

# Environment Scrutiny

Briefing for 15 March meeting

DRAFT

# Environment Scrutiny, Air Quality

The Environment Scrutiny Commission would like Cllr Catherine Rose and officers to discuss and provide a briefing on outstanding Air Quality recommendations. At their meeting on 15 March, 7pm.

The commission would like an update on the cabinet's recent undertaking to OSC that the relevant Cabinet Member will work with officers to fully assess the feasibility of including vehicle size in resident parking charging.

## Background

In April 2021, the Environment Commission agreed their report 'Air quality scrutiny review report - part two' which was subsequently presented to cabinet on 14 September 2021 with a further update provided to cabinet on 7 December 2022.

The 'Air quality scrutiny review report - part two' focused on three areas; the effective implementation of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTN), additional council and TfL measures to reduce and mitigate transport emissions in Southwark and making recommendations to the council and relevant partners in order to reduce other sources of air pollution not covered in depth by the previous scrutiny review on Air Quality in 2019/20.

The Environment Commission have requested a further update on recommendation 8 as well as emerging environmental based parking policies for the upcoming meeting on 15 March 2022.

## Air quality scrutiny review report – recommendation

Recommendation 8 is comprised of six points detailed below supported by an officer response.

- 1. Develop an operational plan with partners to implement the Movement Plan, focusing on structural changes, informed by the ambitions of the Movement Plan and its associated deprivation data.**

On 1 February 2022 Cabinet considered the Movement Plan, its monitoring report and future review. The monitoring report identifies the progress that has been made, recognises the challenges and changing context as well as possible reasons to explain the data that has been observed. The report highlights the work undertaken to develop the Movement Plan Equity Framework and details how this has been used in the past two years, as well as ongoing work.

The report also set out the context for the Movement Plan including the COVID -19 pandemic, Southwark Conversation into the impact of the pandemic, the councils Southwark Stands Together commitment, lessons from the women's and girls safety listening exercise, Climate emergency declaration, Air Quality Strategy 2022 update and lessons learnt from streetspace schemes and how the council brings forward and delivered traffic schemes and lastly the continuing funding challenges.

The Movement Plan review and the resulting revised document will be consulted on in the summer of 2022. This revised Movement Plan will be brought to cabinet to agree its consultation which will include how we will engage with partners.

- 2. Viability testing of the target to reduce traffic by 90% by 2030.**

The council currently has a target (as contained in within the Streetspace Plan) of a 50% reduction of pre-pandemic levels. As part of the review of the Movement Plan targets will be reviewed considering applicability (all traffic, local traffic), deliverability, and ability to monitor and ensure delivering of the ambition, coordination with other work areas. This will particularly include the Air Quality Strategy which is being reviewed on a similar timescales.

- 3. End the current diesel contract for Southwark fleet vehicles and switch to EV as soon as possible. Swap EV for sustainable transport / freight. Revisit our procurement strategy to ensure subcontractors have EV or a sustainable fleet. Set a cut-off date for compliance so that subcontractors have time to make the switch.)**

The Councils current commercial fleet consists of c.330 vehicles. For the majority of these vehicles there is both an internal combustion engine and an electric alternative.

The electric vehicle alternative for the cars and light commercials is no longer considered innovative technology. The electric vehicle options for the heavier and specialist vehicles is not as well advanced. There are some vehicle categories where no appropriate electric alternative currently exists e.g. gulley sucker. There are other vehicle categories where the electric vehicle alternative does exist but is very much in its infancy e.g. compact sweepers.

Fleet Services are currently working to develop a Fleet Replacement Strategy. This work will include the development of a robust vehicle selection process and criteria to establish the needed commercial fleet.

As part of the preparation we have commissioned a detailed analysis of fleet possibilities and option appraisals including but not limited to; fuel source, cost, finance options for replacement, possible programme, and indicative options for delivery models.

Whilst it is certainly feasible to acquire electric vehicles for many of the fleet replacement requirements, detailed consideration needs to be given to the required charging infrastructure, its location and the expected associated costs. The scale of the requirement and the task of installing charging infrastructure on such a large scale should not be under-estimated.

**4. Southwark adopts a maximum charge for bike hubs/hangers that ensures that is cheaper than car parking by space.**

The provision of cycle hangars has continued at pace throughout the last two years with the number of hangars effectively doubling to over 500 by end of March 2022. This is in response to the growing waiting list for hangar spaces which currently stands at nearly 9,000. The accelerated provision of hangars will continue into 2022/23 and beyond, with the future procurement mechanism currently being reviewed.

There are no plans to increase the current hangar space charge to users (currently £40 per annum) or reduce the current level of council subsidy (currently £20 per annum). However, this may be required to be reviewed dependent on the costs to the council of future cycle hangar provision, maintenance and management.

**5. An update on charging for parking in the borough including the development and implementation of the emissions based charging policy and if this will include reductions in car parking provision. The commission recommended that this policy looks at the parameters of vehicle size, fuel, and multiple vehicles per house.**

An emissions based charging structure is in place through the implementation of the following pricing structure on both permits and pay and display:

- Permits – electric vehicles (£31.25), petrol vehicles and ULEZ compliant diesel (£130), Non- ULEZ diesel vehicles (£250)
- Pay by phone – 25% surcharge for non-ULEZ diesel vehicles

The current charging policy contributes to the delivery of objectives within the Movement Plan including managing kerb space and reducing traffic in the borough.

In terms of parking permit pricing criteria the council are limited by the vehicle information which is sold by the DVLA for our use. Officers have looked at the commercially available DVLA information regarding vehicles size and weight and these are not available for use, the current simple streamlined approach adopted concentrates on fuel and emissions because that is the information the DVLA provides commercially. There are other potentially more effective means of managing kerb space in relation to varying permit pricing which will be given consideration in the short to medium term

**6. A borough-wide greenery programme to use native hedges to screen to against air pollution, ecological planting and also improve the environment and place making. Examples include allotments and wildlife sanctuaries. (Marked to be considered in the cabinet response to the first report) In addition, the commission would like to see a focus on more ecologically friendly maintenance of housing estates, including less mowing of grassy banks and verges. Green waste also ought to be converted to compost, see Earth Cycle.[1]**

Southwark Council has undertaken new hedge and tree planting, relaxed mowing in Parks, Housing estates and road side verges and are working on an estate by estate basis to improve ecology and introduce more wildlife friendly management. The Ecology Service has worked with the community gardeners as part of the great estates programme to achieve this.

We have planted over 1,200 m of native hedge since 2021. Most in parks and some on housing estates such as Elmington. That is about 6,000 hedge plants.

Idverde composts parks green waste at the depots in our major parks.

The Southwark Nature Action Plan identifies numerous urban greening actions in the Habitat Action Plans.

This work is continuous and providing we can secure resources we can do much more.

This work is supported by the emerging Air Quality Action Plan includes a number of actions in line with this ambition as follows;

- Ensuring adequate, appropriate and well located green space and infrastructure is included in new and existing developments.
- Embed air quality in designs of estates

## **Further requests**

*An update on charging for parking in the borough including the development and implementation of the emissions based charging policy and if this will include reductions in car parking provision. The commission recommended that this policy looks at the parameters of vehicle size, fuel, and multiple vehicles per house.*

