

London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

Draft Air Quality Action Plan

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Summary Document

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Foreword by Councillor Charles Fairbrass, Leader of the Council

In line with the Environment Act 1995, we have been carrying out a full review and assessment of air quality within the borough since 1998, using air quality objectives set out in the National Air Quality Strategy. The results of the three stages of review and assessment showed that, in the area around the A13, we would not meet the national objectives for nitrogen dioxide and particles in the air. As a result, on 18 July 2002, we declared this area to be an Air Quality Management Area.

Road traffic is the main source of air pollution in Barking and Dagenham. We have produced this action plan to set out what we will do to improve air quality not only in the air quality management area, but also across the borough as a whole.

We have assessed all of the actions included in the plan separately in terms of how they will affect air quality, and the cost, to make sure that we direct time and money towards the most effective options.

We have already made progress in terms of air quality. Many of the actions mentioned in this plan are already in place or are proposed. The plan shows that it is important for council departments to work well together.

The action plan is a working document. It encourages council departments to work together, and work with our partners, progress and develop the plan.

Barking and Dagenham is currently being regenerated within the Thames Gateway scheme, and improving air quality is an important part of making Barking and Dagenham cleaner and greener and creating a more attractive place where people will want to live and work. The measures and targets in this document will lead to real improvements in air quality in the future.

Introduction

The Government's National Air Quality Strategy (NAQS) was first published in 1997. It sets out standards and objectives for nine main pollutants that are harmful to health. By law, every local authority must take steps to meet these objectives. Local authorities have carried out a 'review and assessment' of air quality. This means they have considered present and future air quality and assessed whether they are likely to meet these objectives. If the review and assessment shows that a local authority is unlikely to meet the aims in a certain area, the local authority must declare the area an air quality management area (AQMA) and prepare an air quality action plan (AQAP) to set out what it plans to do to improve local air quality in the area.

We declared an air quality management area (AQMA) covering homes along the A13 where we will not meet standards for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particles in the air (PM₁₀).

The Mayor of London has highlighted the following measures that local authorities in London must consider in their action plans.

- Making sure their vehicles have the lowest possible exhaust emissions.
- Looking into buying vehicles that use fuel that is less damaging to the environment when their vehicles need replacing.
- Making sure vehicles are used sensibly and are well maintained, and that routes and tasks are well planned.
- Training drivers to improve fuel economy.
- Delivering goods and services in a co-ordinated way.
- Setting workplace travel plans which give staff alternatives to travelling to work by car, and reviewing essential car users' allowances, parking and so on.
- Setting similar travel plans for schools to reduce the number of children travelling to school by car.
- Including measures to reduce pollution and traffic in their unitary development plans.
- Producing planning guidance on air pollution.
- Promoting composting, helping to reduce the number of garden bonfires and reducing the cost of managing waste.

The main pollution problem in London is from road transport. This plan aims to balance supply and demand, accepting that cars and the lorries are needed to meet transport needs, while suggesting practical alternatives that will encourage a reduction in road traffic.

When writing the plan, we considered all the services we provide which have an effect on air quality. It explains what actions we are already taking and suggests new ones. It also considers the cost of each proposed action, and how it will affect air quality, to assess the overall effectiveness of each proposal. This document gives a summary of the actions and the effect on air

quality of each proposal. There is a full table, including cost assessment and overall effectiveness, in the full plan.

Actions

Community Strategy

- We will continue to make people more aware of air-quality problems within the borough, working with the relevant subgroups of the Borough Partnership, to deliver on air-quality management plan and improve air quality.

Effect on air quality: low.

The Community Strategy sets out what we must do to deal with the community priorities. Including the Air Quality Action Plan within the Community Strategy will not have a direct effect on air quality, but it shows how committed we are to improving air quality.

Traffic management

- To extend our air-quality monitoring network, we will monitor the air quality associated with traffic management schemes. We will monitor the levels of nitrogen dioxide and particles in the air before, during and after some schemes are introduced.
- We will continue to bid for funds for traffic-calming schemes and home zones through the borough spending plan. A home zone is a street or group of streets designed to be friendly to pedestrians and cyclists. We will complete two planned home-zone schemes by December 2004.
- We will continue to campaign for Transport for London to consider improvements to their road network.
- We will introduce weight restrictions in residential areas to restrict HGVs in these areas.
- When we are planning roadworks we will give priority to traffic calming measures along the safer routes for schools, and introduce 20mph zones near schools.
- We will produce a parking management strategy that will encourage people to cycle or use public transport instead of using cars for short journeys.
- We will use closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras to discourage car drivers from using bus lanes. We will try to get funds for this through the Borough Spending Plan.

