

**THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA**

**COUNCIL MEETING - 17 OCTOBER 2018**

**PETITION FOR DEBATE – AIR QUALITY IN THE BOROUGH**

A petition asks for *RBKC* to review the full range of powers available to it to improve air quality in the Borough including:

1. *Enforcing idling legislation on coaches, commercial vehicles and taxis*
2. *Ensuring that all schools in the borough have traffic marshalling policies for vehicular pick-up and drop-off*
3. *Ensuring that all schools in the borough have air quality monitoring*
4. *That steps are being taken to ensure that RBKC is included in the future Zero Emission Zone area*
5. *Require all major construction projects only to use equipment and on-road vehicles that meet the highest emissions standards required by the EU.*

*The report explains:*

- *What the council are currently doing to tackle poor air quality across the borough with respect to the points raised above*

**FOR DISCUSSION**

**1. THE PETITION**

1.1 A petition in excess of 1,600 signatures has been received which asks:

*We, the undersigned, call on the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea to debate at a Full Council Meeting the air quality crisis in this Borough, that is suffocating us all.*

*Further we call on RBKC to review the full range of powers available to it to improve air quality in the Borough including:*

1. *Enforcing idling legislation on coaches, commercial vehicles and taxis*
2. *Ensuring that all schools in the borough have traffic marshalling policies for vehicular pick-up and drop-off*
3. *Ensuring that all schools in the borough have air quality monitoring*

4. *That steps are being taken to ensure that RBKC is included in the future Zero Emission Zone area*
5. *Require all major construction projects only to use equipment and on-road vehicles that meet the highest emissions standards required by the EU.*

## **2. PETITION GUIDANCE**

### 2.1 The Council's Petition Guidance states:

*A petition may be referred to a meeting of the full Council for debate where:*

- (i) a petition addresses a broad and current issue of interest or relevance to residents across the Borough as a whole; and*
- (ii) the Mayor so agrees; and*
- (iii) the petition achieves at least 1,500 valid supporting signatures.*

### 2.2 As the above applies:

*... the lead petitioner will be asked to confirm that s/he would like the petition handled in that way and, if s/he does, will be invited to address, or nominate someone else to address, the meeting in question. Council or Scrutiny consideration of any petition will be based upon a written report from the relevant Council officer, published with the relevant agenda. The response to any petition that is considered in these ways will be given, usually by the relevant Lead Member, after they have had the opportunity fully to consider the points raised at the meeting in question.*

## **3. BACKGROUND TO LOCAL AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT**

- 3.1 The health impacts from poor air quality in the borough are a significant concern for the Council. We declared the entire borough as an Air Quality Management Area in 2000 and have had Air Quality Action Plans in place since 2003 to tackle air pollution in the borough.
- 3.2 In 2016, the Council put in place its most recent Action Plan as well as a Council Policy committing to give issues related to air pollution a high priority. The aims and objectives of the Action Plan have been set from 2016-2021, but the list of actions is live and may be updated as new measures are identified.
- 3.3 The Council is continually taking action to improve air quality and reviewing and improving our measures to protect the health of everyone in the borough. The Council have had each of our annual reports to Defra and the GLA on our progress implementing the plan approved and hold the GLA's Cleaner Air Borough Status.

## **4. TACKLING IDLING ENGINES**

- 4.1 The Council has been able to serve fixed penalty notices to motorists who refuse to switch off their engines when stationary, if requested to do so by an authorised officer, since 2005. This is the full extent of enforcement powers

provided to local authorities under the Road Traffic (Vehicle Emissions) (Fixed Penalty) (England) Regulations 2002

- 4.2 Officers are currently working with local businesses, companies and resident's associations to publicise the powers the Council has around targeting those areas in the borough where there is a serious problem of idling vehicles. We have approached hotels and asked they install signs on private lands as well as have messages passed to their coach drivers around leaving their engines running.
- 4.3 Patrols have been conducted with the residents to hand out leaflets, erect signs and educate drivers particularly around taxi ranks. TfL are also aware of the problems with ranking and idling and have their enforcement officers in place. We also liaise with Residents associations to ensure they are aware of the process for reporting any taxis idling through the Council website.
- 4.4 Residents and businesses are encouraged to report any idling engines, or ideal locations for placing signs through the RBKC online app. When commercial vehicles are reported to be idling, officers contact the business involved and send idling engine leaflets to circulate to drivers.
- 4.5 The Council has been implementing an awareness raising campaign on the health impacts of idling engines since 2016. This campaign has included a number of actions days with volunteers from the local communities, schools and businesses across the borough.

