authorise the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, to submit a response to the consultation on behalf of the council.
- 1.9 The Annual Air Quality Status Report 2021 highlights the recent action taken to ensure the borough becomes more sustainable and the associated improvements in air quality across the borough; these improvements were further enhanced by the national lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic. It highlighted that air quality has improved across Barnet in the following ways:

- At both automatic air quality monitoring sites, compliance with the annual mean Air Quality Objective (AQO) of 40 µg/m³ for NO₂ was achieved and both sites recorded zero hourly means >200 µg/m³.
- Both sites measuring PM₁₀ met both the annual and daily mean objectives.
- There were significant decreases in NO₂ levels at all monitoring locations.
- There has been a general improvement in air quality across the borough over the past seven years, and concentrations at all diffusion tube sites were significantly better in 2020 and 2021 when compared to 2018 and 2019.

2. Reasons for recommendations

- 2.1 Barnet has a statutory requirement to lower and monitor air pollution across the borough. It is therefore important that we look go as far and as fast as possible in addressing poor air quality and meeting the targets outlined by DEFRA and WHO.

3. Alternative options considered and not recommended

- 3.1 While the production of an Air Quality Action Plan is a statutory requirement, we could go slower and take less ambitious action in addressing air pollution. However, this is not recommended due to the effect that poor air quality has on the health of residents, particularly those from less advantaged backgrounds.
- 3.2 We could choose not to participate in the national campaign and continue with local air quality campaigns. However, this would miss an opportunity to take advantage of national attention and media on this year's theme of air pollution and health.

4. Post decision implementation

- 4.1 Officers will continue to develop a new Air Quality Action Plan through community engagement; this will be presented to Environment & Climate Change Committee later this year.

5. Implications of decision

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1.1 Delivering Quality Services is a key area of focus in the Corporate Plan 2021-2025. Within the 'Keeping the borough Clean and Green' priority there is a commitment to achieve the highest possible standards of air quality. Barnet has a Corporate Performance indicator to monitor and review trends for air quality in Barnet annually.
- 5.1.2 The air quality action plan is aligned to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and its stated priorities and themes.
- 5.1.3 The air quality action plan links with the existing Sustainability Strategy, Long Term Transport Strategy, Growth Strategy and Local Plan, and air quality issues will be taken into account as these plans and strategies are reviewed.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

5.2.1 None at this time

5.3 Legal and Constitutional References

5.3.1 Sections 82-84 of the Environment Act 1995 imposes obligations on a local authority to periodically review air quality in its area and requires the issue of an air quality action plan once an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) has been designated.

5.3.2 The delegated powers of the legislation fall within the remit of the Deputy Chief Executive in line with the Scheme of delegation for officers and are delivered through Re, Environmental Health Team.

5.3.3 Because of Brexit, regulations have come into force to ensure that existing regulatory standards on air quality will be maintained. The Environment Bill 2019-2021 is processing parliament this year and will have implications for the LAQM process and what is required for new and updated air quality action plan. The bill will implement key parts of the government's Clean Air Strategy and include target for tacking air pollution in the UK. However, the specifics are still being debated and discussion on air quality was largely omitted from the most recent debate in Parliament, on 26 May 2021. The Bill has completed its Committee Stage, Report Stage and Third Reading in the House of Commons and has now proceeded to the House of Lords (<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2593>).

5.3.4 Article 7 of the Council's Constitution states that the Environment and Climate Change Committee has responsibility for all borough-wide or cross-constituency matters relating to street scene, including environmental health. The Environment and Climate Change Committee's terms of reference include receiving reports on relevant performance information and risk relating to the services under the remit of the Committee.

5.4 Insight

5.4.1 Not applicable at this stage, insights and data will be used to inform and monitor the delivery of an Air Quality Action Plan.

5.5 Social Value

5.5.1 The existing and additional work on improving air quality has wide environmental and social benefits, particularly for residents and children living working or going to school near to busy roads

5.6 Risk Management

5.6.1 The risks of exceedances of air pollution in Barnet is managed by the following processes: an annual review and assessment of air quality; a five-year air quality action plan, reviewed annually; and an interdepartmental steering group to promote improved air quality minimises the risks below.

5.6.2 The national government, through DEFRA and GLA, check the effectiveness of local authority reports. If exceedances occur that can be deemed to be the fault of poor management of Council controlled highways, then local authorities may be held directly responsible for a proportion of the fine.

5.6.3 The GLA operate a Cleaner Air Borough status accreditation which Barnet currently has. This accreditation can be removed if there is not deemed to be sufficient progress

5.7 Equalities and Diversity

5.7.1 Work to improve air quality will reflect our Strategic Equalities Objective (SEO), which is: “All our communities will be treated equally, with understanding and respect. Both our council and our borough will be places where diversity is celebrated, and inequality is actively tackled, where people have equal opportunities and equal access to quality services”.

5.7.2 The air quality of Barnet affects all residents and workers and does not differentiate between persons of different culture, religion, wealth, sex or physical ability, therefore the improvement sought in the on-going work to improve air quality will affect every part of society.

5.7.3 However poor air quality does not affect everybody equally. Poor air quality is likely to have greater effect on the very young, the very old or people with certain other disabilities or conditions who may be more prone to suffering as a result of poor air quality.

5.7.4 Poor air quality may also adversely affect poorer residents, who may be disproportionately likely to be from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, as they are more likely to be living nearest to busy congested roads.

5.8 Corporate Parenting

5.8.1 In line with Children and Social Work Act 2017, the Council has a duty to consider Corporate Parenting Principles in decision-making across the Council. The outcomes and priorities in the refreshed Corporate Plan, Barnet 2024, reflect the Council’s commitment to the Corporate Parenting duty to ensure the most vulnerable are protected and the needs of children are considered in everything that the Council does. To this end, great attention has been paid to the needs of children in care and care leavers when approaching business planning, to ensure decisions are made through the lens of what a reasonable parent would do for their own child.

5.8.2 The Corporate Parenting Principles have been considered in the development of this report and will continue to be considered in the development of the strategy; they will also be considered in the development of the Equalities Impact Assessment

5.9 Consultation and Engagement

5.9.1 The Council’s current Air Quality Action Plan 2017-2022 went through the formal Prior to a new Action Plan being presented to Committee we will seek to listen to, and consult with, residents to ensure the Action Plan is community led and is coproduced in coordination with the community and the relevant stakeholders. The results of this engagement will be presented to Committee alongside the Action Plan.

5.10 Environmental Impact

5.10.1 The environmental benefits of good Air Quality have a positive impact on our borough

and the environment in which we live, work and visit. The proposals included in this report aim to improve the Air Quality across the borough and will have wide ranging environmental impacts which should provide a positive impact. The potential benefits of the proposals are detailed throughout the report, and their environmental impact will be assessed on a project-by-project basis when conducting feasibility studies and delivery plans.

6. Background papers

6.1 Barnet's Air Quality Action Plan

<https://www.barnet.gov.uk/sites/default/files/assets/citizenportal/documents/EnvironmentalHealth/ScientificServices/AirQualityActionPlan2017consultationdocument.pdf>

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