Effect on air quality: medium

Traffic-calming measures prevent people from driving smoothly. This increases the amount of pollution from vehicles and uses more energy. It may also mean that drivers start to use other roads which will then become too busy. However, this increase in pollution is offset by the possible improvement in air quality by reducing the overall amount of traffic on the road. Also, weight restrictions do not reduce pollution, they only redirect heavy-goods vehicles elsewhere. Transport for London (TfL) is responsible for managing traffic on the Transport of London Road Network (TLRN) which carries over a quarter of all the traffic in London. TfL needs to take action to improve traffic management on the TLRN before we will see a major reduction in pollution.

Alternative methods

We will do the following.

- Continue to work with London Buses, Transport for London, neighbouring boroughs and bus operators to make bus services more reliable and efficient by going to regular meetings and discussing local problems.
- Introduce CCTV cameras at rail and bus interchanges at Becontree Station and Dagenham East station.
- Improve footpaths, signs and directions to encourage people to walk, and continue to extend the 'Just Walk' scheme.
- Support the provision of better facilities at bus and rail stations and routes between bus and rail stations.
- Help to reduce the need for people to travel by private car or by lorries other than for essential trips, but still accept that cars and lorries can help to meet transport needs.
- Support measures to manage travel demand in the borough, and encourage people to walk, cycle or use public transport. The road network should be managed to give priority to essential road users, improving the environment, and keeping pedestrians and all road users safe.
- Look at ways to improve public transport so that it meets the needs of residents, businesses and employees in the borough, without damaging the environment.
- Encourage our employees to use public transport for work-related journeys by considering measures such as free bus and tube passes. This will help to reduce the number of cars on the roads, increase the use of public

² Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, 2001 DETR.

transport and set an example to other employers in the borough. It will also give us a greater interest in making sure that public transport is clean, safe and convenient, and should save us money.

- Try to protect and improve conditions for cyclists and pedestrians.
- Try to understand what prevents people from cycling, and to find ways to overcome those problems. We will work with Transport for London Centre of Cycling Excellence to develop a cycling strategy.
- Look at 'good practice' examples of towns or districts where cycling is popular and identify why and how these areas are different to London Borough of Barking and Dagenham.
- Make sure that schools encourage pupils and staff to cycle or walk to school and that there are suitable facilities to make this possible, including a network of safe routes and undercover shelter for storing cycles.
- Strongly encourage our employees to cycle to work and to use cycles for transport during work. We will consider incentives such as charging for car-parking spaces and using the money from this to support cycling.
- Provide a borough-wide network of cycle routes which links up with the National Cycle Routes Network and the London Cycle Network. We will work with local cycling organisations to make sure that the routes are safe and convenient, and that cyclists and walkers have priority at road junctions as far as possible.
- Promote safe cycling and provide cycle-proficiency training for children and adults.
- Advertise the advantages and benefits of walking for shorter journeys.
- Promote and arrange safer routes to school and organise walking buses along these routes. We will take steps to discourage parents from driving their children to school.
- Take steps to prevent and discourage motorists from parking on or obstructing pavements.
- Introduce bus lanes at Lodge Avenue and Ripple Road, and Bennetts Castle Lane and Becontree Avenue.
- Actively support the movement of freight in and out of the borough on the River Thames.

Effect on air quality: medium.

These measures aim to encourage more people to travel by public transport instead of by car. This will reduce the number of vehicles on the road and so reduce pollution from vehicles. We can introduce measures to promote the use of public transport, but without major investment and co-ordination from the Government, we cannot make public transport more reliable, safer or cheaper to use.

Travel plans

We will do the following.

- Produce a 'Green Travel Plan' for our employees to encourage our staff to cycle or use public transport instead of travelling to work by car.
- Campaign for the Government to develop laws which mean that developers must produce travel plans.
- Use planning conditions or section 106 agreements and work with developers to produce travel plans with outcomes that can be measured, and consider financial penalties to make sure developers follow these conditions or agreements.
- Take steps to limit the number of our employees' private cars. This will set an example to other employers.
- Use allocated funds to develop school travel plans.
- Make sure that the revised Unitary Development Plan contains a commitment to producing travel plans for large developments within the borough, and to enforce their outcomes.

Effect on air quality: medium

By considering how a development will affect traffic in the surrounding areas, before building work is started, developers can offer realistic alternative travel options. However, unless systems are in place to enforce the commitments of planning conditions or section 106 agreements and to monitor and enforce the outcome of travel plans, this will not have a major effect on air quality.

Fleet

We will do the following.

- Develop a Strategy for managing our fleet of vehicles.
- We will consider following the Good Practice Guide GPG318 Transport

and Environmental Management System as a guide for managing our fleet of vehicles.

