

London Councils' Transport & Environment Committee Executive

Reducing Air Pollution in London Item no: 05

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Summary:

Following the previous air quality update, the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, has launched a large-scale public consultation on measures to tackle air pollution in London and the associated public health and inequality impacts. The consultation has been split into three stages, with the first stage launched on 5th of July running until 29th of July.

This paper details London Councils response to the measures laid out in this consultation at Appendix 1.

Recommendations:

The Committee is asked to:

- Discuss and agree the current direction of travel for London Council's response to the Mayor's first phase consultation on air quality at Appendix 1.

Reducing Air Pollution in London

1. The previous air quality update to the last full TEC meeting in June 2016, provided some recent empirical data regarding the social and health impacts of air pollution showing how it causes approximately 9,400 deaths per year in London alone. The report also provided an update on the new Mayors emerging policies in this area and reiterated London Councils current position. The paper committed London Councils to work on a renewed position on air quality, using the consultations proposed by the Mayor as a starting point.
2. On 5th July, the first of three phases of consultations was launched by the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan running until 29th July. This first phase is a high level consultation based on a questionnaire, gauging the views of Londoners and other stakeholders on the air quality problem as a whole, changes proposed to the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) - including bringing its introduction forward and extending the boundaries - and incentivising the use of cleaner vehicles through a diesel scrappage scheme or devolving Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) to London. The consultation also includes questions on pedestrianisation, high pollution alerts, the potential for a boiler scrappage scheme and the principle of introducing a new Emissions Surcharge to discourage the oldest vehicles from driving in Central London.
3. London Councils draft response can be found at Appendix 1. Given the short timeframe of the consultation launch and the production of this report, there have only been a number of London boroughs who have responded so far but more have indicated they will respond before the deadline. This report seeks the views of the Executive Committee on the direction of travel of the response.
4. Following this Phase 1 consultation the Mayor plans an additional two phases;
 - a. Phase 2 – Autumn 2016: Policy consultation on transport related proposals including a detailed statutory public consultation on the introduction of a new Emissions Surcharge.
 - b. Phase 3 – Autumn 2017: A detailed statutory public consultation on the transport related proposals including the widening of the ULEZ boundary to include more of inner London and proposal to tighten the emission standards for the London-wide Low Emission Zone

Going Forward

5. London Councils will respond to these consultations as well and take them to TEC as appropriate and possible, given timings.

Recommendations: The Committee is asked to:

- Discuss and agree the current direction of travel for London Council's response to the Mayor's first phase consultation on air quality at Appendix 1.

Financial Implications

6. There are no financial implications to London Councils arising from this report.

Legal Implications

7. There are no financial implications to London Councils arising from this report.

Equalities Implications

8. There are no equalities implications to London Councils arising from this report.

Appendix 1 - Cleaning Up London's Air Pollution Consultation Draft London Councils Response

1. Measures being considered in this first stage consultation include:
 - Introducing the central London Ultra-Low Emission Zone one year earlier in 2019
 - Extending the Ultra-Low Emission Zone ('ULEZ') beyond central London from 2020: for motorcycles, cars and vans, to the North and South Circular; and for lorries, buses and coaches London-wide
 - Proposals for a diesel scrappage scheme and VED devolution to London
 - The role of pedestrianisation
 - Measures and alerts during periods of high pollution
 - Measures to address emissions from domestic boilers.
 - Implementing a £10 Emissions Surcharge (dubbed the 'T-charge') on the most polluting vehicles entering central London from 2017. The charge would apply to all vehicles with pre-Euro 4 emission standards (broadly speaking those registered before 2005).

London Councils' has the following comments to make on a number of the questions and issues posed in the online survey.

