

Item No. 7.	Classification: Open	Date: 16 April 2013	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Petition – Reduce Air Pollution	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Proper Constitutional Officer	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the cabinet consider a petition from residents' of the borough in respect of air pollution on main roads near schools.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. A petition containing 500 signatures or more maybe presented to the cabinet. A petition can be submitted by a person of any age who lives, works or studies in Southwark. Petitions must relate to matters which the council has powers or duties or which affects Southwark.
3. At the meeting, the spokesperson for the petition will be invited to speak up to five minutes on the subject matter. The cabinet will debate the petition for a period of up to 15 minutes and may decide how to respond to the petition at the meeting.
4. Any relevant resource or community impact issues will be contained in the comments of the strategic director.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

5. A petition containing 531 signatures has been received from local residents in respect of air pollution. The petition is comprised of 121 signatures from the petition on the council's web site and 410 signatures on a 'paper' version of the petition. The petitioners have expressed concern about the levels of pollution on main roads near schools in Southwark. The petition states:

"We the undersigned, call on Southwark Council to urgently reduce air pollution on main roads near schools to protect the health of children in London, to measure levels of air pollution near affected schools and to help them take steps to protect children and staff."

6. Additionally the petition states:

"London records the worst levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) in Europe as well as dangerous concentrations of tiny particles, smaller than the diameter of a human hair, known as PM 10s and PM2.5s. These invisible gases and particles irritate and lodge in the lungs, exacerbating heart disease and asthma and cutting years off the average life expectancy.

After smoking, air pollution is now the leading cause of early death. Young people are particularly vulnerable because their lungs are still developing. It's estimated that traffic pollution may be responsible for 15-30% of all new cases of asthma in children. Yet there are 48 schools in Southwark within 150 metres of roads that carry over 10,000 vehicles a day. That's why this petition concentrates on schools.

Children, the elderly and people with existing respiratory illness suffer most from air pollution, but we're all affected. A study commissioned by the Mayor of London estimated that 4,267 Londoners died prematurely in 2008 as a result of long-term exposure to polluted air – mostly through heart attacks and strokes.”

7. The cabinet will decide how to respond to the petition at this meeting. A decision could be made to:
 - Take the action the petition requests
 - Not to take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate, or
 - To commission further investigation into the matter.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Comments of the Strategic Director of Environment and Leisure

Background

8. London, as a premiere world city, economic centre and transportation hub suffers from poor air quality from time to time. Contributing factors include:-
 - London is a large and busy city region with many sources of emissions to air
 - The most significant source of atmospheric pollution in Southwark is diesel engines and
 - London is in a river valley basin which traps atmospheric emissions under certain weather conditions, for example low wind or temperature inversion and in bright sunlight may develop photochemical smog.
9. Poor air quality events affect everyone in the affected area, but impacts with a greater significance on individuals who have compromised respiratory function due to age or infirmity and on children, who have smaller, immature lungs. London regularly breaches the EEC Air Quality Objectives for NO₂ (Nitrogen Dioxide) and PM₁₀ (breathable particulates). There are also concerns regarding the levels of Black Carbon and PM_{2.5} in London. Many of these poor air quality incidents are caused by meteorological conditions transporting air pollution from outside London, including from industrial Europe. Last month pressure group ClientEarth took the UK Government to the UK Supreme Court due to the lack of effective response to and breaches of the air quality objectives. The Supreme Court has reserved its judgment at the time of writing.
10. A recent report by the pressure group Campaign for Clean Air in London has stated that up to 4,267 people died prematurely due to the impacts of poor air quality in London in 2008, however, this statistic cannot be taken in isolation. If poor air quality was eradicated 4,267 people would not be saved. Poor air quality places a strain on human respiratory and pulmonary systems which results in a deterioration in the quality of individuals biological function and hence, an average reduction in life-span of 7-8 months.

