

Committee: Council

Date: 6th of February 2019

Wards: All

Subject: Strategic Theme – Sustainable Communities (Air Quality)

Lead officer: Director for Environment and Regeneration, Chris Lee

Lead members: Councillor Tobin Byers, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health. Councillor Martin Whelton, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport

Contact officer: Jason Andrews, Air Quality & Contaminated Land Manager

Recommendations:

That Council review and consider the content of the report.

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. Each meeting of Council receives a report updating progress against one of the Council's strategic themes. The theme for this report is **Air Quality**.
- 1.2. The portfolio holders are Councillor Tobin Byers, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health and Councillor Martin Whelton, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport. The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel continues to exercise its statutory function in relation to environmental sustainability (including energy, waste management, parks and open spaces, air quality and the built environment), enterprise and skills (including regeneration, employment, adult education and libraries), housing and transport.
- 1.3. The report provides an overview of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel priorities to:
 - Ensure that the Council is fulfilling its statutory responsibilities under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995.
 - Ensure that the Council take active steps to reduce pollution from Nitrogen Dioxide and Particulate Matter in the borough.

The report details actions that have been taken to manage air pollutants in the borough, and looks at what further actions are proposed to offer protection to residents and businesses in Merton.

2.0 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, with over 9000 attributed to poor air quality in London.
- 2.2 Air pollution is associated with a number of adverse health impacts: it is recognised as a contributing factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer. Additionally, air pollution particularly affects the most vulnerable in society: children and older people, and those with heart and lung conditions. There is also often a strong correlation with equalities issues, because areas with poor air quality are often less affluent.

- 2.3 Public Health England estimate that 6.5% of mortality in Merton is attributable to poor air quality.
- 2.4 Air quality 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 objectives. Merton along with nearly all London boroughs continue to breach the legally binding air quality limits for both nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter (PM₁₀).
- 2.5 The air quality monitoring network run by Merton has shown that the UK annual mean NO₂ objective (40µg/m³) continues to be breached at a number of locations across the borough including Colliers Wood, Morden, Tooting and South Wimbledon. In some locations the NO₂ concentration is also likely to be in excess of the UK 1-hour air quality objective (200µg/m³ not to be exceeded more than 18 times per year) which indicates a risk not only to people living in that area but also for those working or visiting the area.
- 2.6 Pollution in Merton comes from a variety of sources. It includes pollution originating outside the borough, and, in the case of particulate matter, a significant proportion comes from outside London and even outside the UK. Obviously the Council has limited control over this, however local sources are primarily from road transport and from development/buildings.

3 Legal Framework

- 3.1 The UK Government and the devolved administrations are required under the Environment Act 1995 to produce a national air quality strategy. This strategy sets out the UK's air quality objectives and recognises that action at national, regional and local level is needed, depending on the scale and nature of the air quality problem.
- 3.2 Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 and Part II of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 requires local authorities in the UK to review air quality in their area and designate air quality management areas (AQMA) if improvements are necessary. Where an air quality management area is designated, local authorities are also required to work towards the Strategy's objectives prescribed in regulations for that purpose. An Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) describing the pollution reduction measures must then be put in place. These plans contribute to the achievement of air quality limit values at local level.
- 3.3 In the past few years the UK government has been challenged successfully by environmental lawyers from Client Earth. These challenges have been predominantly around the measures within the governments Clean Air Strategy and the implementation process and time periods. The government has recently revised its Clean Air Strategy. The revised Strategy refers to the strengthening of existing powers where necessary and the introduction of new powers for Local Authorities to further reduce air pollution from key areas such as transport, the home, farming and industry. Details of amended Local Authority powers will follow in the new Environment Bill and associated clean air legislation.
- 3.4 Although legal challenges on air quality have been levelled at central government, the same challenge and recommendations can equally be applied to any Local Authorities air quality responsibilities. These challenges, along with the emerging health impact of poor air quality have given the agenda added impetus over the past few years.

As well as the legal responsibility, a Local Authority has a duty to ensure the health and wellbeing of its residents, visitors and businesses.

