

COUNCIL MEETING – WEDNESDAY 12 JULY 2017

NOTICE OF MOTION

This Council welcomes the public meeting held recently by local campaign group, Clean Air Merton, to discuss how best to tackle the serious problem of air pollution in the borough, and notes with concern that:

- 1) Over 12,000 people in Merton are estimated to be exposed to toxic levels of pollution;
- 2) Various locations in Colliers Wood (Western Road and Colliers Wood High Street), Mitcham (London Road and Church Road), Morden (Crown Lane and London Road) and Wimbledon (The Ridgway, Merton Road and Haydons Road) exceed the legal nitrogen dioxide legal limit of 40 ug/m³;
- 3) 13 nurseries and schools across the borough are situated in areas with illegal air quality; and
- 4) Plans submitted to Merton Council for construction of a concrete batching plant at Waterside Way have led to a large number of objections citing the potential adverse impact on the air quality in neighbouring residential streets and at the nearby primary school and children's playground.

Emissions from road traffic have been identified as a major source of pollution in the borough and this Council recognises that Merton has sought in recent years to address levels of air pollution by encouraging local motorists to switch to less polluting vehicles. This has been through various measures, including the installation of a network of electric vehicle charging points; a reduction in the cost of parking permits for electric cars; provision of more on-street cycle parking facilities; and a year's free membership to an electric car club for Merton residents.

However, this Council understands that, whilst local authorities are already responsible for improving air quality in their area, under the government's proposed new air quality plan they will now be expected "to develop new and creative solutions to reduce emissions as quickly as possible, while avoiding undue impact on the motorist".

Given the above, this Council welcomes the work being undertaken in this area both by the borough's Air Quality Task Group, which was established through Scrutiny last year, and by council officers working on the refresh of the Air Quality Action Plan. It is clear there is still more that can and must be done to improve air quality across Merton, particularly by looking at the following:

- Tackling congestion hotspots in the borough and focusing on the worst-offending areas for air pollution;
- Introducing anti-idling measures as has been done in neighbouring Wandsworth;
- Expanding the use of air quality monitoring equipment, including to those locations, such as Plough Lane, where monitoring is no longer taking place;
- Initiatives to incentivise cycling and walking as alternative means of transport and to promote car sharing;

- A further reduction in the parking permit charge for electric vehicles as part of a comprehensive emissions based parking scheme;
- Cleaning up the many diesel vehicles that form the majority of Merton's own transport fleet and lobbying the Mayor of London for cleaner buses; and
- Increased co-operation across the South West London sub-region on air quality.

This Council therefore resolves to redouble its efforts to tackle air pollution and the danger it poses to the health of Merton's residents, and it calls on the Cabinet to:

- a) Look at new and bold ways that the borough can address this issue, in conjunction with the Mayor of London and national government, for incorporation into the 2017-22 Air Quality Action Plan due to go out for public consultation this year; and
- b) Ensure that this consultation is widely promoted and publicised by the Council and that ideas and suggestions to improve air quality are encouraged from individuals, residents' associations, local campaign groups, community organisations and business representatives right across Merton for consideration prior to final adoption of the new Action Plan.

Cllr Michael Bull

Cllr Daniel Holden

Cllr Abdul Latif