11. The Campaign for Clean Air in London has also stated that across London there are 1,148 London schools within 150 metres of roads carrying about 10,000 vehicles a day. The majority of these routes are managed by TfL. In poor air quality events everyone, including all schools within the affected area, experiences diminished air quality. However, it is clear that if a school is located at roadside on a busy road, then its air quality will be significantly poorer than at schools on quiet roads. Air quality measurements are categorized as 'background' when they are more than 50m from a predominant source/road.
12. Emissions to atmosphere are a global issue without boundaries and are known to be causing climate change. Poor air quality in London is both a regional and a Pan European issue with much of the funding to research and address air quality historically coming from EC grant sources.
13. Southwark is a central London Authority with main arterial road routes carrying regional traffic through the borough and has limited influence regarding the volume and make up of vehicles using those routes. Despite this much can be done to work regionally, to raise awareness regarding air quality and to influence personal and business transport mode decisions within the borough.

What is Southwark doing to improve air quality?

14. Southwark has an Air Quality Improvement Strategy for 2012 – 2017 which is compiled to complement national and regional air quality and other relevant strategy. It places improvements in levels of nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter at its core. It also recognises the particular health impacts of poor quality upon the young.
15. While the EHTS Environmental Protection Team has no specific budget allocation for air quality improvement initiatives, it works together with partner services and authorities to identify appropriate funding and other opportunities. For example:
 - (1) Southwark successfully applied to DEFRA for an Air Quality Grant in 2012 and received an award of approx £21,000 (50% of the amount sought) and is now working as part of a consortium of 8 London Boroughs and the Greater London Authority to deliver the Clean Air 4 Schools (CA4S) programme to as many primary schools as possible with the funding achieved. To manage the shortfall in the grant EH&TS combined with other LBS Services (Transportation, Sustainable Services & Children's Services) and secured a further £20,000 from the Green Travel Plan Budget to add directly to the project fund making a total of £40,000. A contractor has very recently been engaged to deliver the CA4S programme in 6 primary schools.

The CA4S project aims and objectives include:-

- Raise awareness of air quality issues in schools (students, teachers, parents & governors) AQ monitoring, near AQ hotspots, link to climate change
- Increase awareness and understanding of air pollution amongst school communities and encourage sustainable behaviour with regard to anti idling and modal shift

- Assess schools for suitability for installation of green infrastructure/highway or traffic flow modifications and
- Assess schools for suitability for installation of energy efficiency measures.

As part of the project we have also linked access to potentially £500,000 of grants to improve energy efficiency in schools to potentially £200,000 of GLA funding towards green infrastructure for schools. So far 5 of 12 shortlisted primary schools approached have agreed to participate in the programme which delivers them with multiple, cost free benefits including Key Stage 2 citizen science, air quality monitoring and potential for changes to parental transport choices leading to improved air quality. The aim is to give the most suitable and engaged schools as much of a 'whole treatment' as is appropriate/possible. The CA4S project funds available currently limits the number of schools that can be involved to 6, however, all other schools in the borough will be informed of the grant funding available to them and given the link to the on-line schools toolkit which they can choose to engage with. If the economies of scale achieved from the mass procurement exercise engaged in permit more schools to be involved the project will be expanded. It is also hoped that further grant funding rounds from DEFRA and the EU will be secured in future to enable more schools to be assisted to join the CA4S Project should they wish.

The LBS shortlist of preferred schools for involvement was developed using the following criteria:-

- High % of pupils driven to school, therefore more capacity for modal shift and reduced levels of pollution
- Area of known poor air quality, therefore more capacity to make educative message relevant
- Potential to undertake infrastructure works to improve air quality within the school and its environs or improve the carbon footprint of school
- Geographical spread across borough and
- Size of school role.

All 12 of the shortlisted schools have been approached. As noted 5 have signed and we are currently trying to engage any other primary school to fill the remaining vacant slot in the programme. It is hoped that the CA4S project will provide air quality monitoring data that will permit the impact on schools and children to move up many agendas across London. Further grant funding will be sought to continue and expand this programme in the future.

