

	<h2>Environment Committee</h2> <h3>14th March 2023</h3>
Title	Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP)
Report of	Chair of Environment & Climate Change Committee
Wards	All Wards
Status	Public
Urgent	No
Key	Yes
Enclosures	Appendix 1 – Recommended actions to improve air quality in Barnet. Appendix 2 – 2021 Annual Status Report for Air Quality in Barnet and GLA feedback
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<h3>Summary</h3>	
<p>In 2001 the Council designated the borough of Barnet as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and in 2002 produced a strategy to improve air quality in Barnet. This strategy was superseded by the requirement for a statutory Action Plan to reduce air pollutants such as Nitrogen Dioxide and Fine Particles (PM10 and PM2.5). This Action Plan is updated annually, and update reports must be submitted to the Greater London Authority (GLA) in a prescribed format. This action plan is also written in conjunction with Barnet’s corporate sustainability and climate change policies. This includes BarNET Zero and the Caring for our People, Place, and Planet themes in Barnet’s new corporate plan.</p>	
<p>The purpose of this report is to seek Members’ views on the draft updated Action Plan that is due to be submitted to the GLA and to seek Members views on the range of measures that could be introduced to improve air quality in Barnet.</p>	

Recommendations

- 1. That the Environment Committee note the draft updated Air Quality Action Plan and make written comment.**
- 2. That authority be delegated to the Executive Director Assurance (or deputy) and/or Lead Member for Environment to approve the submission of the finalised Air Quality Action Plan to the GLA on 31st May 2023.**

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 In 2001 the Council designated the borough of Barnet as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and in 2002 produced a strategy to improve air quality in Barnet. This strategy was superseded by the requirement for a statutory Action Plan to reduce air pollutants such as Nitrogen Dioxide and Fine Particles (PM10). This Action Plan is updated annually, and update reports must be submitted to Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in a prescribed format. These are also published on the council website. The pollutants are mainly caused by high levels of motor vehicle use on the busy roads of the borough.
- 1.2 Each year DEFRA and the GLA approve the Action Plan as part of the Statutory Review and Assessment of the authorities' management of air quality. The GLA issued a new template for revising the AQAP in 2019 and provides yearly updates to the template for air quality annual status reports. Barnet's latest air quality annual status report was reviewed by the GLA in 2022 and received no adverse comments.
- 1.3 We consulted on the 2017-2022 AQAP in 2017 receiving approx. 80 responses. The revised action plan is currently undergoing consultation. Feedback and decisions made from other consultations regarding traffic, Sustainable Transport, Public health, and Climate Change will be incorporated into the new AQAP, for example:
 - A1000 Cycle Lane engagement and consultation - Phase 2 (2022)
 - A1000 Experimental Cycle Route consultation – Enhancement (2022)
 - A1000 Cycle Lane engagement and consultation - Phase 1 (2022)
 - Burnt Oak and Colindale traffic measures consultation (2022) (measures did not proceed)
 - School Streets (Various Locations) (2021)
 - Mayor of London's Sustainable Transport, Walking and Cycling guidance consultation (2021)
 - Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-2025 (2021)

This action plan is written in conjunction with corporate sustainability and climate change policies, including BarNET Zero and the *Caring for our People, Place, and Planet* themes in the new corporate plan.

- 1.4 The revised Action Plan will be discussed in the corporate Air Quality Steering Group which will provide progress updates for the following topics:

1. Monitoring and other core statutory duties
 2. Improvement of Public Health and implementation/continuation of awareness campaigns
 3. Reducing Transport Emissions
 4. Delivery servicing and freight
 5. Borough fleet actions
 6. Emissions from developments and buildings
 7. Localised solutions
- 1.5 The Plan will be finalised after receiving comments from the Committee meeting and public consultation. This will be before the end of May.
- 1.6 The DEFRA/GLA timetable requires the Council to report its 2022 air quality results and update the statutory Action Plan by the end of May 2023.
- 1.7 Member's views are sought on what actions they would like to see incorporated in the new Action Plan.
- 1.8 Please see Appendix 1 for the list of recommended new and existing measures to include in the updated air quality action plan.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The measures proposed for the updated Action Plan will help to improve air quality in Barnet, reduce congestion, reduce negative impacts on public health, encourage sustainable transport, support climate change measures, and reduce the likelihood of breaching national air quality objectives.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 The Air Quality Action Plan is a statutory report and therefore must be submitted to DEFRA/GLA in accordance with their timetable. To not submit a plan is therefore not recommended.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 The revised action plan will be completed by 2023 and submitted in agreement with the GLA in the first quarter of 2023. The action plan will also be publicised on the Barnet website.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

5.1.1 The Air Quality Action Plan is relevant to the new Barnet Corporate Plan, *Caring for our People, Place, and Planet*, priorities, as a supporting measure. These themes are addressed in actions such as the following:

People

- Consultation as part of being an effective and engaged council; finding out what Barnet residents and workers want. Empowering communities to help improve poor air quality in Barnet.
- Tackling inequalities in the exposure to poor air quality i.e., improving conditions for those who live near busy roads etc.
- Improving health outcomes by reducing air pollution exposure, and therefore providing people with opportunities to live well.

Places:

- Championing the development of healthier town centres where residents and workers of Barnet can experience a cleaner and safer environment.

Planet:

- Reducing emissions from Buildings and vehicles so that residents benefit from cleaner air.
- Making sustainable choices and/or changes in how we live and work in Barnet in response to the Climate and Biodiversity Emergency declared in 2022.
- our priorities are further explained in detail below on the following pages.