## 5. **TRAFFIC MARSHALLING AT SCHOOLS**

- 5.1 Local authorities have no power to force schools to marshal vehicles picking up or dropping off children. We do however work with schools on a voluntary basis to discourage use of the private car in favour of walking, cycling or using public transport to get to school. Forty of the borough's 85 schools have active travel plans that aim to promote sustainable travel. Sixteen of these 40 schools operate informal 'kiss and drop,' with school staff managing vehicle pick-up and drop-off.

## 6. **AIR QUALITY MONITORING AT SCHOOLS**

- 6.1 Schools in the borough are monitored through nearby diffusion tubes and there is a station which continuously monitors air pollution at Sion Manning School including the following pollutants: Particulate Matter (PM<sub>10</sub> & PM<sub>2.5</sub>), Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) Carbon Monoxide (CO) Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) and Sulphur Dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>). Data is publicly available at the following web link <http://www.airqualityengland.co.uk/>. All schools can view modelled air quality in their local area via: <https://www.londonair.org.uk/london/asp/annualmaps.asp>.
- 6.2 We are seeing increasing numbers of schools invest in air quality monitors, however low cost air pollution monitors are currently not accurate enough to be used scientifically or in regulatory assessments. This is due to a number of variables including:
  - the chemical interaction of pollutants
  - environmental conditions

- dataset processing and validation
  - low cost sensors often 'drift' over time and need to be recalibrated often
7. Three schools in the borough (Holy Trinity, St Mary Abbots, Oxford Gardens) were selected as priority schools, receiving an air quality audit via the Mayor of London's air quality monitoring project. The audits have been undertaken and the Council will be looking to deliver the resultant action plans through 2018/2019 in partnership with the GLA
- 7.1 These Schools have also been selected to be part in a new air quality monitoring project launched by the Mayor of London across London at schools in areas of elevated NO<sub>2</sub> pollution. The details and timelines are currently being discussed and finalised.

## **8. ULTRA LOW EMISSION ZONE ACROSS THE BOROUGH**

- 8.1 The Royal Borough has always supported expansion of the Ultra Low Emission Zone since the proposal to introduce the first ULEZ within the congestion charge zone. We responded in favour of the Mayor of London's proposals to introduce the expansion up to the North and South Circulars as soon as 2019 (June 2017 consultation), and his latter proposal to expand the zone in October 2021 (February 2018 consultation), though we would have preferred to see the expansion take place sooner. The Mayor has since confirmed introduction of the ULEZ to the North and South Circular roads for all vehicles by 2021 (sooner for heavy goods vehicles). This includes the entirety of the Royal Borough.

## **9. TACKLING POLLUTION FROM CONSTRUCTION SITES**

- 9.1 The Royal Borough is a member of the of the London Low Emission Construction Partnership. The partnership consists of several Central London Boroughs working in partnership with Kings college London. The project aims to: help the construction industry to understand its impact on local air quality; encourage the uptake of 'best in class' pollution reduction (abatement) measures; and evaluate the cost effectiveness of pollution abatement techniques. A best in class guidance document for all developers is currently being developed for launch early in the new year.
- 9.2 The Council implements the Control of Dust and Emissions from Construction and Demolition Supplementary Planning Guidance (GLA, 2014) for all major development sites in the borough. This requires all of these developments to:
- Undertake an air quality dust risk assessment (including a particulate matter (PM10) assessment) which looks at the impact of all site activities including the use of Non Road Mobile Machinery (NRMM) as well as the road vehicles.
  - Produce a management plan which addresses the risks identified in the assessment. If there is more than one stage or phase of work (i.e. demolition and construction) separate management reports are required.
  - Use the highest standard of vehicle and NRMM available.

- Install active PM10 monitors, where needed, along with a system for dealing with elevated readings which includes reporting their actions to address these incidents and ensure they do not recur to the Council.

## **10. RECOMMENDATION**

- 10.1 Council invites Lead Members to note the representations of the petitioners and any views expressed by Councillors.

**Background papers:** None

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