ULEZ (Questions 3-5)

2. We support the Mayor's objective of implementing the ULEZ, and would support plans to bring forward the implementation of the ULEZ to September 2019 if this can be done effectively and without causing additional disruption or problems for London residents than had otherwise been considered.
3. London Councils welcomes plans to expand the ULEZ beyond the initial area of the current central London Congestion Zone. While there is support for the implementation of the ULEZ, there are a number of concerns regarding the proposed boundary for any expansion in the future. The north south circular road being used as a future boundary raises a number of issues, but was seen as a good option in the interim. The north and south circulars cut through a number of boroughs, which clearly further increases the complexity of charging regimes and enforcement in the capital.
4. There is also the issue with the fact that the south circular is different in nature to the north circular, in that it is often made up of smaller, local roads moving through suburban communities. It is also not as expansive as the north circular, meaning that it would have less impact on south London. Therefore we believe there may be merits to looking at other boundary solutions, in the south especially.
5. We believe any extended boundary for the ULEZ should cover light and heavy vehicles but done in a way where displacement issues are minimised and local businesses are consulted. Pedestrianisation and filtered permeability should also be considered, but the issue of displacement should be monitored closely by TfL.

Diesel Scrappage Scheme (Questions 6-10)

6. We support plans for a diesel scrappage scheme but would welcome more information on the nature of the scheme proposed – such as the scope of the vehicles to be included, and any requirements on participants. We would also encourage these plans to be taken forward to influence the Autumn Budget to make the scrappage scheme a nationwide policy, given that air pollution is not just a London problem. This would also help to fight the traffic that comes into London from elsewhere, as well as tackle the issues of air pollution within London by residents. London Councils does caution of a move away from a focus on carbon emissions, with any move away from diesel needing to encourage the right kind of take-up of other forms of transport (i.e. different modes or if a private vehicle, it should be fully electric, hydrogen, hybrid, or cleaner petrol).

7. London Councils supports, in principle, the devolution of VED powers to London, but more information is required before making an informed decision. With the information provided, it's not clear how much income VED would provide for London, nor is it clear that devolution of VED would not detrimentally impact other funding sources used by local authorities for road maintenance, such as Principal Road Maintenance funding through the Local Implementation Plan.
8. London Councils does not agree with the recent reforms to vehicle excise duty (VED) as it no longer incentivises low emission vehicles and we think this fiscal stimulus should continue.
9. London Councils welcomes plans for air pollution alerts to raise awareness of the issue particularly through electronic signs on roads and at public transport stations, email, text messages, television, radio and online formats.
10. We support a boiler scrappage scheme funded by the Mayor, providing lessons are learnt from the scheme implemented under the previous administration and the scheme provides good value for money.

Emissions Surcharge (Questions 11-16)

11. London Councils and the London boroughs support a daily emissions surcharge for all non-compliant vehicles (Euro IV and older). The concept of the Congestion Charge and Low Emission Zone are already well understood by drivers in London.
12. The implementation of the Emissions Surcharge under the same hours of operation as the Congestion Charge (0700 – 1800, Monday to Friday) would make things simpler initially. But there could be merit in understanding the potential impact of extending these hours. Ideally, TfL should undertake modelling to assess the impact of extending the operating hours. TfL should also model the impacts of extended hours on freight services, taking into account the potential contribution to other policy objectives, such as freight retiming or consolidation.
13. London Councils agrees that there needs to be a reduction for residents of the emissions surcharge and using the Congestion Charge reduction of 90% is a fair amount, although this may need to be revisited for areas included in any expanded ULEZ, given the number of residents that would then be included.
14. Given the fact that large vehicles (in this case, vehicles with nine seats or more) create more pollution, we agree that vehicles of this nature should also pay the Emissions Surcharge.

Additional comments (Questions 17–18)

15. We seek assurances from TfL that any surplus from the ULEZ and emissions surcharge will be ring fenced and used for measures that improve air quality standards in London, for example investment in electric buses, electric charging points or more sustainable modes of transport, especially walking and cycling.
16. The ULEZ alone will not solve London's air quality problems, not least for the areas outside the zone. Whilst acknowledging the Transport Emissions Road Map and funding schemes for boroughs to deliver local air quality improvements, we strongly encourage the Mayor to continue to prioritise air quality improvements, establish ways to reduce air pollution levels to below the legal limit, and work with boroughs to ensure the benefits of the ULEZ are felt across London.
17. We support the greater use of green infrastructure and urban greening (for instance the use of green walls, roofs and screens in public areas, and more strategic planning of green

spaces) as a means of mitigating air pollution. London Councils also supports national clean air zones which could be implemented with the adoption of a new Clean Air Act - to help bring about a change in culture on this issue, and help to make it a national priority.