Table A. Summary of National Air Quality Standards and Objectives

Pollutant	Objective (UK)	Averaging Period	Date ¹
Nitrogen dioxide - NO ₂	200 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ not to be exceeded more than 18 times a year	1-hour mean	31 Dec 2005
	40 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$	Annual mean	31 Dec 2005
Particles - PM ₁₀	50 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ not to be exceeded more than 35 times a year	24-hour mean	31 Dec 2004
	40 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$	Annual mean	31 Dec 2004
Particles - PM _{2.5}	25 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$	Annual mean	2020
	Target of 15% reduction in concentration at urban background locations	3 year mean	Between 2010 and 2020
Sulphur Dioxide (SO ₂)	266 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ not to be exceeded more than 35 times a year	15 minute mean	31 Dec 2005
	350 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ not to be exceeded more than 24 times a year	1 hour mean	31 Dec 2004
	125 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ not to be exceeded more than 3 times a year	24 hour mean	31 Dec 2004

Note: ¹by which to be achieved by and maintained thereafter

4. Air Quality in Merton

- 4.1 Pollution in Merton comes from a variety of sources. It includes pollution originating outside the borough, and, in the case of particulate matter, a significant proportion of this comes from outside London and beyond the UK. Of the pollution that originates inside the borough the main sources of NO_x are road transport (57.1%), domestic gas boilers (18.8%) and Non-Road Mobile Machinery NRMM (11.6%) – Figure 1. The main sources of particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) are road transport (51.6%), NRMM (17.7%) and industry (10.3%) – Figure 2. The main sources of particulate matter (PM₁₀) are road transport (50.4%), re-suspended dust from roads and surfaces (19.9%) and NRMM (10.3%) – Figure 3.

Figure 1

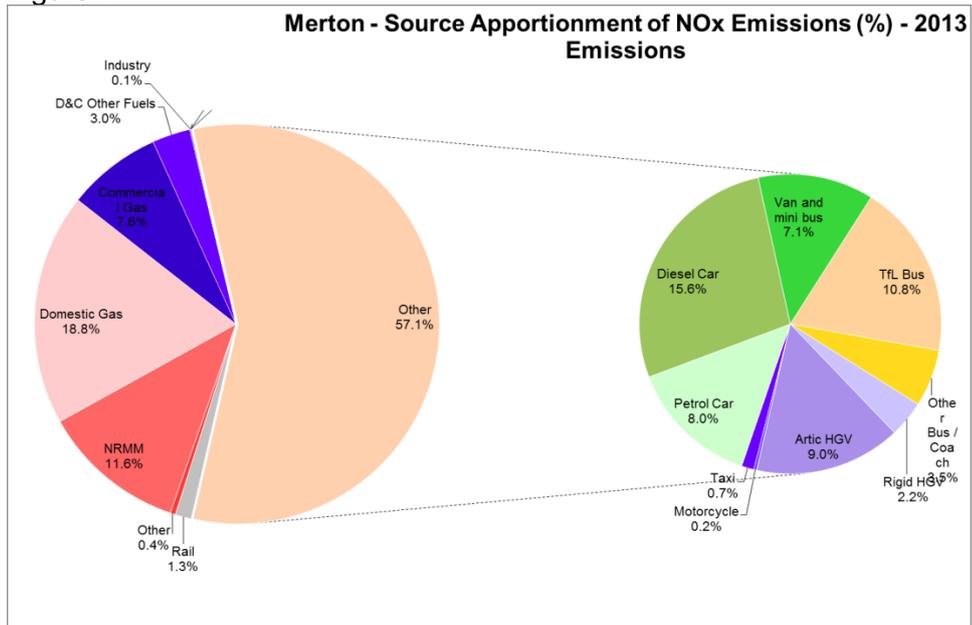


Figure 2.