- We will try to use our vehicles less and we will maintain them to make sure they last as long as possible. When a vehicle has clearly reached the end of its economic life and we need to replace it, we will buy a new energy-efficient vehicle which uses the best commercially-available technology at the time for minimising carbon dioxide (CO₂). This may be biodiesel, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), petrol, electricity or hydrogen fuel cell.
- We know that by training drivers we can reduce the amount of fuel used and make our vehicles last longer. We will make sure that the drivers of all our vehicles, and all essential car users, receive appropriate training. We will monitor the amount of fuel these drivers use before and after the training to assess the benefits.
- Where possible, we will take advantage of reduced vehicle excise duty and enhanced capital allowances for the most efficient cars.

Effect on air quality: low

The effect on air quality will be low because of the small number of vehicles we have in relation to the entire borough. However, we should lead by example and follow a travel plan that includes how we manage our vehicles, then the measures in this action plan will be more effective.

Low emission zone (LEZ)

A low emission zone is a defined area where restrictions are placed on polluting vehicles.

We will do the following.

- Work with the Greater London Authority (GLA), Association of London Government (ALG) and other boroughs to consider the results of the study into whether a LEZ would work in Barking and Dagenham, and if so, help to introduce the LEZ in phases.
- Keep local transport operators informed of any proposed LEZ scheme and provide information about opportunities to find improvements to their fleets of vehicles.

Effect on air quality: high

A LEZ is likely to achieve a major reduction in nitrogen dioxide and particles in the air by only allowing vehicles that cause less pollution to enter the zone. Restricting vehicles means fewer vehicles on the road and so less pollution. Some car users will find alternative routes

but overall, restrictions will encourage people to use other types of transport.

Testing pollution from vehicles

- We will support the Vehicle Emission Testing and Maintenance Campaign and encourage the project to include goods vehicles, buses and coaches.
- We will increase publicity about testing pollution from vehicles and ongoing maintenance, and will continue to publish the results.
- We will continue to campaign for the Government to reduce the limits for acceptable levels of pollution.

Effect on air quality: high

The main aim of testing pollution from vehicles is to encourage regular servicing and tuning. Random checks and fixed penalty notices will encourage drivers to make sure that their vehicles do not cause more pollution than the Government's limit. Although not all vehicles will be tested, if the programme leads to a large proportion of older vehicles being serviced regularly, there could be a considerable improvement in air quality.

Land use planning

As the local planning authority, we will do the following.

- Encourage developers to choose sites close to the public transport network for new commercial and industrial developments, and oppose major developments that do not include suitable access to public transport and cycling facilities.
- Produce planning guidance to develop conditions for developments within the air quality management area looking at issues such as sustainable buildings designed to use recycled materials and less energy, promoting the use of alternative sources of energy, and measures to save energy.
- Make sure that people applying for planning permission carry out assessments into how major developments will affect traffic and air quality within the borough. If a development would lead to an unacceptable reduction in air quality, this should be included in the planning application, and we could refuse planning permission or include planning conditions forcing the developers to restrict the effect of the development. We must decide what we consider to be unacceptable, taking guidance from the Greater London Authority (GLA) and groups like the National Society for Clear Air and Environmental Protection.
- Review the Unitary Development Plan to include policies and guidance to

reflect the air quality management area as a material planning consideration bearing in mind guidance from the Government and the recommendations in this action plan.

- Support the transport proposals with Thames Gateway Regeneration.

Effect on air quality: high

Using planning controls to enforce full assessments of location, suitability, infrastructure development, and sustainable development, and to discourage car use and promote energy-efficient technology can have a high effect on local air quality. Developing close links between Health and Consumer Services, Highways and Planning Divisions and the use of air-quality information on Geographic Information Systems (GIS), will improve the decision-making progress and improve local air quality.

Monitoring air quality

We will do the following.

- Continue to manage the air-quality monitoring network.
- Improve the information on our website and provide links for the public to view current pollution levels.
- Use our geographical information system to show the declared air-quality management area and industrial areas.
- Health and Consumer Services Division will continue to raise awareness of air quality within the borough, working with the relevant subgroups, to deliver the air-quality management plan and improve air quality.

Effect on air quality: medium

Monitoring air quality and looking at trends using GIS is a main part of this action plan. We will share the information we gather to inform debate and target action for improvements across the council and the community. The information will influence our policies and make sure improving air quality is included in the planning process.

Industry

We will do the following.

- Continue to carry out risk-based inspections of Local Authority Integrated Pollution Control (LA-IPC) processes and take action if industries break the conditions.
- Continue to provide operator forums to encourage networking between operators of similar processes and to provide information and advice about legal requirements and developments within each sector.

Effect on air quality: low

Current laws already control pollution from industry in Barking and Dagenham. Extra efforts are likely to have a low effect on air quality.

Construction

We will do the following.

