

Merton Council Council

6 February 2019

Supplementary agenda 2

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Liberal Democrat Strategic Theme Motion 1

Effective action to cut the most polluting vehicles

This Council notes:

- The proposals for increasing parking charges adopted by Cabinet on 14 January 2019, in the report *Public health, air quality and sustainable transport – a strategic approach to parking charges 2*;
- That policy on parking charges cannot be a revenue-raising strategy;
- The reference made by the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 9 January, that Cabinet was required to receive additional evidence to demonstrate that “increasing parking charges results in a decrease in traffic, and on the link between higher costs for high polluting cars and changing the behaviour of drivers”;
- A planned review of the diesel levy and emissions based charging that will report back later this year, and the start of the procurement process for an IT system that can support an emissions based charging policy.

This Council believes:

- Air quality is a significant public health issue that requires a link to be made between the action proposed, the outcome desired, and a means of measuring success;
- That any scheme for parking charges is undermined in the eyes of the public by a lack of any evidence or analysis the specific charges being proposed will improve air quality by driving down car use or reducing journeys;
- That as vehicle emissions have a direct relationship to air quality and emissions-based charging conforms to the ‘polluter pays’ principle, there is a clear logic which is now commonplace in London for a higher premium to be charged for vehicles that have higher emissions, and a lower charge for cars that have lower emissions; and
- That some residents will need help switching to greener transport options. This is especially those who bought diesel vehicles on the understanding that they were more environmentally friendly, based on Government advice.

This Council therefore requests that Cabinet:

- Abandons the proposals outlined in the *Public health, air quality and sustainable transport – a strategic approach to parking charges 2* adopted by Cabinet on 14 January 2019;
- Urgently brings forward proposals for parking charges based on emissions, using evidence resulting from the planned review of the diesel levy and emissions based charges (expediting that review if necessary), and learning lessons from similar schemes adopted by other London Boroughs;
- Supports and promotes the Mayor of London’s new scheme to help smaller business owners scrap older more polluting vehicles, and investigates ways to help those with lower incomes to change to less polluting vehicles, such as a scrappage schemes for older cars, or only applying emissions based charges to new vehicle applications for controlled parking permits/appropriate sunset periods;
- Engages with the Mayor of London on: extending the Ultra Low Emission Zone to Merton, or the possibility of a mini-ULEZ for the borough; other action to limit the number of high polluting HGVs travelling through the borough; the possibility of Low Emission Bus Zones, like on Putney High Street.

Signed

Cllr Simon McGrath

Cllr Anthony Fairclough

Cllr Carl Quilliam

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Liberal Democrat Strategic theme Motion 2

Air quality Scrutiny Champion

This Council notes:

- That the borough is designated an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA);
- LB Merton's Air Quality Action Plan 2018–2023;
- Research showing that a number of LB Merton schools are located in areas with dangerously high pollution levels.

This Council believes that:

- Air quality is a significant public health issue that needs action from the Council; and
- There should be a focus on measurement of the success of the Council's air quality strategies, and a greater focus on meeting targets and improving air quality.

Therefore, this Council requests that the Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel appoint a councillor as "Air Quality Scrutiny Champion" to ensure air quality plans and actions throughout the borough are consistently monitored, and to support LB Merton's scrutiny of its commitments in relation to improving air quality. The proposed role of the "Air Quality Scrutiny Champion" is set out below.

The Air Quality Scrutiny Champion

- needs an up-to-date understanding of Council/contractor issues affecting air quality;
- should obtain briefings from relevant officers as required;
- should be facilitated in seeking co-operative working with the relevant Cabinet Member(s) and will provide input as required;
- should report back to the panel on at least on an annual basis;
- will work to promote improvements in the scrutiny of air quality plans and activity within the Council;
- could be a nominated Council representative on any relevant outside body;
- will not receive an SRA for this role;
- should be appointed at the Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel at their planned meeting on 27th June 2019, as a time bound appointment with reappointment at the beginning of each new Council term."

Proposed by: Cllr Eloise Bailey

Seconded by: Cllr Paul Kohler

Signed by Cllr Eloise Bailey

Cllr Paul Kohler

Cllr Hina Bokhari

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Conservative Group Strategic theme motion: Sustainable Communities with a focus on Air Quality.

This Council welcomes the focus on air quality in the London Borough of Merton and notes that this is a key concern of our residents. The failure to improve Merton's air quality is a key driving factor in the increase in the life expectancy gap between the east and the west of the borough to nine years.

This Council acknowledges that some action has been taken to address these concerns by:

- Creating an up-to-date Air Quality Action Plan
- The soon to launch policy on anti-idling in the borough, with warning signage being installed this winter
- Introduction of electric vehicle charging points with our partner Source London.

However, this Council is concerned by the extra burdens placed on residents in Merton, especially in Wimbledon and Raynes Park regarding the imposition of the Diesel Parking Tax in 2017 and the upcoming plans to significantly increase parking permit fees from April 2019.

This Council also recognises that no action has been taken to limit air pollution beside schools in the borough, and that it has just awarded itself permission to build a new secondary school on the High Path Estate in an area of very poor air quality.

Therefore, Council resolves to ask the Cabinet to:

1. Lobby the Mayor of London and TfL urgently to clean up the bus fleet and look to introduce Low Emission Bus Zones in Wimbledon Town Centre, Raynes Park, South Wimbledon, Morden and Mitcham Town Centre (e.g. as per Putney High Street in the Conservative controlled London Borough of Wandsworth which has reduced NO_x emissions by 87%)
2. Review the location of the new secondary school to another location within Merton that has cleaner air – thus helping improve the children's' health
3. Abandon discriminatory parking taxes which do nothing to improve air quality
4. Look at positive actions to improve air quality which the residents can support (e.g. large tree planting program, investment in safe space for cycling and storage).

Cllr Daniel Holden

Cllr Nick McLean

Cllr David Dean

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