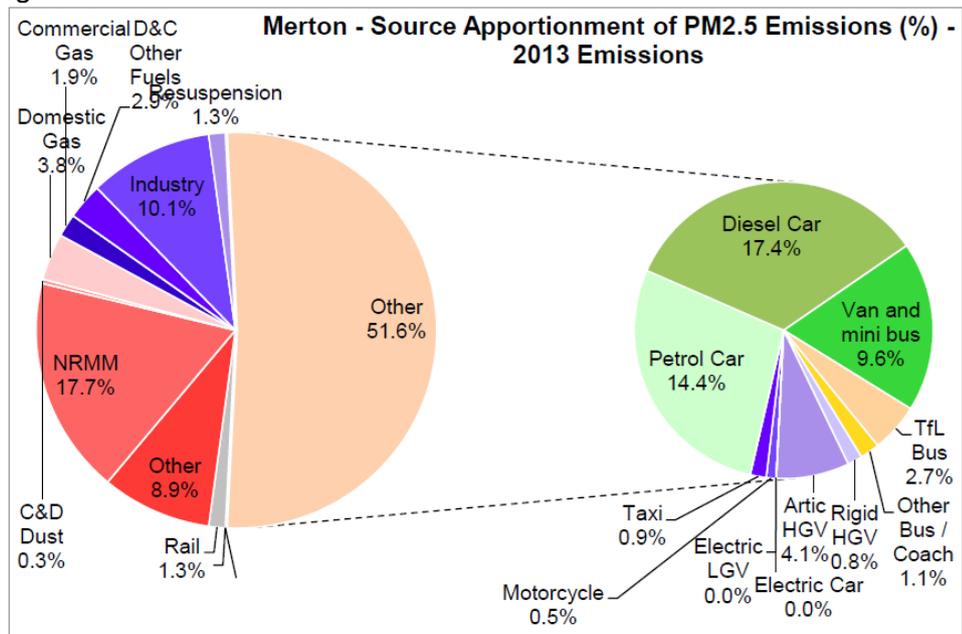
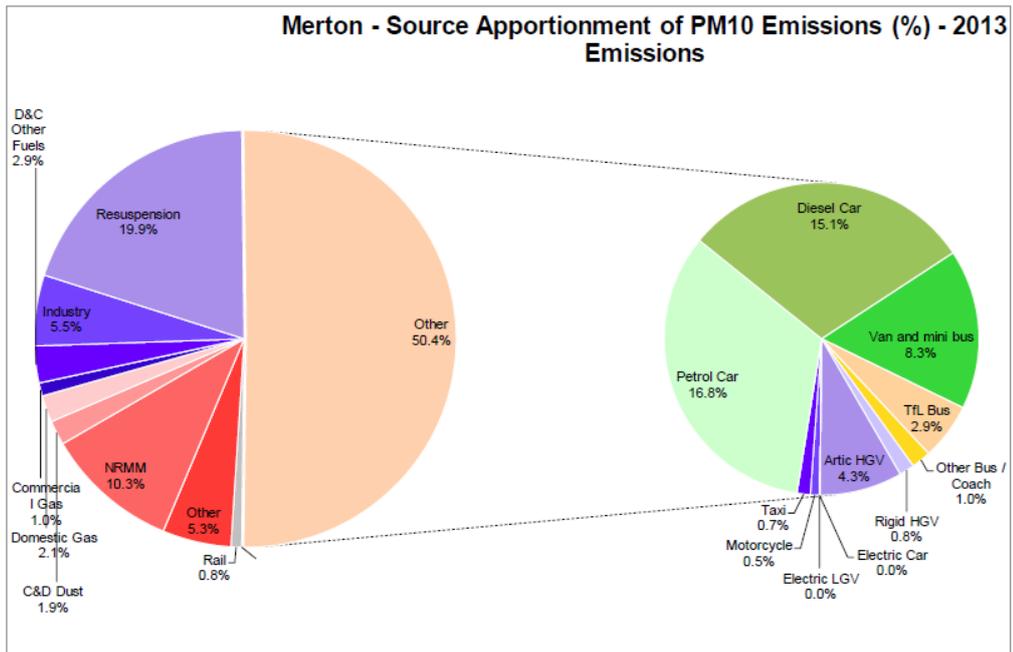


