

Air Quality Action Plan 2022-2027

Summary



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Introduction



Air pollution is decreasing in our borough and across the capital thanks to measures like School Streets and the Ultra Low Emission Zone, which are helping to create a greener, cleaner and healthier Lewisham for current and future generations. However, as an inner-city borough, we know that more needs to be done to reach the strict WHO-backed targets that we've committed to.

Our new Air Quality Action plan for 2022-2027, which is aligned with the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan, sets out how we plan to:

- build on our progress
- reduce health inequalities
- work with partners to ensure that our local neighbourhoods are greener, better for mental and physical health and less congested by motor traffic

Air pollution can have a detrimental effect on people's health, especially our most vulnerable residents, such

as children, elderly people and people with existing health conditions. With an estimated 28,000 – 36,000 deaths attributable to human-made air pollution in the UK every single year, more action is needed at all levels to address this unacceptable, serious and avoidable source of harm to our health.

We can't address air pollution alone as some of the causes of air pollution do not come from our borough, or even within the UK. That's why we're committed to working with Transport for London, The Greater London Authority, the local Clinical Commissioning Group, businesses, residents and all levels of government to collectively improve the air we all breathe. I'd like to thank everyone who took part in our consultation and shared their ideas. Your contribution will help shape our approach to improving air quality in the years to come.

CLlr Louise Krupski
Cabinet Member for Environment
and Climate Action

What have we achieved since the last action plan?

Carbon emissions have **reduced by 100,000 tonnes** in Lewisham over the past four years

We won **over £5 million** in external funding in 2020/2021 for carbon reduction, fuel poverty and anti-flooding projects

Our Community Energy Fund has supported **11 local community groups** to raise awareness of clean energy and to become more energy efficient

Our council offices and schools are now powered by **100% renewable energy**

We've made tackling air pollution a key part of our London Borough of Culture programme 2022, We Are Lewisham.

Visit www.wearelewisham.com to find out more.

Over 45 School Streets have been put in place outside 38 local schools, helping children walk, cycle and scoot to school by closing roads to cars at the start and end of the school day

Over 150 electric vehicle charging points have been installed – with at least one in every ward!

We've introduced **112 cycle hangars**, with more planned this year

Anti-idling signage has been installed outside local primary schools

All our parking charges are now based on how **environmentally-friendly** vehicles are

We've introduced fines of **up to £80** for engine idlers

Air quality in context

What is an Air Quality Action Plan?

An Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) is required as part of the Council's duty to manage local air quality and help tackle air pollution in the borough.

Poor air quality is bad for everyone, particularly the elderly, young people and those with health issues. This action plan lays out a series of measures and actions that aim to reduce the amount of pollution in the air, to create a healthier and greener borough.

What is air pollution and why is it important?

Air pollution is the release of harmful particles and gases, such as nitrous oxides, into the air. These emissions can have a significant impact on both the health of our planet and our own physical health.

Pollution tends to affect the most vulnerable people in our society, including children and young people, elderly people, and people with pre-existing health conditions, including heart disease, cancer and asthma. However, air pollution is not just a public health issue, it's also a social one, as air pollution levels are highest in more deprived parts of the country. This action plan includes specific measures and monitoring in schools, care homes, hospitals and lower-income areas, to help address the impact that pollution has on vulnerable people.



Whilst air pollution has been improving in London, the levels of pollution in the capital are still too high. The most concerning air pollutants in urban areas are particulate matter (small particles which are made up of different chemicals) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) – both of which have different causes and

health impacts, which makes addressing the overall issue of air pollution very complex. Particulate matter (PM) is particularly difficult to address as a large percentage of London's particulate matter comes from other parts of the country and also from outside the UK.

