

Air Quality Manifesto

March 2018

Summary

Westminster was the first local authority in the United Kingdom to recognise air quality as a serious issue and develop an air quality plan. Today, with the health impacts better-known, air quality is the number one concern amongst residents in the City of Westminster. Positioned at the heart of a global capital, our city suffers from some of the worst pollution in the country. With over a million people moving into and travelling around our neighbourhoods each day, it is crucial that we make more strides to clean up our air and tackle poor air quality for residents and visitors alike.

Last year, we set out to find new ways of reducing pollution and identifying clear steps to improve the air we breathe. Since then we have been talking to business leaders, health experts, government departments, academics and particularly our community - inviting them to share their ideas and help create a plan. Improving Westminster's air-quality is a journey. While we have made progress, there is still a long way to go.

Throughout the project, several priorities emerged as key to cleaning up our air:

- reducing or cleaning dirty journeys and creating better infrastructure for electric and low emission vehicles
- placing emissions and pollution in the forefront of decision making on public spaces and buildings and encouraging all those who shape spaces and buildings to do likewise
- making cleaner and environmentally-friendly options easier for our residents and changing behaviour
- moving the air quality agenda forward through thought leadership and innovation. The City of Westminster is at the heart of British business, creativity and the United Kingdom's academic community. We are well placed to bring those leaders of change together for everyone

Now we have made a series of pledges setting out our commitment to make Westminster a cleaner, greener city.

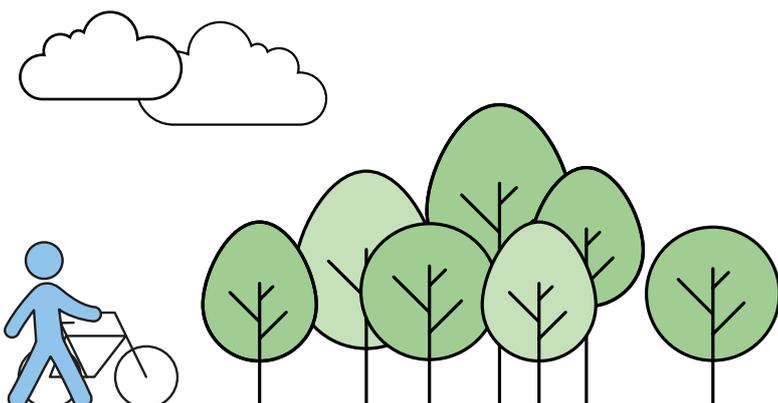
It is important that this work and our pledges are seen within the wider context of developments in this area. These pledges both highlight our achievements to date and provide us with a plan for action in the coming months and years. At the end of 2018, we will be publishing our new Air Quality Strategy and Action Plan, which will contain these pledges and more. They will provide a comprehensive overview of how we will continue to make progress on this agenda over the next five years. We will continue to integrate our air quality agenda and green policies into the life and work of Westminster City Council.

We look forward to working with you on this critical issue. It is a massive challenge and air quality is a national health emergency. We cannot change the City of Westminster alone. Key themes of our pledges are collaboration and partnership working. To improve our air quality, we need to work together with our residents, businesses and other partners from the Mayor of London to central Government. As we work to influence government and partners, we will remain accountable here in Westminster to you. We hope too that, as individuals, we can all make small and big changes in our lives to improve air quality and other aspects of our environment.

Pledges

Each pledge focuses on a significant area where we can make a change to improve air quality. The pledges focus in turn on:

- Westminster's record to date, pathfinding amongst the other London boroughs
- what is within our power to change and be accountable for, so you can measure our progress
- what we would like others to do from their positions of influence
- what you can do as a resident



Reducing or cleaning up dirty journeys

1 We will extend our successful diesel surcharge on pay and display parking across the city to help discourage diesel vehicles from polluting Westminster

Low emission neighbourhood to low emission city:

Evidence shows our trial diesel surcharge in the Marylebone Low Emission Neighbourhood (LEN) is working. It contributed to a 14% decrease in the number of the most polluting older diesel vehicles visiting our city in its first six months.