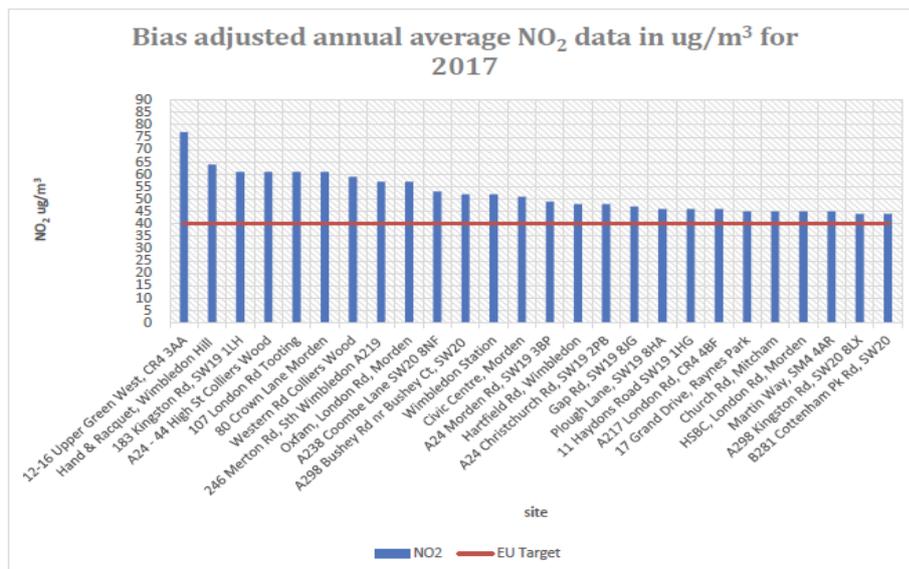
Figure 3

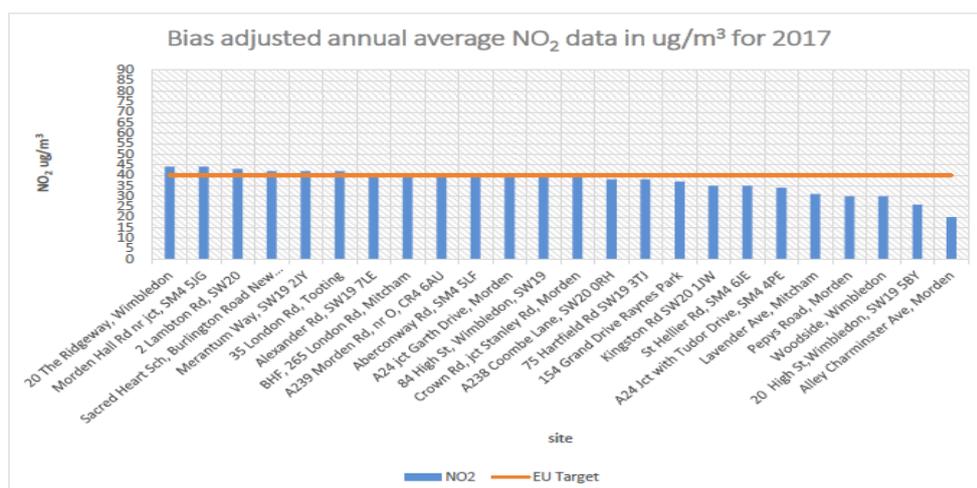


4.2

In respect of **road transport** sources, the London Atmospheric Emissions Inventory (LAEI) source apportionment data for the borough indicates that diesel vehicles contribute to approximately 90% of the NO_x emissions and 80% of the PM₁₀ emissions (based on 2013 modelled data). This supports the evidence from the dispersion modelling which indicates that the highest concentrations of both NO₂ and PM₁₀ are most closely associated with the main traffic routes and road junctions within the borough.

Figure 1: Nitrogen Dioxide Bias Adjusted Annual Average Concentrations for all sites for 2017 (split over 2 graphs)





5. Recent background to Air Quality in Merton

- 5.1 In 2017, Merton convened a cross-party group specifically charged to review air quality in the borough, with a view to considering current action and improvements the Council should implement. This Air Quality Task Group heard from a number of experts and worked closely with the Environmental Health Pollution Team Manager.

The final report of the Air Quality Task Group was presented to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel in February 2018.

The report recommended that;

- *The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel to conduct pre-decision scrutiny on the scope of any reviews to parking levies.*
- *An Air Quality Officer to be appointed to help to implement the Air Quality Action Plan and provide expertise across the council. This will be appointed from existing resources, such as the diesel surcharge.*
- *The task group supports the use of Local Implementation Plan funding to deliver the Air Quality Action Plan.*
- *Better use should be made of section 106 monies to support air quality measures.*
- *That the Environmental Health team conduct a review of the impact of emissions from bonfires held in private gardens and on construction sites with a view to tighter restrictions, excluding cultural events.*
- *The task group supports the rollout of electric charging points across the borough, including utilising additional funding where available.*
- *Ensure that air quality measures are embedded in the Local Plan and that Council adopts the Draft Air Quality Supplementary Planning Guidance for Merton.*
- *In recognition for Merton's work to coordinate a South London wide construction emission initiative, Merton should award certificates recognising good practice to developers that comply with the council's standard.*
- *The Environmental Health team to provide training for colleagues in planning team and Councillors on the planning committee on air quality issues, so that informed decisions on planning applications can be made where there is an air quality component.*

- 5.2 In 2018, Merton published its new Air Quality Action Plan 2018 – 2023 (AQAP) this was developed in response to recommendations made by the 2017 Air Quality Task Group.

This new AQAP received a warm welcome from both the air quality industry and the public alike. It was innovative in its design and the way in which it communicated this vital agenda to all levels of the community.

This Action Plan is a living document subject to constant review and evaluation and will continually incorporate best practice and developing technologies in the world of air quality.

The Plan is split into nine separate themes and contains some 70 action points.



