

Committee: Sustainable Communities O&S Panel

Date: 20 March 2018

Wards: All

Subject: Cabinet response to recommendations made by the Air Quality Task Group and final Air Quality Action Plan 2018 - 2023

Lead officer: Chris Lee, Director, Environment and Regeneration

Lead member: Cllr Ross Garrod, Cabinet Member for Cleanliness and Parking

Contact officer: Jason Andrews, EH Pollution Manager

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The Panel to discuss and comment on amendments to the Air Quality Action Plan 2018-2023, incorporating recommendations and observations of the Air Quality Task Group.
 - Approve the Final Air Quality Action Plan for publication.
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider the final recommendations of the Air Quality Task Group, and where necessary embed these into the final Air Quality Action Plan 2018/23.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Air pollution is recognised as a major contributor to poor health with more than 40,000 premature deaths attributed to poor air quality across the UK each year. It has been identified as a priority both nationally and within London, where pollution levels continue to exceed both EU limit values and UK air quality standards. Pollution concentrations in Merton continue to breach the legally binding air quality limits for both Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) and Particulate Matter (PM₁₀).
- 2.2 This priority has resulted in establishing or a Merton specific cross-party task group to review what actions we need to take as a council and contribute to the drafting and consultation of a new Air Quality Action Plan for the borough.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSE

Recommendation of Air Quality Task Group	Cabinet Member Response	Action Taken
The Sustainable Communities and Overview and Scrutiny Panel to conduct pre-decision scrutiny on the scope of any reviews on parking levies.	Agreed	Embedded in Action Point 33
An Air Quality Officer to be appointed to help to implement the Air Quality Action Plan and provide expertise across the council.	Agreed	Embedded in Action Point 55
The task group supports the use of Local Implementation Plan funding to deliver the Air Quality Action Plan	Agreed	Embedded in Road Transport Theme and to be discussed at DMT
Better use should be made of Section 106 monies to support air quality measures	Agreed	Embedded in Action Point 24
That the Environmental Health Team conduct a review of the impact of emissions from bonfires held in private gardens and on construction sites.	Agreed and the scope must allow for cultural celebrations such as November the 5 th .	Embedded in Action Point 62
The task group supports the rollout of electric charging points across the borough, including utilising additional funding where available.	Agreed	Embedded in Action Point TBC
Ensure that air quality measures are embedded in the Local Plan and that council adopts the Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance for Merton and Richmond.	Agreed but as the Action Plan is not live until 2020 we need to adopt a New Planning Guidance as soon as possible even if this falls before the Local Plan.	Embedded in Action Point 10 & 11
Merton should award certificates recognising good practice to developers	Agreed	To be followed up with the Pollution

that comply with the council's standards		Team as part of the NRMM funding for 2018/19
The Environmental Health team to provide training for the planning team and councillors on the planning committee on air quality issues.	Agreed	Embedded in Action Point 43

4. COMMENT FROM THE CABINET MEMBER

- 4.1 I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues with their work as part of the Air Quality Task Group. I recognise their contribution to developing a better Action Plan and a more robust monitoring network. Tackling air quality is such an important area of work and I know that this is a cross-party priority for Merton.

5. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 5.1 A 6-week public consultation was undertaken. The consultation was part of the statutory process for the implementation of an AQAP including:
- 5.2 The targeted engagement of partners and statutory bodies with an interest in air quality
- 5.3 A borough wide six-week online publication of the draft plan and accompanying online survey
- 5.4 The targeting of some community groups that had engaged us on the subject of air quality.
- 5.5 This resulted in 155 responses and 6 group or organisation responses.

6. TIMETABLE

- 6.1 Air Quality Action Plan to be published 30th March 2018

7. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Air Quality Action Plan will require an investment in resources to deliver the plan over the next 5 years, these resources will be dependent upon the final options adopted.
- 7.2. Many of these measures will already be influenced and implemented within the Councils capital and revenue commitments over the next 5 years.
- 7.3. Infrastructure measures are limited to the available grant funding streams.
- 7.4. A small number of measures have a direct consultancy cost and funding will need to be secured internally.
- 7.5. This plan will require a revenue staffing commitment to at least 1 FTE to deliver, coordinate and feedback measures and work with partners to deliver the Plan. Estimated cost is £48,000 (including on costs). This will be funded by revenue generated from the vehicle emissions charge.

- 7.6. Additionally, Merton's Local Implementation Plan funding (LIP) needs to be accessible by the Pollution Team to fund borough specific air quality actions.

8. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

The Council has declared the borough as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and as such has a statutory duty to produce and update an Air Quality Action Plan.

9. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. A recent study into poor air quality highlights the fact that inequalities in exposure to air pollution are mainly an urban problem, suggesting that measures to reduce environmental air pollution inequality should focus on cutting vehicle emissions in deprived urban neighbourhoods. Poor air disproportionately impacts on the old, the young and those suffering underlying health conditions.
- 9.2. The Council's New Air Quality Action Plan for 2018-2023 proposes a number of measures aimed at tackling air quality across the borough with a particular focus on hotspots where we know that air quality is at its worst.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

None

11. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None

12. APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

Appendix 1 – Revised Air Quality Action Plan 2018-23
Appendix 2 - Final Report and Recommendations arising from the Air Quality Task Group

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Not Applicable