

Air Quality Action Plan Progress Report 2004

Introduction

The National Air Quality Strategy (NAQS), which was introduced in 1997 (reviewed in 1998, and revised in January 2000), not only set air quality standards and objectives for local authorities to work towards, it also gave us responsibility for periodically reviewing local air quality. Following a detailed air quality modelling exercise, the results of which can be found in 'Review and Assessment of Air Quality in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea – stages two and three', the Royal Borough concluded that some of the objectives set for particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide were unlikely to be met. Therefore in December 2000, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea declared the whole Borough an 'Air Quality Management Area'. Subsequent modelling work, the results of which can be seen in the Royal Boroughs 'Review and Assessment –Stage Four' report, further support this declaration.

In 2003, the Council produced its Air Quality Action Plan. This identified a number of specific actions, which when implemented, should help to improve air quality within the Borough, and consequently help us to work towards achieving the air quality objectives set out in the NAQS.

Almost one year on from the publication of the final version of the Action Plan, and as we approach the first air quality objective deadline for the 24 hourly and annual mean objective for particulate matter, it is time to produce a progress report that gives an indication of how far we have got with the 25 actions set out in the Plan.

Good progress has been made with the majority of actions. The table overleaf is arranged to show, amongst other things, what progress has been made with each measure and the outcome to date. Implementation of the Plan has involved liaison with several Council Departments, including Highways and Transportation, Planning and Conservation, Waste Management and of course, Environmental Health. Not all actions however, are the sole responsibility of the Royal Borough; some are led by external organisations, for example the implementation of a Londonwide LEZ which is being led by the GLA and the ALG. Therefore progress is dependent on collaboration between these organisations. We look forward to working with these organisations to take the proposals further.

For further copies of this report, or any other report mentioned above, please contact Rebecca Brown on 020 7341 5716. If you have any comments or suggestions on how the Council could work towards improving air quality then please e-mail them to airquality@rbkc.gov.uk or post them to the Environmental Quality Unit, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, 37 Pembroke Road, London W8 6PW.

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1	We will push for a Londonwide LEZ as soon as is practicable, and ideally by the end of 2006. If there is no support for a Londonwide scheme, we will investigate the possibility of introducing a local or sub-regional LEZ in the Royal Borough.	End of 2006	Following the publication of the GLA/ALG study, all parties have expressed support for a 2007 scheme but there is little evidence of work to make this happen. The Council remains committed, but believes there remain some important questions about the effectiveness of the LEZ approach.	We are closer to a Londonwide LEZ insofar as the study recommendations to proceed had widespread support. However, there are no firm proposals with dates and costs.	The Council would welcome the views of DEFRA and the Mayor of London about the future of LEZs. Should attention shift now to the 2010 schemes identified in the study, which would appear to have a greater effect than the 2007 scheme originally put forward?	Environmental Services
2	We will work with the Association of London Government, neighbouring authorities, the Metropolitan Police and others to operate a vehicle emission-testing scheme in the Royal Borough from April 2003.	April 2003	Testing carried out on 10 days at 2 locations in the Borough.	A review of the scheme, including the publicity it attracted, is being conducted by a independent consultant.	Officers are exploring the possibility of VOSA (formerly the Vehicle Inspectorate) carrying out testing in the Borough.	Environmental Health
3	This Council supports the use of new powers to require drivers of stationary vehicles to switch off 'idling' engines.		Officers in the Waste Management enforcement have been trained to use these powers; scheme will go 'live' in May 04, in known hotspots.	Scheme will begin in May 2004.		Environmental Services- Waste Management and Leisure
4	From April 2004, contractors will be required to choose the Best Practicable Environmental Option for their vehicle fleet. As a minimum, their vehicles' emissions should be no worse than the previous Euro standard.	April 2004	Informally, the Council has been adopting this approach for some time; the next step is to formalise a policy requiring the BPEO choice.	Where alternative fuels have been impractical we have tried to secure other environmental improvements, e.g. energy-saving tyres.	Formalising a policy will be taken forward in the next few months as part of a wider green contracts initiative.	Corporate Services and Environmental Services