This action plan is integral to the following new environmental priorities currently undergoing development, in addition to the above:

- Clean Air for Barnet Pledge
- Transport and Active travel

5.1.2 To deliver the action plan 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”.

5.1.3 The air quality action plan is aligned to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and its stated priorities and themes.

Key Area 1: Creating a healthier place and resilient communities, highlights that residents in Barnet feel that Barnet *“could be a healthier place to live, work and learn if Air quality was improved, there was less road traffic and more support for active travel”*.

Key Area 1 also acknowledges that:

“Long term exposure [to air pollution] can produce respiratory symptoms and affect lung function, with high concentrations causing inflammation of the airways. Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) pollution within the borough is largely due to transport, areas of higher NO₂ pollution are mainly concentrated around the main roads and junctions, including the A1, M1, A406 and A1000.”

The air quality action plan will encourage sustainable transport such as walking and cycling that help the objective to focus on reducing obesity and preventing long term conditions through promoting physical activity.

The air quality action plan also seeks to address inequalities in the level of exposure to air pollution among communities and the reduction of impacts on the overall health of residents, workers, and commuters in the borough.

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

5.2.1 The COVID-19 pandemic has had a wholly negative impact on the sources of external funding for air quality improvement projects. TFL experienced a dramatic fall in service users which severely impacted revenue, and in turn, the money available for implementation and maintenance of air quality and sustainable transport projects.

Barnet have applied for DEFRA funding in the 2022 round of the Air Quality Grant Scheme. This project: in partnership with Imperial College London’s Environmental Research Group (ERG), and the London Boroughs of Lewisham, Tower Hamlets, Merton, Royal Greenwich, Richmond Upon Thames, Wandsworth, and Newham, aims to use the model responsible for the London Atmospheric Emissions Inventory (LAEI) to provide a science based approach to targeting actions within this Air Quality Action Plan. This pilot work will be a useful tool in identifying and taking local action to drive down NO₂ and Particulates, as well as being able to show local effectiveness of interventions. Additionally, health benefits can be calculated at a borough level adding further benefits to Barnet and other partner authorities. The project is currently pending decision from DEFRA.

Funding of £27,000 from Barnet’s Highways department has been provided for PM_{2.5} monitoring. The money provided will be able to upgrade one automatic monitor to meet DEFRA’s requirements for equivalence and add PM_{2.5} to our general monitoring regime, ahead of the anticipated statutory requirement for PM_{2.5} monitoring.

Highways Agency is currently looking at feasibility study for noise barrier and/or speed reduction, both of which will also have Air Quality benefits by reducing emissions and providing a physical barrier to the migration of pollutants, on the M1/Woodland Way near Mill Hill station.

5.2.2 Depending on the actions, the associated costs to implement are already covered by Council funding, or would be borne by another agency, e.g., TfL, Highways Agency.

5.3 Social Value

5.3.1 The improvements in air quality promoted by the Air Quality Action Plan will have wide social and environmental benefits for all residents and workers in Barnet, especially those close to busy roads, and often areas with higher levels of deprivation.

5.4 Legal and Constitutional References

5.4.1 S.82 Environment Act 1995 requires the issue of an Air Quality Action Plan once an Air Quality Management Area has been designated. The Environment Act 2021 will set objectives for PM2.5.

5.4.2 The delegated powers for this legislation fall within the remit of Regulatory Services and the Environmental Health department.

5.4.3 The Council's Constitution, Article 7 Committees, Forums, Working Groups and Partnerships, sets out the functions of the Environment and Climate Change Committee which includes responsibility for Air Quality, and:

- To approve any non-statutory plan or strategy within the remit of the Committee that is not reserved to Full Council or Policy and Resources.
- The Scheme of Delegation also states that if any report comes within the remit of more than one committee, to avoid the report being discussed at several committees, the report will be presented and determined at the most appropriate committee.

5.6 Risk Management

5.6.1 The risks of not providing an adequate Air Quality Action Plan to help reduce exceedances of poor air quality in the L.B. Barnet are the potential impacts on the health of residents that are regularly exposed to poor air quality from highly trafficked roads.

5.6.2 Exceedances of air quality limits occur near the busy roads of Barnet, and these can reasonably be expected to be still in place in 2025 for PM2.5. Barnet currently has 11 Air Quality Focus Areas.

5.6.3 As the borough has an expanding population this does increase the risk of continued exceedances if the development is not sustainably managed.

5.6.4 There is a moderate risk of major reputational and operational impact if there is no progress acknowledged by the GLA/DEFRA on improving Barnet's air quality from measures described in the action plan.

5.7 Equalities and Diversity

5.7.1 Delivering the action plan will reflect our Strategic Equalities Objective (SEO), which is included in our Equalities, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy 2021

to 2025:

“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 action plan will affect every part of society. Inequalities in the levels of air pollution impact in deprived areas have been identified in national research.

5.8 Consultation and Engagement

5.8.1 The Draft Air Quality Action Plan is undergoing a consultation process with the public, neighbouring boroughs, and other stakeholders. It needs to be approved by Defra and the GLA.

5.8.2 Related consultation(s) over sustainable transport and improvements in the use of roads in Barnet are planned.

5.8.3 Outcomes of the public consultation for the AQAP will be reported within the final AQAP. This AQAP is scheduled for submission to the GLA by 31st of May 2023. The AQAP will be published following feedback from the GLA.

5.9 Insight

5.9.1 There is DEFRA and GLA guidance concerning Air quality action plans. It is a statutory requirement to follow the guidance when producing plans.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- PUBLIC CONSULTATION DRAFT AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN 2023-2028
- [2021 ANNUAL STATUS REPORT FOR AIR QUALITY IN BARNET](#)