We were the first borough to introduce a diesel surcharge and now others are following our lead. We will be continuing our surcharge and look to extend it across the city. We will talk to you, community by community, to make sure what we do works for your area.

What have we done so far?

In June 2017, we introduced a diesel surcharge in our parking 'F Zone' (which covers Marylebone, Fitzrovia and Hyde Park). The trial set a 50% surcharge on all pre-2015 diesel vehicles using our Pay to Park bays. The results of the trial to date have seen a reduction of over 10% in the number of vehicles paying to park in F Zone versus last year. The percentage of pre-2015 diesels paying to park has reduced by more than 14%.

What are we going to do?

We plan to extend the surcharge further across the city if there is a desire amongst residents to do so. We are keen to make sure that any new policies work for the areas we introduce them to. We will be listening carefully to you as we look to extend the surcharge across the city. We will continue to monitor similar proposals being introduced amongst other boroughs as well as the new Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) charge being introduced in April 2019 by the Mayor of London.

What do we want others to do?

We would like to see other London Boroughs follow our example and introduce diesel parking surcharges for Pay and Display parking. This policy is mostly aimed at visitors to Westminster arriving from outside the city. We would therefore like outer London Boroughs in particular to consider how they can encourage residents to leave their cars at home when they come into central London.

What you can do

Spread the word. The surcharge is aimed at visitors. If you're a resident – tell friends and family members when they visit that this charge is in place and it would be better for the air that we all breathe if they could travel by public transport or other means. If you are a resident and use a car to travel into more central parts of the city, consider other options such as public transport.

2 We will ask those who own more than one car to pay extra for their parking permits, unless they are driving low emission vehicles

Those who own more than one car will pay extra for their parking permits (unless they choose a low emission option):

We will give people time to change their vehicles and won't penalise those for whom cars are essential. We want residents to consider greener forms of transport instead of using their car.

There will be a 'sunset period' for older and more polluting cars, so all owners have time to think about the impact of their car when they next replace it.

What have we done so far?

A standard resident parking permit parking in Westminster currently costs £145 a year. To encourage the adoption of lower emission vehicles amongst residents, we offer a discount to vehicles with smaller engines where permits cost £103 per annum. Ultra-low emission vehicles receive free permits. We also have a car club, giving options to residents wanting to give up car ownership but who may still need to use one occasionally.

What are we going to do?

In consultation with residents, we would like to minimise the air quality impact of private ownership of vehicles; particularly high polluting diesel vehicles and where ownership of multiple vehicles is potentially unnecessary. We plan to do this by increasing permit charges for households that own multiple cars and introducing a maximum number of

permits that can be issued to the same household unless the vehicles are electric, hybrid or otherwise low-emission. We will also review the current tariffs to provide more incentives for residents who own cleaner vehicles.

What do we want others to do?

We would like to work with central Government, Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency and car manufacturers to ensure that we better understand the harmful emissions from different types of vehicles, so we can focus on the worst offenders. Every MOT should include a pollution test, with various incentives to take the worst offenders off the roads. Many of the vehicles on our roads belong to Londoners living outside of Westminster. So, we'd also like to see other London Boroughs follow our lead in looking and consider how they too can discourage the ownership of older, more polluting vehicles.

What can you as a resident do?

Think about whether you need your car for shorter journeys – there are alternatives whether you're planning on travelling in London or further afield, such as car clubs or public transport. If your household has more than one vehicle, when it comes to replacing your older vehicle consider whether you need to have more than one car, or whether you can buy an electric or other low emission vehicle.



3 We will continue to invest in more ways to encourage the use of electric vehicles throughout the city

Green transport infrastructure for a clean air city:

Westminster is ahead of the curve in embracing electric vehicle infrastructure. We are now installing new rapid charging points across the city and making it easier to charge electric vehicles with our new lamp post charging points. Working with partners, we have persuaded businesses to rationalise and reduce freight deliveries, where half-empty vehicles contribute significantly to air pollution.

