

# **Merton Council**

## **Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

**25 February 2020**

**Supplementary agenda**

5 Diesel Levy Implementation

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## MAYOR OF LONDON

**Cllr Stephen Alambritis**

Leader of the Council  
London Borough of Merton  
Merton Civic Centre  
London Road  
Morden SM4 5DX

**Ref:** MGLA240719-8384

**Date:** 21 October 2019

Dear Stephen

Thank you for your letter to the Mayor of 22 July about air quality in the London Borough of Merton. I have been asked to respond and I am sorry for the delay in responding.

It is great to hear about all the action you are taking in Merton to tackle London's toxic air and I appreciated the update on some of the initiatives that you are taking forward as part of your Air Quality Action Plan.

You referred to the work Transport for London (TfL) has undertaken in Putney High Street. Low Emission Bus Zones, like Putney, are served only by buses which meet or exceed the cleanest Euro VI engine emission standards. As I want the same benefits to be felt everywhere in London, TfL is lifting the entire diesel bus fleet to the same level. So, I wanted to assure you that all TfL buses in Merton will reach Low Emission Bus Zone standards next year. We are 80 per cent of the way there, with work on the remaining buses being completed by October 2020. Euro VI emission buses emit up to 80 and 95 per cent less particulate matter and oxides of nitrogen respectively from their tailpipes – bringing immediate benefits to the areas they drive through.

In addition, all new double deck buses that have been introduced since last year have had to be hybrid or zero emission. The hybrid technology helps reduce CO2 and fuel consumption by a significant margin, which helps to cut greenhouse gases. TfL now operates the largest electric bus fleet in Europe and, as the technologies develop and become cheaper, this will accelerate the transition.

Turning to your point about transport accessibility, I agree that step-free access at stations is extremely important, which is why it forms a key part of the Mayor's Transport Strategy. In your borough, work to make Wimbledon Park tube station step-free will begin later this year.

As you state, Raynes Park station was included in TfL's nomination for the recent round of Access for All funding but not accepted by the Department for Transport (DfT). The DfT made their decision on funding allocations by setting a quota of stations by region across the UK. The applications are received by region and then ranked in order of demand by region with higher demand being preferred, together with the availability of third-party funding.

Motspur Park did not feature in the same nominations process as it is adjacent to Raynes Park and TfL did not want to make a submission for two stations that are close together on the same route, however there is still a good case for step-free access there.

Currently TfL has no funding to take forward step-free access proposals at these stations. The DfT has announced a further tranche of "Mid Tier" Access for All funding but this is aimed at small-scale schemes. The limit on contributions from the DfT is £1 million and there is only £20 million available for projects across Britain. If the cost exceeds £1 million for any project, then there has to be a guaranteed contribution from another party to cover the difference. TfL would support any further bids made for step-free access provision at these stations made by the borough but cannot commit to supporting these financially. I would advise you to look to other sources of funding, for example CIL or Section 106.

I hope this reply is helpful.

Yours sincerely,



**Heidi Alexander**

Deputy Mayor for Transport

PS – I hope you found our trip to Nottingham useful. I thought it was incredibly helpful and it was good to spend time with you and Ruth.