6. Redefining our priorities

- 6.1 In recognition of the public health priority of the air quality agenda and the need to comply with the national air quality objectives within the Merton, the Council reviewed what actions we can and will take to tackle air pollution in the borough. Merton is not alone in this, many London boroughs have now, or are considering, a complete refresh of their action plans and a move towards many of the measures that Merton have and are continuing to implement.
- 6.2 Although there are limited measures we can take as an authority to directly influence polluting traffic, we have used the powers available to us to tackle this problem. These actions included the introduction of a diesel levy, this was based upon the realisation that diesel vehicles (particularly cars) contribute to a disproportionate amount of NO₂ within the borough. This was also one of the few levers that the Council can use to try to tackle one of the main causes of toxic gases within the borough. We are also currently reviewing parking charges in the borough as an additional measure to influence the move towards active travel, public transport and away from the most polluting vehicles.
- 6.3 The priorities for the new AQAP 2018-2023 are:
- *Establish and maintain an effective air quality group to ensure that the implementation of AQAP measures is coordinated effectively between relevant Council services;*
 - *Encourage the uptake of low emission vehicles and review and consider the introduction of an emissions-based parking levy, and review the effectiveness of such a measure over the next two years;*
 - *To identify the key causes of traffic congestion within our Air Quality Focus Areas and pollution 'hotspots' and to determine effective measures for improving traffic flow through those areas using detailed air quality and traffic management modelling tools;*
 - *To evaluate the air quality benefits and feasibility of introducing 'mini' Ultra-Low Emission Zones in the areas of the borough identified as having the poorest air quality;*
 - *To provide guidance to developers on the impact of development on air quality and ensure that approved schemes include effective mitigation and maximise the opportunity to improve infrastructure for sustainable transport options;*

- *To formalise anti-idling enforcement in order to minimise emission from vehicles around key locations such as schools, taxi-ranks, Air Quality Focus Areas and hotspots;*
- *To continue to work with schools, parents and students to improve awareness of AQ and to optimise parents' and children's desire and opportunity to adopt sustainable travel options;*
- *To review Merton's air quality monitoring network to ensure that it effectively identifies areas of poor air quality, and provides accurate data to enable us to evaluate air quality trends and the impact of AQAP measures.*

7. Merton now leading the AQ Agenda

7.1 Merton is now recognised as one of the leading Local Authorities for its work on air quality, leading on innovative and ground breaking initiatives that extend beyond our borough boundaries.

7.2 We have made brave and sometimes controversial decisions to tackle pollution in our borough, something we will continue to do. We have implemented a diesel levy linked to our parking permit system and are coordinating our air quality work with internal partners and shaping policies that can push behavioural issues such as parking and planning.

7.3 We are delivering industry leading regional and national initiatives such as our work in reducing pollution from the construction industry in London. This project in partnership with the Mayor of London is directly tackling the most polluting equipment on large construction sites throughout South London. The project has been so successful that it will be extended to cover all London boroughs from April 2019 and funded by the Mayor of London in partnership with the London boroughs. This scheme is the world's first Low Emission Zone for the construction industry and can be applied throughout the UK and other major cities across the world.



7.4 We are a key partner in the 'School Neighbourhood Approach Pilot - (SNAP)', formerly 'Schools Superzones'. Colleagues from 3 different directorates; Children, Schools and Families, Environment & Regeneration, and Public Health are collaborating to shape a local 'whole systems' approach to improve the environment in and around a school across broad themes: The food around us; Moving around; Feeling safe; Spaces and places (includes air quality); and Communications and enablers.

7.5 Our new expanded joint Regulatory Services Partnership (RSP) spans three important London boroughs and brings together officer expertise and good practice in the air quality industry. It will provide for air quality initiatives across a wider geographical area, give a greater voice for lobbying and could attract considerable resourcing through grants and other funding.

8. Current AQAP update

8.1 The Air Quality Action Plan is split into 9 Themes covering some 70 action measures, an outline update on the themes are listed below. A RAG status rating for each measure is provided in the Air Quality Matrix and is reviewed by Senior Management and the Cabinet Member monthly.

8.2 Theme - Monitoring Air Quality (Action Points 1- 9)

All actions are on target as of January 2019. In addition, we have installed a further monitoring device as part of a London wide pilot scheme aimed at gathering real-time pollution levels. We are also working with a major multinational company to test and pilot the use of smart monitors. These could potentially provide cheap real-time data on air quality within the borough.

To facilitate the change to smarter monitoring the refresh of lamppost columns in Merton will include plugin facilities for new devices.

8.3 Theme - Reducing Emissions from Building & Developments (Action Points 10 – 22)

All actions measures are on target, AQ will form a stand-alone part of the Local Plan, this is currently undergoing consultation. Initial feedback has been very positive.

We have been awarded our first Section 106 payment specifically relating to Air Quality.

Funding from the diesel levy has enabled us to employ a new Air Quality Officer to help deliver our new Action Plan and build close relationships with partners including planning colleagues, and strengthening links between the planning agenda and air quality.

There have been a number of recent challenges to the planning process on the basis of air quality, officers have noted that there is a lot of misunderstanding about air quality in the borough, a subject we will need to work to clarify over the next year or so.