Air quality in context

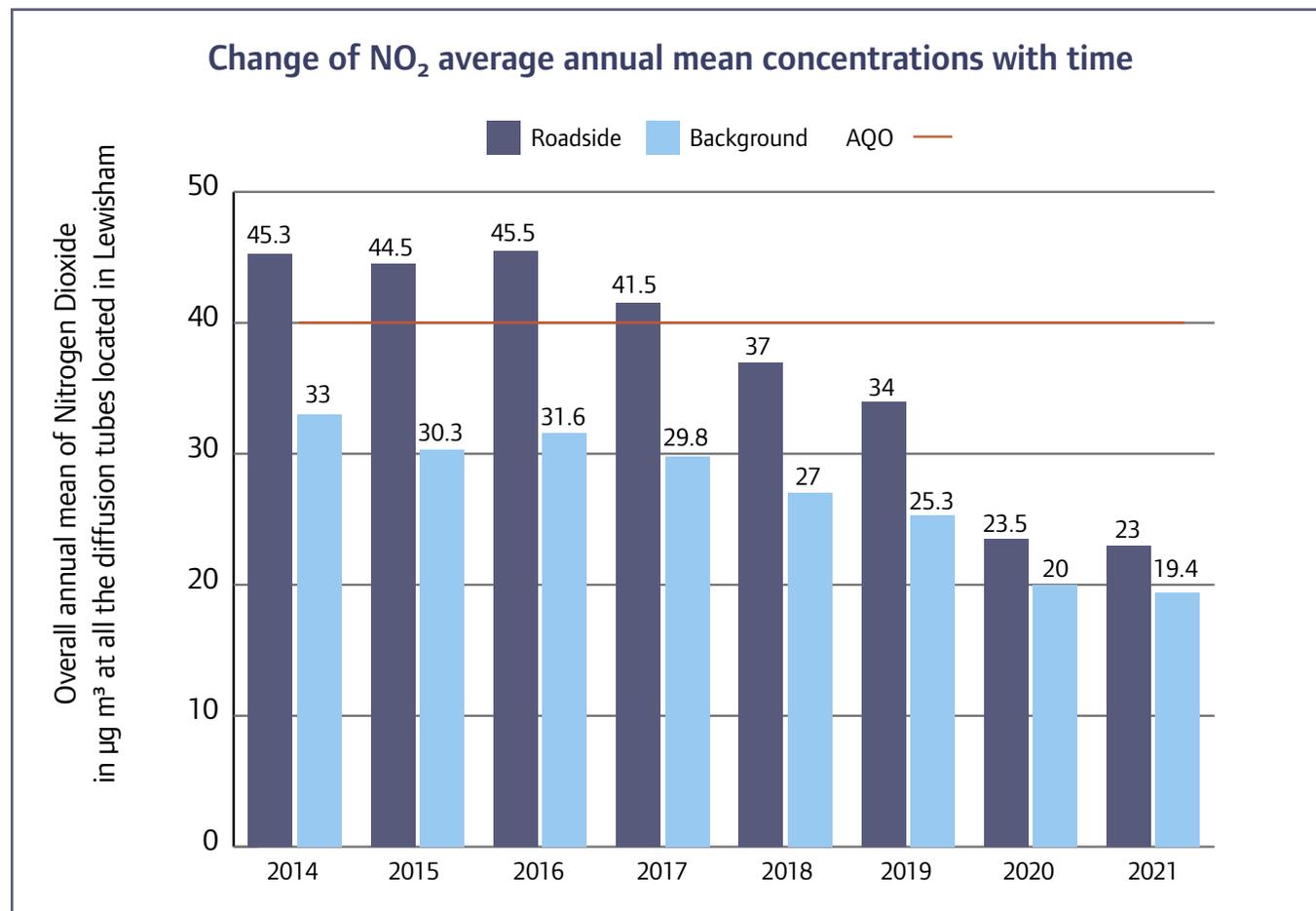
Air quality in Lewisham

The highest levels of PM and NO₂ in Lewisham are concentrated on our busiest roads. Our action plan includes monitoring and measures that will focus specifically on improving air quality on major roads, such as the South Circular.

Based on the latest evidence on the effects of PM on health, the UK monitors the concentration of particles less than 10 micrometres in diameter (PM₁₀) and less than 2.5 micrometres in diameter (PM_{2.5}).

NO₂ monitoring across Lewisham has generally shown good improvement. Between 2014 and 2021, our monitoring stations showed an overall downward trend with all annual mean NO₂ concentrations – as shown in the graph to the right. PM monitoring sites have also shown a decrease in particulate matter in the borough over the past eight years.

However, there's still much more that we need to do to reach the WHO emissions' targets, which are much tougher than the national targets set out by central government. Our Air Quality Action Plan 2022-2027 sets out how we will work towards these targets.