- Use planning conditions and continue to work as part of the East London Air Quality Cluster Group to develop planning guidance to reduce the amount of dust from major development sites. This guidance will be incorporated into the revised UDP and given to developers.
- Develop proposals to take samples of dust if we receive complaints about dust from construction sites.
- Continue random site inspections to make sure vehicles use wheel washes that their loads are covered when being transported to and from the building sites.
- Review our enforcement policy for controlling dust from construction sites within the air quality management area.
- Continue to respond quickly to complaints about dust.

Effect on air quality: medium

Large construction sites have a major effect on the local area. It is important that we regulate construction sites effectively so that the public can have confidence in our aim to improve air quality.

Buying goods and services

We will do the following.

- Develop a guide for officers on buying environmentally-friendly goods and services.

- Monitor and record how each contract above £200,000 will affect the environment.

Effect on air quality: low

Buying environmentally-friendly goods, materials and services show our commitment to protecting the environment, but the effects on local air quality are likely to be low.

Energy

We will do the following.

- Use the proposals in the National Building Associates Consortium Services Ltd () survey as a target for the Housing Strategy and the Affordable Warmth Strategy.
- Use the measures set out in the National Building Associates' Private Sector Report as targets for the Private Sector Housing Strategy.
- Make sure the Private Sector Housing Strategy and the Housing Strategy include raising awareness of energy efficiency and the need to take personal responsibility for using energy and the amount of CO₂ released into the air. People can save a lot of money by turning off unwanted lights, closing doors and windows, and not leaving televisions and video recorders on standby. The strategy should aim to encourage people to buy low-energy appliances, and appliances that do not use too much water, for their homes.
- Investigate whether we could set a design standard for energy usage in new buildings that is an improvement on the minimum standards necessary under the Building Regulations.
- Make sure that developers consider district heating, combined heat and power and renewable energy for any large-scale housing developments in the borough, including the new waterfront developments at Barking Reach and Dagenham Docks and in the Heath Park area.
- Set realistic targets for increasing the use of renewable energy by providing advice and information to owners and developers.
- Work with the electricity suppliers, to find out how many homes buy green electricity (electricity from renewable sources) and help to promote green electricity.
- Through our planning department, provide support for embedded photovoltaic generation (including solar electricity panels in new buildings) and give developers help and information.

- Investigate best practice solar water heating and make sure that all developers receive information about this at the appropriate planning stage.
- Make sure that all future policies and strategies have a section on climate change, which will include an estimate of the resulting changes in the substances that cause global warming.

Effect on air quality: low

Road traffic is the main cause of air pollution, and energy measures are unlikely to affect air quality until pollution from road traffic reduces. Energy-efficiency measures are more important in the long term as the Government introduces measures to deal with climate change and reduce the amount of carbon dioxide released into the air.

Campaigns

We will do the following.

- Continue to take part in Walk-to-school week and advertise our success.
- Take part in Don't Choke London and Car Free Day.
- Promote the car-sharing scheme and encourage our staff to take part.

Effect on air quality: low

These campaigns are vital in showing our commitment to improving air quality, but are unlikely to have a major effect due to their short-lived nature. They are unlikely to have a lasting effect on people in the borough unless resources are available to support and publicise them regularly.

Further assessment

If a local authority has declared an air-quality management area (AQMA) it must carry out another assessment to complete the next step of the air-quality management process. The assessment allows the authority to do the following.

- 1 Confirm the original assessment of air quality against the set aims and so make sure that they were right to declare the AQMA in the first place.
- 2 Calculate more accurately how much of an improvement in air quality would be needed to meet air-quality aims within the AQMA.
- 3 Increase their knowledge of what causes pollution so that they can target air-quality action plans properly. .
- 4 Take account of any new national policy developments which have come to light since the AQMA was declared and the Stage 3 report was prepared.
- 5 Take account of any new local policy developments which are likely to affect air quality and which were not covered fully in the Stage 3 report.
- 6 Respond to comments from people we must consult by law in connection with the Stage 3 report.
- 7 Check that the information we used when making our decision about the AQMA was correct.
- 8 Carry out further monitoring in problem areas to check their earlier findings.

These further assessments confirmed that levels of nitrogen dioxide and particles in the air would be above the national targets in our air quality management area. The report predicted that the area of where levels of nitrogen dioxide will be too high will be larger than the area we declared so, if there is an increased risk to the public, we will need to enlarge our air quality management area.

The report investigated what was causing pollution where the air quality standards objectives will not be met within the borough. We chose a series of locations across the borough to assess what was causing the pollution. The results confirm the largest cause was road traffic.

We also looked at various solutions such as removing certain polluting categories of vehicle (low emission zone) which showed reduced concentrations of both nitrogen dioxide and particles in the air, and reducing the amount of traffic by completely removing the 'school run' and reducing total traffic by 20%. The outcome for all solutions was that fewer areas were predicted not to meet Air Quality Standards aim.