8.4 Theme - Reducing Emissions from Road Transport (Actions 23 -32)

All action measures are on target. The Plan is aligned closely with the review of the parking charges throughout the borough and the AQ team is working closely with Public Health colleagues to ensure that the review of parking is closely aligned to both the health agenda and air quality initiatives.

The Council is in the process of finalising its draft third Local Implementation Plan (LIP), which sets the course as to how we will meet the Mayor's Transport Strategy and incorporates a number of delivery targets, including targets on car ownership and air quality. The LIP funding of £1.5m for 2019/20 will focus on Vision Zero and Healthier Streets and covers 18 individual initiatives. Vision Zero aims to ensure that deaths and serious injuries from all road collisions are eliminated and Healthy Streets/Heathy People sets out to rebalance our streets and environment.

Improving the street environment and promoting healthier lifestyles through more walking and cycling will be essential in delivering these outcomes.

The Council is committed to extending 20MPH speed limit zones throughout the borough, although the direct benefit to reducing air pollution is generally unclear, these zones do assist in creating an environment that is attractive to walking and cycling and improved safety.

In 2019-2020 the Pollution Team will be funding a study into 20MPH zones and air quality as part of its wider work throughout the partnership boroughs.

8.5 Theme - Raising Awareness (Action Point 33-39)

Merton has funded the hosting of the Love Clean Air website for the next five years and subscribed to airTEXT for the next two years. We held a successful Clean Air Day which was also supplemented by additional school's days.

Closer links are being established with our Public Health colleagues and nearly all initiatives are joint actions between the teams. Regular meetings are ongoing at officer level to explore links between Public Health & Air Quality teams.

8.6 Theme – Working Together (Action Point 40-48)

A borough wide steering group has not been established yet. There are current discussions to use the established Environment Sub Group as a foundation for the steering group. Initial discussions are positive and the formal proposal will be put to the group in Jan/Feb 2019.

The Council supports the Mayors Transport Strategy proposals to clean the bus fleet but believes the target of doing this in outer London by 2041 is not ambitious enough. The Council will continue to lobby to see this target brought forward and for more all-electric buses to be placed on outer London Streets sooner. Briefing sessions for Councillors and Planning colleagues will be an action picked up in February.

8.7 Theme – Leading by Example (Action Point 49 – 54)

A new air quality officer paid for through the Diesel Levy has been appointed bringing further experience in delivering air quality initiatives to the borough.

Parking Services is fundamentally reviewing its fleet of vehicles. This project is aimed at reducing the number of vehicles and move towards the use of public transport. The remaining fleet will be all electric and secured through procurement in 2019/20.

8.8 Theme – Innovation & Technology (Action Points 55-58)

We are currently piloting an initiative with a multinational company around the deployment of new real-time air quality monitors.

Officers played an active role in the industry annual conference on new monitoring technologies.

Merton has applied for a number external grants relating to air quality and will be leading on a London wide initiative to reduce emissions from construction sites.

8.9 Theme – Tackling Pollution (Action Point 59-64)

Anti-idling signage was due to be installed by officers of the Air Quality Team, however this was delayed due to public liability issues. A private contractor has now been tasked with installing signage throughout the borough. There are currently 113 signs to be installed in 20 locations throughout the borough. This includes schools, taxi ranks and level crossings.

We are currently considering additional locations in the borough.

Merton has submitted an application to the Mayors Air Quality Fund to be a member of a pan-London anti-idling project, which includes on-street enforcement against idling. If the application is successful, Merton has a commitment to commence enforcement activities later in 2019.

8.10 Theme – Our Schools (Action Point 65 – 70)

The new programme of school audits will start in April 2019; we will aim to cover at least three schools a year.

The Mayors primary school air quality audit programme is now in the completion stage and we are working closely with Merton Abbey Primary school.

There is current joint working with parking colleagues to pilot and implement pedestrian streets outside schools which will restrict traffic at certain times of the day to reduce pollution and increase safety.

The air quality team will be working along with Public Health colleagues leading in a school's project called 'SNAP'. This not only looks at air quality but also includes health and well-being initiatives (see section 7.4). A number of schools are being considered for the project and negotiations are underway.

9.0 Additional borough activities improving air quality

9.1 All departments in the Council can and are taking steps to improve air quality in the borough, this includes creating a local environment which is attractive to cycling, walking and active lifestyles.