What have we done so far?

Westminster has the largest electric vehicle charging network in the UK. We have pioneered the installation of different types of charging, including lamp column chargers. Freight rationalisation schemes are now in place across the city, for instance around Bond Street.

What are we going to do?

We are going to continue to add to our electric vehicle charging network. This includes 75 more lamp column chargers, another 40 standard chargers in dedicated bays throughout the city, and we are working with TfL to introduce rapid chargers. This will help support the black cab industry in its transition to new hybrid taxis. We are aiming to have London's first zero emission taxi rank and want to see no more diesel taxis on our streets by 2025.

We are also going to work with developers and businesses who operate sites like fuelling stations to encourage further the installation of a much more extensive charging infrastructure across the city. We will complete the gaps in the Westminster freight rationalisation network to promote the movement of goods in an environmentally friendly way.

What do we want others to do?

We believe the Mayor of London could do more to encourage a shift towards the new electric hybrid black cab taxi. We want Transport for London to reduce the maximum age limit for taxis and take the oldest, most polluting taxis off our roads quicker.

Businesses and developers can do more to investigate where charging infrastructure could be located on private land and work with us in building London's most developed charging network.

Together, with the Mayor and the other London Boroughs, we could do more to consolidate freight so that deliveries are rationalised on a substantial scale in outer London and minimise the traffic coming into the city.

What you can do?

Considering getting an electric vehicle? Let us know. We are installing new charging points across the city and could install them near you. If you would like a charging point visit our website at westminster.gov.uk/request-vehicle-charging-point and let us know where.

If you can, try not to have single item deliveries to your office. Instead have them sent to your home and order items together.





Our public spaces and buildings

4 We will go further in tackling emissions from all types of buildings, new and old, to reduce air pollution

We will use our new City Plan to encourage developers, particularly in the heritage sector, to make being green a must.

We have committed to ensuring our public buildings, including the newly refurbished City Hall, meet 'excellent' BREEAM standards, which is the world's longest established method of assessing, rating and certifying the sustainability of buildings. There's still lots more we can do.

What have we done so far?

We are working to ensure our own projects, such as the City Hall refurbishment, are as green as possible. We have also introduced a range of policies to minimise emissions from new developments and construction sites. This ranges from enforcing the Mayor of London's new policy on emissions from construction equipment, to requiring all developers to sign up to a stringent Code of Construction Practice to manage their own emissions effectively.

What are we going to do?

As well as looking at our own buildings and how we live in them, we will work with the heritage and planning sectors to see how we can make retrofitting property more affordable. This will help reduce building emissions and reduce the impacts

of pollution on these buildings and their occupants. We will be more alert to indoor pollution and run an education programme for the building industry and provide more information to residents on indoor pollution and planting. We will use licencing and planning enforcement powers to discourage wood burning and, where appropriate, force the removal of dirty generators. We want to work with major event organisers to see how we can reduce the pollution impacts of these temporary additions to our built environment.

What do we want others to do?

We need the heritage industry to be more flexible and open to change where we can help reduce pollution inside older buildings without damaging or devaluing protected buildings.

More action is also needed from central Government on wood burning stoves to help local authorities, such as ourselves, to properly tackle businesses who flout the rules on producing harmful smoke.

What can you do?

Be aware of indoor air quality, particularly when you think about refurbishing or redecorating. You can also consider indoor planting to improve the air you breathe. Get in touch with us if you see thick smoke from chimneys.



5 We will create low emission zones around our schools

We know that air pollution disproportionately affects the young and reducing pollution levels around our schools is a key priority for us.

We are taking a holistic approach to this problem, not just traffic levels around schools, but also behavioural change, lessons for pupils, green infrastructure and changes to the built environment to help give our pupils the best start in life.

What have we done so far?

Westminster has worked with a number of schools on various projects to reduce local pollution. Across the city we have introduced a number of 20pmh zones around schools and encourage them to have Travel Plans to help parents and pupils switch to healthy and low pollution ways of travelling. We have also worked with the Mayor of London to carry out detailed air quality audits for four of our schools.