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5	The Council will work with existing and potential suppliers of alternative fuels to establish fuelling points in the Royal Borough, and ii) if it is feasible and cost-effective to do so, the Council will install public charging points for electric vehicles in the Town Hall by the end of 2003.	Dec 2003	i) The Council expressed interest in a local biofuel project but this has been slow to progress. There appears to be no interest among suppliers in bringing LPG pumps to the Borough. We will publicise existing London LPG pumps through the website. ii) Feasibility study into electric vehicle charging points completed in spring 2004.	i) No material change. ii) The study found little demand for electric charging points; advent of mass-produced hybrid petrol-electric cars (which do not require charging) makes charging points less attractive. However no final decision made.		i) Corporate Services and Env Services ii) Highways and Transportation
6	The Council will help local organisations to green their fleet, primarily by identifying potential suppliers of low and zero emission fuel. We will offer support and practical assistance to local employers wishing to produce Green Travel Plans and participate in environmental management schemes.		Until now, resource constraints have limited us to offering only a reactive service; we are trying now to reach out to businesses via a major mail-out. Our main role will still be 'signposting', e.g. to the Energy Savings Trust.	No outcomes to report.		Environmental Services
7	We will consider using the residents' parking permit scheme to encourage residents to choose less polluting vehicles.		Officers have identified the best means of operating the scheme, and consultation results suggest that the principle would be welcomed by residents. We cannot take this further until the new IT system for residents' parking permits is upgraded in late 2005.	We know how we could implement the idea, and believe that coupled with the Government's graduated road tax scheme it should be possible to exert some influence on residents' car purchase decisions.		Highways and Transportation

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8	i) We will continue to develop our own green travel plan, paying particular attention to flexible working and homeworking, and ii) We will work with all interested schools in the Royal Borough to develop school travel plans and encourage less polluting forms of travel to school.		i) We have improved travel information on the intranet, and currently are planning improvements to our secure cycle storage. We are also hoping to reduce staff taxi use by taking advantage of a Government 'green vehicle' scheme (ii) school travel plan coordinator post created and school travel plan process developed, including an innovative website for schools	i) A new staff travel survey in 2003 found a fewer people driving to work and more cycling. ii) school travel plan website and schools engaged in process	(ii) School travel plan post currently vacant	i) Environmental Services ii) Highways and Transportation
9	The London City Car Club scheme will be operational in at least one part of the Royal Borough from Spring 2003.	Spring 2003	RBKC lead borough in the LCCC. First car launched Feb2003, and since then we have opened a second station, with 5 more planned by end April 04.	There are 125 members in RBKC and 3 cars.	TfL will not continue funding for this project, which will make it harder for the scheme to succeed.	Highways and Transportation
10	We will produce Supplementary Planning Guidance on air quality. This will explain to developers the Council's requirements and policies in relation to the impacts on air quality of new development proposals. The Council will request that all proposals for developments, if they fall within the scope of the guidance, will include an assessment of the air quality implications.		The SPG was published in Sep 03.	There have been no development proposals large enough to be covered by this SPG since it was published. Even so, it is a useful document for all developers.		Planning and Conservation

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11	The Council will work with TfL, Network Rail, the Strategic Rail Authority and others to ensure that the improvements to public transport in the Royal Borough will be delivered as soon as possible. The Council will help TfL to deliver improvements to bus services, for instance through targeting parking enforcement on congested areas, and reviewing loading and waiting restrictions.		There is a new 360 bus route which will use dual-fuelled buses from 2005. Work on the LPSA project to improve bus reliability by reviewing loading restrictions has begun. Work is on schedule for two new rail stations on the West London Line to be open in Winter 04/05	The public transport accessibility of the Borough has been improved, and will be again when the 2 new rail stations open.		Highways and Transportation
12	We will set and maintain the highest possible standards of urban design and street cleansing as part of an integrated approach to making walking an attractive option in the Royal Borough. In doing so, we will seek to establish a reputation as a centre of excellence for streetscape design.		Kensington High Street Scheme implemented Streetscape Manual published for consultation. Streetscape pilot areas established LPSA target to improve street cleanliness is making progress: additional street cleaning to begin in April/May 2004.	Increased levels of walking and cycling on Kensington High Street. Reduced traffic flows.	This approach is being repeated at Sloane Square and Exhibition Road.	Highways and Transportation And Waste Management
13	The Council will continue to encourage responsible cycling through a combination of cycle parking, high quality road surfaces, and where appropriate, traffic management.		Free cycle training available to all who live/work in RBKC Improved cycle parking on Kensington High Street and review of cycle parking underway. High level of road maintenance maintained.	Increase in number of residents and workers trained in cycling. Increased numbers of cyclists.		Highways and Transportation