9.2 **Car Clubs** – There are currently 3 car club providers in the borough. Each uses a different operating model. The Blue City scheme provides 5 - 6 all electric cars operating between Source London electric vehicle charging points; Enterprise Cars run a traditional car club from dedicated on-street bays with about 200 Merton members and by far the largest is Zip Car Flex with around 60 flex cars operating in the borough on a daily basis plus a small number of dedicated bays. Launched between April and June 2017 the Flex scheme now has over 5000 Merton members. This so called floating car club model is expanding rapidly across London. New operators are expected to come to Merton in 2019 further expanding the car club offer. Each floating car club vehicle can replace up to 13 privately owned vehicles. The Council is expected to generate between £80k and £100k per annum. London has a target of 1,000,000 car club members by 2025. Merton would like to double the number of car club members by 2021/2022. Many car club operators have ambitions to move towards all electric fleets.

9.3 **Vehicle Scrappage** – As a borough we will continue to lobby and support the need for a London-wide and national scrappage scheme to help people move away from the most polluting vehicles, and compliment local actions targeted at reducing the use and ownership of such vehicles.

9.4 **Electric Vehicle Charging Points** - There are currently 70 publically accessible charge points (7kw) spread across the borough, which are able to charge a typical electric vehicle in 3-4 hours. A further 31 charge points are in the process of being commissioned by Source London and should be operational by the end of March 2019.

9.5 **Transport for London** – We are continuing to work in partnership with TFL on a number of joint initiatives aimed tackling traffic and transport with a view to prioritising active transport and creating an environment attractive to walking and cycling. In partnership with TFL we are supporting a network of 20 rapid chargers (50KW) across Merton which will be capable of charging a vehicle in 15- 30 minutes. This includes two chargers on London Road, Morden and a third on Colliers Wood High Street is currently going through the planning process. These rapid chargers are mainly aimed at taxi and other high usage vehicles but can be

used by any motorist. As part of the Go Ultra Low City Scheme (GULCS) Merton proposes to trial a number of lamp column chargers in 2019 aimed at overnight parking. The Council is now ahead of target to deliver 125 publically assessable charge points by 2020/21.

- 9.6 **Road Safety Education & Travel plans** - Future Merton Road Safety Education Team provide a range of programmes and training for school children and the local community. Partnership working with schools, Met Police and Cycling Instructor provides events such as Changing Places for pedal cyclists and motorcyclists, advising on blind spots and road positioning. Other road safety training programmes are Kerbcraft, practical on road child pedestrian training modules for year 2 pupils, and Junior Travel Ambassadors and Youth Travel Ambassador projects which promote sustainable travel and healthier lifestyle choices. These are also part of the TfL Stars School Travel Plan Programme. Currently Merton has 33 schools engaged or achieving Stars Accreditation, of which 10 are Gold Level, 8 Silver Level, 11 Bronze Level and 3 are engaged and working toward accreditation. Air Quality is also of concern as it affects children's health i.e. asthma, lung infections and events have been provided in 2 schools to raise awareness of pollution and emissions on health and how to reduce levels by reducing car engine idling and car usage.
- 9.7 **Bikeability cycle training** is provided to school children and adults at beginner, improver and commuter levels. Balance Bike is valuable training for younger children who cannot cycle and we provide training bikes in socio-economic areas for school children. Scooter training is a popular pre-cursor to cycle training as it develops balance skills as progression to cycle training. Cycle training for adults increased by 6% in 2017 and numbers in the group training sessions at weekends have also increased.
- 9.8 **School Safety** – apart from supporting schools to develop their school travel plans we have an annual rolling programme to introduce road safety and access improvements outside schools. Interventions include localised 20mph speed limit; vertical deflections such as a speed table and buildouts; review of existing parking restrictions including school keep clear zigzag markings; school children alert lights; other school related road markings etc. Last year we made safety improvements outside nine schools. The Council's wider roll out of 20mph speed limits will help create a street environment where people feel safer to walk and cycle thereby supporting improved health outcomes for everyone.
- 9.9 **Accessibility** - As part of our annual accessibility programme we regularly respond to requests made from vulnerable road users. Last year we introduced safe crossing points such as central islands, zebra crossings and pedestrian phase at existing signals in seven locations across the borough. We have also introduced a number of footway widening and pram ramps.
- 9.10 **Cycle schemes** - In partnership with the Mitcham Common Conservators, last year we introduced a much-needed shared space (pedestrians and cyclists) along Croydon Road and in recent months we completed a similar route along Beddington Lane. Through LIP3, the Council is intending to deliver new safer cycling routes.
- 9.11 **Controlled Parking Zones (CPZ)** - During last financial year we introduced 9 CPZs across the borough which included new zones and the extension of zones in Wimbledon Village, Raynes Park, Colliers Wood, Mitcham and Morden. Extending the CPZ's means that the borough can apply actions such as the diesel levy to more vehicles in the borough.
- 9.12 **Morden town centre** - Merton council is working in partnership with TfL to design and deliver public realm improvements with the Mayor's Healthy Streets agenda

being a core priority. As part of our shared public realm with TfL in Morden, we are committed to relocating the bus stands at Morden station to drastically improve air quality and provide new public space.