What are we going to do?

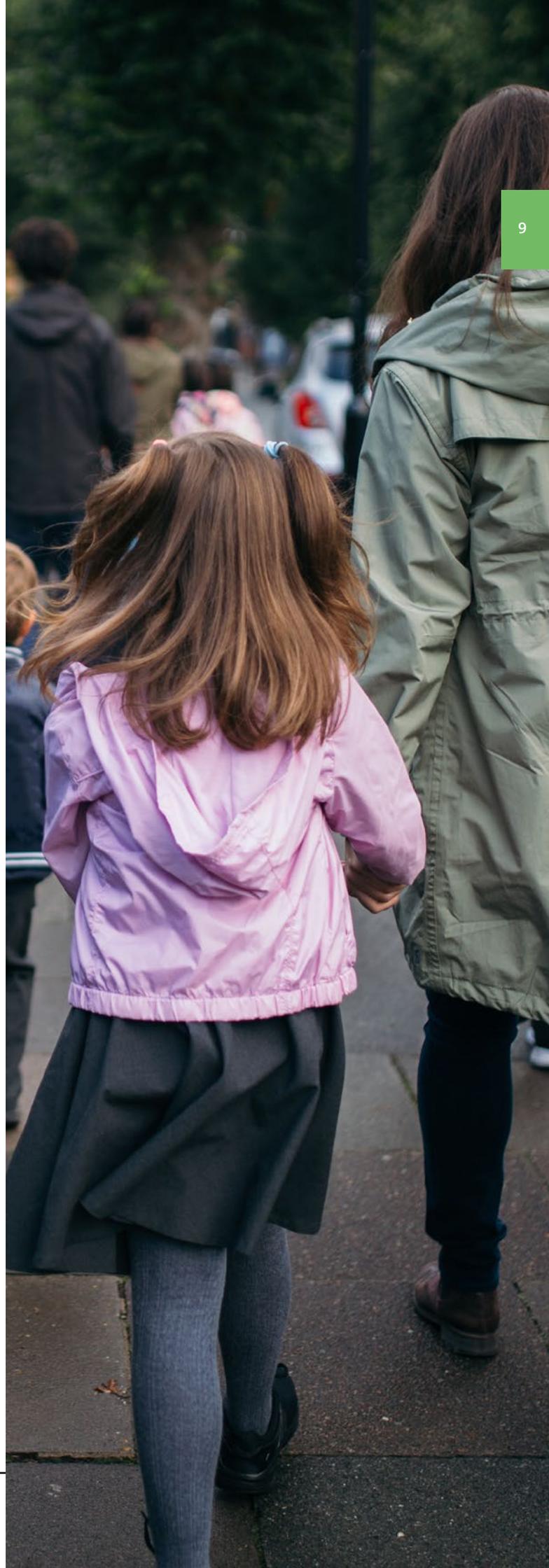
We are going to take the recommendations from these air quality audits and see how we can roll them out to all schools in the city. We will look for innovative ways to fund energy efficiency improvements and introduce green infrastructure to reduce and help shield pupils from the worst pollution. These changes will also enable us to explore options for new low emission areas in Westminster.

What do we want others to do?

The Mayor of London could make more money available to help us roll out these changes across all schools in the city. Businesses could partner with schools and sponsor projects. It's also crucial that schools themselves, from parents, governors, teachers and pupils, work with us to help drive changes.

What can you do?

Support your school if they are trying to implement changes such as encouraging walking to school. Talk to other parents about air pollution and the small steps everyone can take to reduce their own emissions and exposure to harmful pollution.



Making greener options easier for residents and changing behaviour together

6 We will support residents to monitor air quality in their neighbourhoods

Evidence shows that local interventions can make a big difference. Working with you, we want to build a detailed picture of pollution in the city to inform our policy, guide local decisions big and small and provide evidence to back community action.

What have we done so far?