- (2) All schools involved in the CA4S project will be signed up to the AirText Service as a matter of course. AirText provides daily information on local air pollution; UV index; pollen; and temperature. EH&TS Officers are currently working to identify the most effective way of providing the AirText information to other services and internal and external organisations including schools. The aim is that this will be in place for the 'alert season' next year.

- (3) LBS works closely with TfL and the GLA to reduce pollution from transportation. EH&TS staff work with colleagues in Sustainable Transport, Road Safety and Transport Planning to address issues arising from the road infrastructure and are considering projects to
- Improve traffic management
 - improve transport infrastructure
 - reduce emissions from all vehicles (buses, taxis, cars, mopeds, haulage) through the provision of low and no carbon fuelling points (electrical chargers, hydrogen depot, etc)
 - reduce taxi idling and touting and improve taxi rank management and location.

Specific information regarding changes that have been made to reduce traffic levels in Southwark are available from LBS Transport Services, TfL and GLA.

- (4) Improving air quality monitoring. EH&TS have recently fitted a new permanent monitoring station at Elephant & Castle which is now on-line and giving results. This joins the earlier established monitoring station on the Old Kent Road. We have also expanded our NO2 monitoring survey borough wide giving a good spread of polluted and relatively unpolluted locations to provide a greater understanding of the patterns of pollution. All the Southwark locations of concern which appear in a list maintained by the GLA, are included.
- (5) Applying for grant monies from the Mayors Air Quality Fund. A Southwark working group has been set up to consider projects that will meet the criteria to access this funding source. The process is being led by officers from Transportation and EH&TS. Current projects that have been shortlisted include:
- Developing a Clean Air 4 Schools Toolkit for secondary schools
 - Countdown and engine idling awareness campaign on road approaches to the north and south of Tower Bridge
 - Open Streets events to temporarily close roads to improve the local environment and raise public and trader awareness with regards to alternative choices and behaviours
 - To include electric vehicles in the council fleet
 - To provide support for air quality champions in Borough Market to encourage the use of no-carbon delivery technologies and, in conjunction with Better Bankside, to manage delivery of a 'green staircase' to raise awareness of air quality issues. Assessment of the performance of the green infrastructure will be by Imperial College
 - Improving access to air quality information for Southwark residents and users of Southwark's AQ Web-pages. To increase awareness and encourage personal behaviour change.
- (6) Constant improving and updating of LB Southwark's planning policies and standard conditions to ensure the most recent and appropriate constraints are applied to new development.
- (7) Audit and appropriate refit of Southwark's buildings.

Comments of the Director of Planning

16. Southwark's Transport Plan (2011) is a vision for transport in the borough and seeks to reduce transport related air pollution through the overall reduction of private motor traffic on our streets and promoting the uptake of low emission vehicles (LEVs).
17. To deliver this ambition, the council continues to work specifically with the local school community to encourage increasing numbers of children to travel more sustainably through the development of school travel plans (STPs). By monitoring travel to school via STPs, we have seen that car use has steadily decreased whilst walking and public transport remain the more popular choices. Supporting this programme the council offers a range of walking and cycling promotions and road safety awareness programmes.
18. For further detail and statistics and related policies, please refer to the Council's Transport Plan (http://www.southwark.gov.uk/downloads/download/2578/transport_plan) and Annual Report (http://www.southwark.gov.uk/downloads/download/2873/annual_report)

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
E-petition on web site: http://moderngov.southwarksites.com/mgEPetitionDisplay.aspx?ID=50000022&RPID=500547678&HPID=500547678	160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Beverley Olamijulo 020 7525 7234

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Alexa Coates, Principal Constitutional Officer	
Report Author	Paula Thornton, Constitutional Officer	
Version	Final	
Dated	4 April 2013	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Legal Services	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	No	No
Strategic Director of Environment and Leisure	Yes	Yes
Director of Planning	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	4 April 2013	