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14	The Council will ensure that its charges for on-street visitor parking spaces are effective in managing demand.		The Council reviews charges annually on the basis of regular occupancy surveys. Last year it increased charges in North Kensington but not in the other tariff areas.	Charges are used to ensure that occupancy levels are not so high as to lead to large numbers of vehicles circulating in search of a space.		Highways and Transportation
15	The Council will use its new powers to require that appropriate new developments are made 'permit-free', as part of the planning consent process.		Council Policy agreed. Traffic order has been amended. SPG out for consultation.	First permit free scheme approved on Earl's Court Road.		Highways and Transportation
16	The Council will review opportunities to designate new taxi ranks in the Royal Borough and will lobby for taxis to be affected by the rules of any LEZ that is established.		i) A taxi rank was installed in Kings Road, and engineers are considering changes to the taxi rank arrangements as part of a major redesign of Sloane Square. ii) Officers have challenged the study recommendations that taxis be dealt with outside a formal LEZ policy.	i) A new taxi rank has been provided, which should help to reduce the need for taxis to circulate while empty. ii) No work on the LEZ appears to have been done since the ALG and the Mayor gave the idea their backing in autumn 2003.		Highways and Transportation
17	The Council will work with Transport for London to use signals to smooth traffic flow, without increasing overall traffic levels.		We changed signal arrangements at Ken High Street and plan to do so on Exhibition Road and Notting Hill Gate	Traffic moving fairly freely on Ken High Street.		Highways and Transportation
18	The Council will review coach parking facilities in the Royal Borough.		This has yet to be carried out formally but will be included in the final stage of a parking policy review.	No new arrangements made in the last year.	Since securing off-street coach parking facilities on Warwick Rd, the Council has had no requests for new coach parking.	Highways and Transportation
19	We will consider the recommendations from the London Sustainable Distribution Partnership and we will actively consider joining Freight Quality Partnerships promoted at sub-regional level.		The Council has not been approached by the London Sustainable Distribution Partnership, and has not seen any recommendations.	The Council is a member of SWELTRAC, which is part of a Freight Quality Partnership.		Highways and Transportation

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20	The Council will work with the Building Research Establishment, the Mayor of London, neighbouring boroughs and representatives of the construction industry to create a Green Building Site Code of Practice.		Work is underway on a considerate builder scheme, which should include some environmental elements. We will review the need to produce our own Code of Practice in the light of other agencies' work.	The Code of Practice has not been produced yet.		Env Health and Planning and Conservation
21	The Council will continue to encourage residents to compost waste rather than burning it in bonfires.		In addition to supplying cut-price composters to residents, the Council has just embarked on a 6 month scheme offering to collect garden waste for municipal composting.	There are no records of how much home composting is done, but we aim to measure this in the summer. Little evidence of garden bonfires in the Borough.		Waste Management
22	We will work towards re-designating the Smoke Control Zone by 2003.	Dec 2003	A new draft Order is out for consultation until May. If the Cabinet Member approves it, the Order will become operative 6 months later. The old orders remain in force until this time.	The Smoke Control Zone has not yet been redesignated but this will happen shortly.	The search for the old existing orders proved more difficult than expected, causing the delay.	Environmental Health
23	The Council will continue to carry out regular and rigorous statutory inspections in accordance with DEFRA guidance, to ensure that emissions from small industrial processes (Part B processes) do not exceed national air quality objectives, and are minimised as far as is practically possible.		All inspections have been completed in accordance with our statutory requirements.	The processes were found to be satisfactory and operating in line with their authorisations.		Environmental Health

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24	The council will continue to promote energy-efficiency measures in the homes in the Royal Borough, under its HECA and its Affordable Warmth work. It will also consider and require efficient local energy generating schemes where practicable.		<p>Refurbishment work on the ‘flagship’ HMO is approaching completion. Publicity campaign is underway.</p> <p>Grant-aided work to improve dwellings can now be assessed to see how much the energy rating (NHER) has changed.</p>	<p>Energy saving measures being installed.</p> <p>Publicity will raise awareness of possible and practical ways of saving energy among landlords and residents.</p> <p>A statistical survey of grant-aided works will shortly be available which will show the amount of energy saved and carbon dioxide emissions reduced.</p>		Environmental Health
25	The council will maintain its financial commitment to air quality monitoring and modelling and will consider further types of monitoring as the need arises.		Commitment to the air quality monitoring programme has been continued.	<p>A further year’s detailed data on pollution concentrations has been collected.</p> <p>The Defra installed PM_{2.5} monitor at our AURN affiliated site is providing data that will enable us to assess the need for more PM_{2.5} monitoring.</p>		Environmental Health