In Westminster, we monitor air pollution in a number of ways, from long-term fixed monitors by our roadsides to smaller monitors aimed at managing dust produced at construction sites. We have also led the way in testing out new methods of monitoring. Earlier this year, we conducted personal exposure monitoring for pedestrians in the Marylebone Low Emission Neighbourhood using a 'backpack monitor' in partnership with King's College London.

What are we going to do?

We want to work in partnership with our residents and businesses to build up awareness of local air pollution. By supporting more people to undertake their own pollution monitoring, we can bring them into the conversation and help us formulate and implement new policies and projects.

What do we want others to do?

There are a whole range of new products, applications and services on the market to help residents undertake their own monitoring. To help build a more accurate picture of pollution levels across Westminster, we want entrepreneurs and academics to work with and trial new products on our streets and in buildings where air pollution can also be harmful to health.

What can you do?

Get in touch. Let us know if you want to help in monitoring air quality in your area. We will be introducing a new 'community monitoring framework' this summer so you can monitor air quality in your own area. We will help you with obtaining the most suitable equipment, understanding the results, and developing local projects to reduce pollution.



7 We will support everyone in Westminster to increase recycling and reduce the use of limited resources

What have we done so far?

Westminster residents are encouraged to recycle. Virtually no waste goes to landfill. Most is used to generate energy. However, this is not the optimal result. We need to do more recycling. This year we have run activities focused on minimising single-use plastics in Westminster, partly because of the pollutants produced when making them and broader environmental and health damage. However, we know that with a million visitors, to central London every day and in a city of flats and apartments, recycling is a challenge. We need to find new ways to recycle better and do more.

What are we going to do?

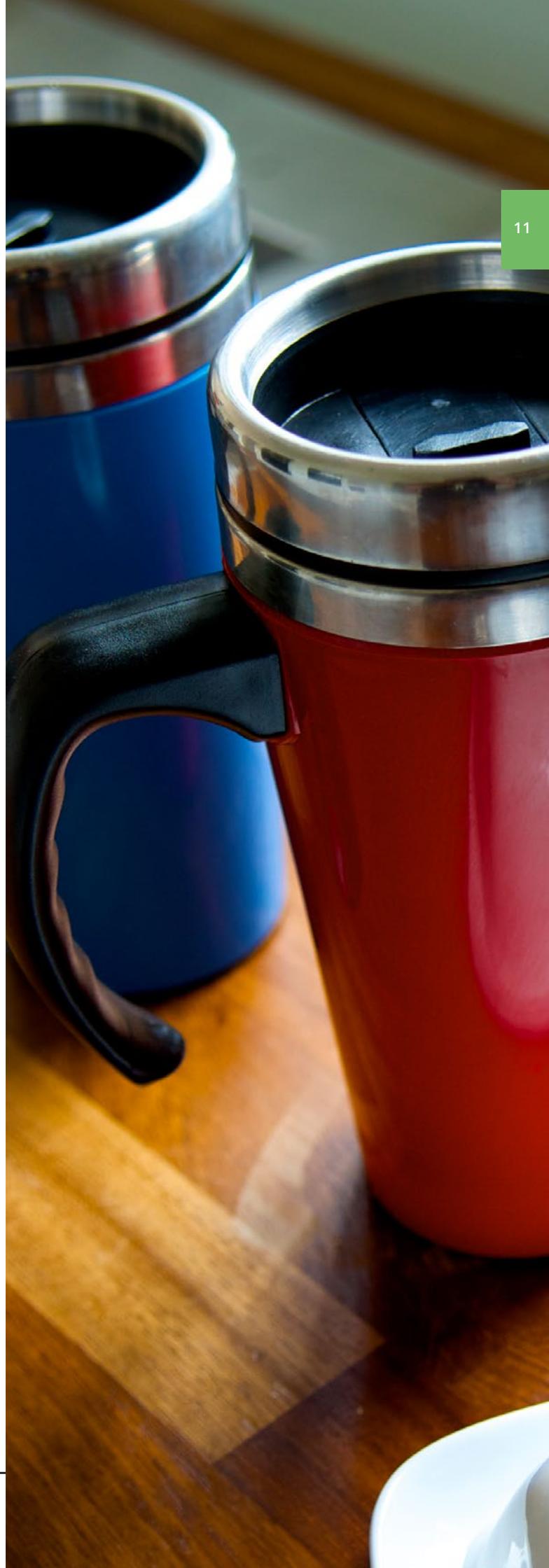
We will establish a Recycling Alliance across Westminster's businesses, communities and social enterprises to increase recycling step-by-step and building by building, with a targeted programme. Our thought leadership agenda will allow us to look at new ways of making recycling easier for residents and visitors. We will continue to campaign against single-use plastics and work with organisations to provide (free) water for bottle refills across our city. We will educate and support our tourist visitors to feel that they, too, are for a few days, Visiting Citizens of Westminster, welcome guests, accepting environmental responsibilities too.