Air quality in context

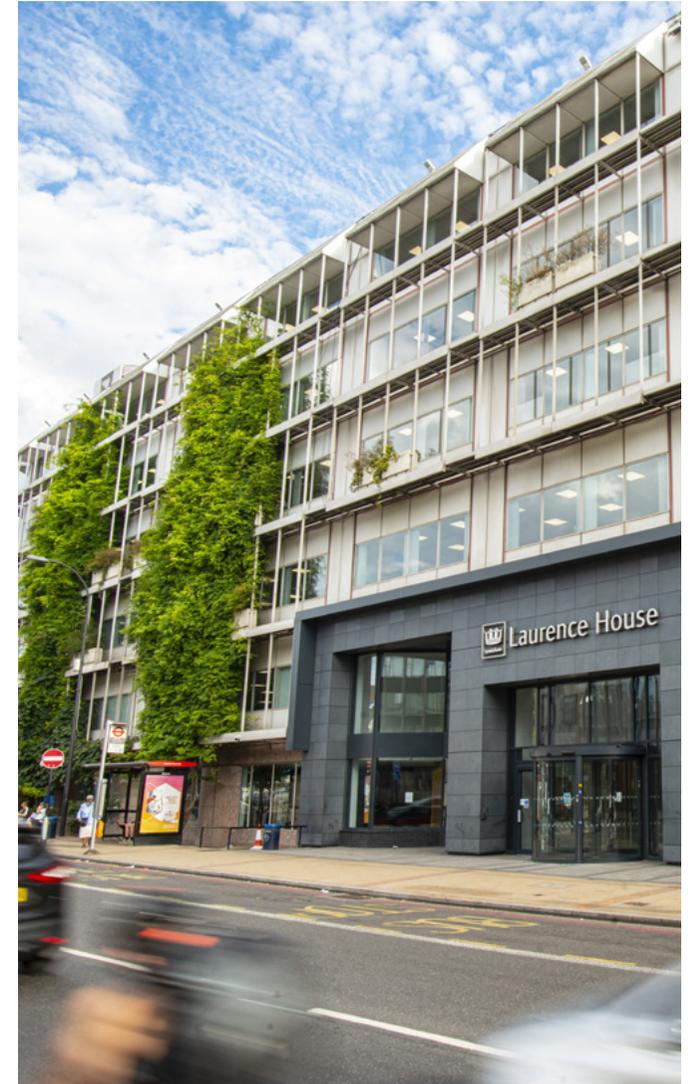
Ella Adoo-Kissi-Debrah

Ella Adoo-Kissi Debrah lived with her mother and two siblings near the South Circular. She passed away in 2013 when she was nine years old following an asthma attack, which a coroner concluded was caused by air pollution. This conclusion highlighted the significant health impacts of air pollution and set a legal precedent that should lead to the appropriate enforcement of air quality guidelines.

In April 2021, the coroner published a series of recommendations for different levels of government and health and care organisations in the Prevention of Future Deaths' report. As part of the report's recommendations, Lewisham Council was asked to address issues around public awareness of information about national and local pollution levels.

In response to the report, we will:

- Expand our air quality monitoring network – we will install additional air quality monitors in our borough which will feed into a London-wide network. This will improve data collection and our understanding of this data. It will also help improve public awareness of air pollution across the capital. We'll also be installing additional diffusion tubes. We aim to have 75 additional monitors – including diffusion tubes – by October 2027.
- Report on WHO air quality targets – we will compare our data on air pollution in Lewisham with the WHO targets and the current national air pollution limits
- Raise awareness of air pollution – we will promote information about air quality and monitoring tools on Council channels, including our website, social media pages and digital newsletter. We will work with health partners, such as the local Clinical Commissioning Group, GPs and pharmacies, to share information with residents . This awareness raising started on Clean Air Day in June 2021 .



What we will do over the next five years

Monitor air quality

This will help us understand what parts of the borough are most affected by pollution and what measures are effective in reducing air pollution. To improve our understanding of local air quality, we've committed to investing in additional air quality monitors, as well as maintaining our existing network of monitoring sites. Schools, care homes and hospitals will be prioritised for monitoring.

We will:

- Introduce up to 75 further air quality monitors, which will help us understand the impacts of air quality and how we can mitigate them.
- Trial real-time monitors, and make all project reports available on our website for consultation with the public.
- Expand our diffusion tube network, with priority given to lower-income areas.
- Commit to working towards meeting the strict WHO-backed air quality targets by 2030.

Reduce emissions from developments and buildings

We will work to minimise emissions from existing buildings and new developments, using a series of mitigations and measures – including policies, enforcement, an awareness campaign and engagement with businesses, residents and other partners.

We will:

- Deliver projects based on tackling indoor pollution, including an awareness campaign on wood burning and working with landlords to ensure that private-rented accommodation follows legal requirements on the environment
- Encourage developers to opt for low carbon heating systems and to build green spaces into their plans.
- Enforce smoke Control Zones to help address pollution caused by wood burning
- Introduce more electric vehicle chargers and green spaces in new developments.
- Make sure that all developments take steps to reduce their impact on air quality. We will take enforcement action, where necessary.
- Support developments that use low pollution heating solutions, such as heat pumps, which use heat stored in the ground or in the air to power hot water and heaters.



What we will do over the next five years

Public Health and Awareness Raising

We will work with our Public Health team, Lewisham's Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and other partners to raise awareness about the causes of air pollution, measures that are being taken to reduce harmful emissions, and steps that residents, businesses and organisations can take to help improve air quality.

We will ensure that Public Health play a leading role in the implementation of our air quality work, as public health professionals are trusted people within communities. By working with GPs, pharmacists and other health colleagues, we can better support vulnerable residents.