- 9.13 **Greener Borough** - Merton is fortunate to have abundant green spaces and parks with a rich biodiversity and mix of trees, including along many of our streets. Trees can help to improve air quality and mitigate climate change and through screening helps to support a more appealing walking environment and improve physical and mental health. The Council will continue to seek ways to maintain and enhance our green infrastructure.
- 9.14 **Public Health** - A key theme for the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which is currently being refreshed to cover 2019-24 (led by the Health and Wellbeing Board), is **Healthy Place**. We want to focus on how we can create an environment that allows all Merton residents to flourish. This will include a vision to make walking and cycling easier and more accessible options in the borough.

10. Future steps and priorities

- 10.1 The AQAP is a 'live' document that brings together actions that the Council as a whole can and should be taking to tackle air pollution in the borough. It is subject to changes and challenges facing the boroughs need to tackle this public health concern.
- 10.2 The AQAP will run for the next 4 years and will focus on delivering the actions and reviewing these actions on a regular basis. It will incorporate changes in the air quality agenda and embrace new innovations and technologies.
- 10.3 The plans to introduce a new extended ULEZ in London although welcomed for tackling polluting vehicles needs to be assessed carefully, we need to ensure that the impact on our borough is positive and that action we take compliment or may even help expand the zone and its ambitions.
- 10.4 The governments new Clean Air Strategy 2019 suggests new powers for Local Authorities, whilst we welcome this, there will be a resourcing issue that needs to be considered and active discussions are currently underway throughout Councils to define what these powers will look like and how these could be used to address the air quality agenda.
- 10.5 The possibility of Heathrow expansion will impact upon a significant number of London boroughs. In Merton the direct impact of air pollution and noise is significantly less than other boroughs, however we need to ensure that we fully engage in the consultation process and ensure the best outcome for our borough for both air quality and noise. We will encourage residents to have their say on this important subject.
- 10.6 In 2019 onward we intend to actively take those steps available to us as an authority to tackle this problem rigorously. This will include reviewing and levying polluting activities where we can, reviewing policy and charging mechanisms to incentivise change. We will consider what new regulatory framework is available to us to tackle through traffic in the borough and specifically in our focus areas and locations of poor air quality.

11. **ADVICE/RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELEVANT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

- 11.1 The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel has taken an active role in scrutinising air quality issues, contributing to policy development and the inclusion of an air quality performance measurement in the basket of indicators that the Panel considers at each of its meetings.
- 11.2 In January 2018, the Panel received the final report of its scrutiny task group review of air quality. The findings fed into the council's air quality action plan. The Panel is continuing to monitor the implementation of the task group's recommendations – the next update is due at the Panel's meeting on 26 February 2019.
- 11.3 Further scrutiny work to address the link between air quality, vehicle emissions and traffic speed was conducted through pre-decision scrutiny and two call-ins relating to the diesel levy. The Panel plans to monitor the implementation of the levy to assess whether the policy is beginning to have an impact on desired outcomes. The Panel also plan to take an active role in contributing to the terms of reference for a review of the levy in 2019/20.
- 11.4 In November 2018, as part of its discussion of the council's budget and business plan, the Panel passed a recommendation asking Cabinet to consider increasing the capital spend on street trees and other associated landscaping by 10% to help improve the borough's air quality, to be offset by reducing equivalent spend on fleet vehicles.
- 11.5 Most recently, at its meeting in January 2019, the Panel has scrutinised the proposals relating to the development of an approach to car parking charges to be used as a lever to improve public health, air quality and sustainable transport. The Panel's reference to Cabinet on this matter included a recommendation that Cabinet should receive further 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.
- 11.6 The Panel welcomed Cabinet's plan for public consultation on the parking charge proposals and recommended that Cabinet share the results with the Panel so that it could contribute additional thoughts prior to a final decision being made by Cabinet. Similarly, the Panel also requested an opportunity for pre-decision scrutiny of the review planned 6-12 months after implementation of the new charges.

12 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 12.1. None for the purposes of this report.

13 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 13.1. None for the purposes of this report. The Air Quality Action Plan was subject to public consultation.

14 TIMETABLE

- 14.1. None for the purposes of this report. The progress of the Air Quality Action Plan is set out in this report

15 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1. None for the purposes of this report.

16 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 16.1. None for the purposes of this report. Air quality management is a statutory duty for local authorities

17 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 17.1. None for the purposes of this report.

18 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

18.1. None for the purposes of this report.

19 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

19.1. None for the purposes of this report.

20 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT
AIR QUALITY ACTION MATRIX

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