What we want others to do?

We want every organisation in Westminster to share our recycling ambition and the answers and problems they may have so we can multiply our knowledge and options in this area. We want every London Borough to adopt similar policies, especially in inner London where recycling is more difficult. We would like Government to provide regulation and incentives to phase out single-use plastic.

What can you do?

Make a conscious effort to recycle more, know what you can recycle and cannot. Try and find alternatives to single-use plastics when you buy. Reuse water bottles and get a reusable cup for your tea and coffee on the move. When we come and talk to you about food recycling for instance, be open to new ideas.



#DontBeIdle

westminster.gov.uk/dont-be-idle

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AIR QUALITY MANIFESTO



Sign our
pledge and
help improve
air quality in
the city

8 We will continue to campaign against engine idling

Make engine idling the new smoking:

7,000 people have signed our #DontBeIdle pledge encouraging drivers to turn off their engine while waiting at the side of the road or collecting a passenger.

Now the campaign is getting bigger. We will be encouraging government to give us greater power to prosecute idling drivers and to roll out #DontBeIdle across the country. Closer to home we will be targeting messages at those people most likely to idle: encouraging businesses, freight, taxi, coach and delivery companies to make the pledge part of their corporate social responsibility.

What have we done so far?

Over 7,000 people have signed our #DontBeIdle pledge encouraging drivers to turn off their engine while waiting at the side of the road or collecting a passenger. We've held awareness raising events all over the city to help promote the small steps drivers can take to help reduce their own contributions to pollution.

What are we going to do?

We are going to build on the first year of our #DontBeIdle campaign. We want this to grow beyond Westminster and involve everyone from residents to our businesses, bus and freight companies. We will also be working with the London School of Economics to help us understand how we can get our messages on pollution and idling across to even more people.

What do we want others to do?

We need national Government to help us penalise those who aren't doing the best they can. We need new legislation on enforcement to complement our wider work on awareness raising and behaviour change. We need to be able to make penalties hurt when fleet and coach vehicles are not open to education and persuasion, which most are.

Businesses can also get more involved with #DontBeIdle with their own fleets, but those delivering to offices, shops etc.

What can you do?

Sign the pledge and encourage others to do the same. If you want to run your own Anti-Idling Road Show let us know. We will provide you with your own pack of materials.

Innovation and thought leadership

9 We will welcome new green technology and become a centre of leadership for green innovation

We will invite businesses, builders and universities to trial new green technology in Westminster. We aspire to be the centre for air quality learning and technology in the UK. We want to encourage new ideas, partnerships and sponsorships to help drive green innovation in the city.

From pollution-eating benches and trees to the latest electric vehicle charging points, we will try new green initiatives and embrace technology which works. Through a range of programmes and partnerships, we shall establish a laboratory for green leadership to benefit our residents and help other city centres shape air quality and environment agendas.

What have we done so far?