We will:

- Place our Environmental Health and Public Health teams at the centre of our work to address air pollution
- Work closely with the Clinical Commissioning Group, GPs and pharmacies to raise awareness of the health impacts of air pollution within local communities. This will help us reach vulnerable residents, who are most impacted by air pollution.
- Create an Air Quality Action Plan for schools. This includes actions that will support children to walk and cycle to school, such as more School Streets and cycling lessons.
- Raise awareness of indoor air pollution, including wood burning.
- Share high level pollution alerts through alerts services, such as the Lewisham Air app or airTEXT.

Delivery vehicles and services

We will take steps to ensure that older, highly polluting, vehicles that deliver goods and services are upgraded to be more environmentally-friendly.

We will:

- Publish a new procurement strategy, which commits the Council to only awarding contracts to companies that aim to reduce their impact on air pollution whilst delivering their services.
- Install additional electric vehicle charging points.

Improve the Council's fleet

As well as making external delivery vehicles environmentally-friendly, we're taking steps to make the Council's own vehicles greener to help reduce our emissions. Our Waste and Recycling vehicles already comply with the highest standard of emissions, and we will invest in more of these vehicles throughout the lifespan of this action plan.

We will:

- Invest in more vehicles that comply with the highest standard of emissions, aiming to have a zero-emission fleet by 2030.
- Deliver training to Council fleet drivers, to help them reduce the emissions that they use when driving.

What we will do over the next five years

Localised Solutions

We will introduce measures to tackle air quality in highly-polluted parts of the borough, including in the South Circular.

This priority will go hand-in-hand with other parts of this action plan, such as the introduction of additional air quality monitoring sites to monitor hotspots and partnering with healthcare professionals to reach residents who are most affected by air pollution.

We will:

- Look into options for tree planting and other green measures in areas with high levels of pollution, including outside schools.
- Partner with key organisations to improve air quality on major roads like the South Circular.
- Install up to 75 additional air quality monitors across the borough and around the South Circular. A Breathe London monitor was installed around the South Circular in June 2021, which we will continue using to monitor pollution levels in real-time.
- Look into whether one of Lewisham's highly-polluted areas could be made into a Low Emission Neighbourhood (LEN).

Cleaner Transport

We want to make our borough a place where the most environmentally-friendly methods of transport are easy to access, to help create cleaner, greener and healthier neighbourhoods for current and future generations.

We will:

- Deliver projects designed to tackle engine-idling, including a public awareness campaign, Idling Action workshops and enforcement around schools.
- Introduce additional School Streets to help children walk, cycle and scoot to school.
- Increase the number of Play Streets outside schools.
- Introduce more Controlled Parking Zones.
- Increase the number of cycle hangars and electric vehicle charging points, to ensure that no one is more than 500 metres away from an electric vehicle charging point by 2022. We'll ensure that pavement access is still maintained for pedestrians, people with wheelchairs and people with prams.
- Work closely with Transport for London to help improve road safety.

Supporting vulnerable people

Children, elderly people, people with pre-existing conditions and people living in lower-income areas are most at risk from air pollution. We've included specific measures that focus on protecting vulnerable people in our action plan.

We will:

- Prioritise schools, care homes, hospitals and lower-income areas for air quality monitoring
- Look into whether it's possible to create a fleet of electric school vehicles for disabled children
- Work with GPs, pharmacists and other public health professionals to share information with vulnerable residents
- Support schools to help children walk and cycle more, through initiatives like free cycle lessons, and encouraging them to gain STARS accreditation. STARS is a TfL initiative that encourages and rewards children for walking, cycling or scooting to school.

How you can help

Whilst we'll do everything we can to improve local air quality, we'll need your help, as so much of our pollution is linked to personal consumption, like driving, burning wood or using gas-fuelled heating systems.

You can help improve local air quality and create greener and healthier neighbourhoods by pledging to make changes, however big or small, that will decrease your carbon footprint.

These could include:

- Walking, cycling or using public transport instead of driving your car
- Making your next car an electric or hybrid one, or joining a car club scheme
- Turning your engine off when you're parked or stationary
- Downloading the Lewisham Air app to get air quality news and alerts – search 'Lewisham Air' on the app store
- Not using a wood burning stove
- Switching your commute or the school run to foot or bicycle
- If you're a parent, you can become an air quality champion at your child's school
- Buying local produce from small businesses
- Incorporating vegan meals into your diet.



You can find out more about how you can help create a #GreenerLewisham by visiting our website: lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/environment/resident-guide

Contact us

If you have any comments on this document or the Air Quality Action Plan 2022-2027, please contact Dr. Eliane Scholastiq Foteu Madio on EnvironmentalProtection@lewisham.gov.uk or ElianeScholastiq.foteumadio@lewisham.gov.uk