Westminster is the only London borough to have funding for two Low Emission Neighbourhoods (LENs). Our LEN in Marylebone is well established and has become a test bed for new and exciting initiatives such as trialling our diesel parking surcharge for Pay and Display bays. We also have a new business LEN to be delivered by the Northbank Business Improvement District, who are looking at a number of innovative projects to green the urban realm and reduce pollution levels. We have also established effective partnerships with our universities with their ground-breaking research.

What are we going to do?

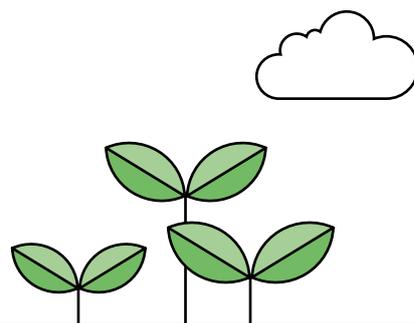
We are going to work with universities, residents, schools and businesses of all shapes and sizes to come up with exciting projects to help reduce pollution across the city. We are looking at the possibility of creating a new Green Business Council to help support this work, and investigate new ideas, products and technologies.

What do we want others to do?

Get involved! We want to encourage start-ups, established businesses and entrepreneurs to pitch projects and ideas to us and work in partnership with us.

What you can do?

Having a great idea for a project or product that will help reduce pollution in Westminster doesn't have to come from an established business – we want residents and schools to get involved as we aim to make the city a hotbed for green innovation.





10

We will invite new ideas from around the world to help inform our own work and to influence government

Providing thought leadership:

During 2017, we began actively engaging with academics, industry and politicians on how to tackle air quality in Westminster. This included running a series of three thought leadership events, using our experience and unique position in the centre of London.

What have we done so far?

We are pushing central Government to maximise the opportunity presented by Brexit to deliver a new green policy framework, including a strong and independent Environmental Enforcement Agency to make air quality standards as tough as possible. The Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has been moving in the same direction. We would also like to central Government to have an independent Air-Quality Regulator to move the air-quality debate onto higher standards above and beyond those of the EU.

What are we going to do?

We will continue engaging with the DEFRA to understand and influence their work, specifically with regard to the new Environmental Enforcement Agency. We will use our experience in the centre of London, such as the #DontBeldle campaign, to make a case for a strong and independent agency that will set the global standard, and give local authorities new powers to maximise the opportunity presented to deliver a green Brexit.

We will look into organising an international event to bring in expertise and experience from cities across Europe and beyond who are taking a variety of measures to tackle air pollution, particularly from diesel vehicles. We will strive to be at the heart of generating new ideas and building partnerships on this important agenda.

We know that it is not enough to posture and say that Westminster will be a WHO standard air-quality city. Instead, we will commit practically to exploring how and when we could achieve WHO standards for Westminster air-quality and make this our ongoing target, sharing our findings in discussion with the community.

What do we want others to do?

We want academics, businesses, residents and politicians to join us in the public discourse, to share ideas and solutions, coordinate activity and make a strong case to Government for a green Brexit.

What you can do?

Seek to join us in the discussion, utilising your own networks and forums to engage on this issue and share your experience with Westminster. Providing leadership doesn't need to just come from Government or us as a council – through talking to your friends and networks or as a leader in your businesses you too can champion improving air quality where you live or work! Be aware of the small changes you can make in your impact on air quality, make some of them and aspire to the rest.

Final thoughts and next steps

Improving Westminster's air quality is a journey, but the first steps have already been made. Not only are residents better educated and more aware, but between residents, businesses, the community sector and the council we are all changing our behaviours. For instance, NO₂ pollution on Oxford Street has dropped by 35% since 2013.

These first steps are just baby steps – remembering that young people, as well as the elderly, are the worst affected by air pollution. Moving forward, first we can make an impact through vehicles and how they are powered and drive in our city. Second, we can change how we build and refurbish. Third, we can choose to change our behaviours and those of others and do so together. Fourth, we can build innovation and thought leadership through Westminster to share on a much wider basis beyond our city to influence Government nationally and regionally and to share across the UK's boroughs and cities.

