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# Clearing the air Executive Summary

The Mayor's draft Air Quality Strategy for consultation with the London Assembly and functional bodies



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**[www.london.gov.uk](http://www.london.gov.uk)** enquiries 020 7983 4100 minicom 020 7983 4458

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# Clearing the air – summary

## What is the problem?

London's air quality has improved dramatically since the 1950s when legislation was introduced to prevent the infamous 'pea souper' smogs that blighted the capital. But despite this, London currently has some of the worst air pollution in the UK. Along with many other European cities, parts of London are not meeting EU targets for the most harmful pollutants nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and fine particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>).

The Mayor is already delivering policies that are making the air in London cleaner. Programmes that offer people alternatives to the car, that improve efficiency in homes and offices, which smooth traffic flow, all help reduce emissions. This Strategy proposes a further comprehensive package of measures that, together with strong action at the national level, can help bring London's air quality up to EU targets and reduce Londoners' exposure to pollution. This is an essential step towards improving air quality in London - and most importantly to improve the health and quality of life of Londoners.

Air pollution has an impact on everyone living and working in London, but mainly on the most vulnerable people in our city such as children, older people and those with existing heart and respiratory conditions. Research has also shown that people living in deprived areas are disproportionately affected by poor air quality, in part because these areas are near busy roads, which tend to have higher levels of pollution.

Tackling air pollution is challenging. Weather conditions can cause huge variations in levels

of pollutants. Pollution levels vary dramatically and pollution 'episodes' can mean unexpected, sudden spikes in the risk of exposure in certain locations. Pollution blown in from outside London contributes significantly to problems in the capital. In central London, around 40 per cent of PM<sub>10</sub> concentrations are caused by emissions from outside the capital. Similarly, 25 per cent of NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations across London are caused by emissions not generated in the capital.

The PM<sub>10</sub> and NO<sub>2</sub> problems are very different in nature. In the case of PM<sub>10</sub> concentrations are far more limited to particular locations and within a few years the number of PM<sub>10</sub> hotspots will be focused on a small number of locations in central London. Impacts are very influenced by proximity; keeping vehicles even a few metres further away from pedestrians makes a significant difference to people's exposure. The majority of PM<sub>10</sub> emissions from within London come from road transport. A surprisingly high proportion comes from tyre and brake wear, which is difficult to tackle. In central London where the hotspots are, taxis are a particular problem, accounting for 35 per cent of emissions from exhausts.

In the case of NO<sub>2</sub>, the problem is spread across most of inner London and around Heathrow Airport. The scale of the challenge is also greater since the level of reduction needed is significant. The primary sources of emissions are from road transport but a significant proportion is from domestic and commercial gas emissions relating to heating. The NO<sub>2</sub> challenge therefore requires a different set of solutions.

## What the Mayor will do

The Mayor wants London to be one of the cleanest, greenest cities in the world to ensure that people living here enjoy a great quality of life. This Air Quality Strategy sets out actions to improve London's air quality and includes measures aimed at reducing emissions from transport, homes, offices and new developments. It also sets out how Londoners can reduce their own emissions, and, especially for vulnerable people, reduce their risk of exposure.

The Mayor is already investing hundreds of millions of pounds delivering a range of measures that are tackling air pollution. This includes unprecedented investment to boost cycling, expansion of 'smarter travel' measures, encouraging the uptake of electric vehicles and converting London's bus fleet to hybrid.

The Mayor is proposing further transport policies that will make London's transport network even cleaner and greener. These proposals include:

- Cleaning up London's bus fleet so that all buses meet Euro IV emissions standards for both NO<sub>x</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub> by 2015. A Euro IV bus emits roughly a third less NO<sub>x</sub> than a bus made in 2000 (Euro III)
- Cleaning up London's taxis through a proposed age limit for taxis and minicabs starting from 2012; this will mean that by 2015 they will all meet the Euro 4 emissions standard. All taxis currently meet the Euro 3 standard for PM through retrofit – but a Euro 4 taxi emits nearly half the PM<sub>10</sub> of a Euro 3 taxi.
- Introducing Phase 3 of the LEZ in 2012, so that vans and minibuses would have to meet the Euro 3 standard for PM to drive without charge.
- Introducing a new NO<sub>x</sub> standard for the LEZ from 2015 that will bring all lorries, buses and coaches to Euro IV standards across London. This will require effective retrofit equipment to be available and a coordinated approach across the UK given that NO<sub>x</sub> is a national challenge.
- Working with boroughs to implement targeted action plans at air quality 'hotspots' – which could include road space design, planting trees that absorb particles, hedges to protect pedestrians from emissions and redirecting the cleanest buses into these areas.
- Putting in place air quality action days and 'special measures' for high pollution episodes to reduce concentrations and risk of exposure. This will focus on traffic management measures and information provision.
- Regular events to encourage people to walk and cycle more.

A package of non-transport policy measures is also proposed to reduce localised pollution sources. The highlights include:

- Creating new provisions in the forthcoming London Plan to encourage boroughs to use s.106 to ensure that new developments are 'air quality neutral'.
- Reducing dust emissions from construction sites through best practice guidance and promoting its adoption through planning conditions.

- Significantly scaling up London's schemes to retrofit homes and public buildings to improve energy efficiency and thereby reduce emissions. Rolling this out at scale will require a coordinated approach with Government including new delivery and funding models. These are already being developed by the GLA and boroughs through the Homes Energy Efficiency Programme for London.
- Introducing stricter requirements for biomass boilers so that only the cleanest technology is used in London.
- Raising public awareness to encourage all Londoners to take action to reduce their emissions, from travel choices to energy efficiency.
- Improving information for the most vulnerable Londoners to enable them to reduce the risk to their health from poor air quality.

Preliminary analysis indicates that these proposed measures, if appropriately resourced, will enable the UK to meet its legal targets for PM<sub>10</sub>. However, meeting the NO<sub>2</sub> limit values will be more of a challenge; strong action by the Mayor on his own will help but will not be enough for the UK to meet its targets in London. The Mayor will be working with the Government to develop a full plan of action that will allow NO<sub>2</sub> targets to be met.

### Next steps

The Mayor through the Greater London Authority and the functional bodies such as Transport for London will be directly responsible for delivering many of the measures in this strategy. Boroughs and the business sector also have important roles. Small actions by individuals such as taking steps to improve energy efficiency within the home, or making fewer short car journeys can collectively make a big difference.

The Mayor has been working closely with the Government on plans to improve air quality in London. London's air quality is a shared challenge, which requires action from the Mayor and Government. The Mayor will be discussing the types of policy measures that Government must put in place to enable London's air quality to be improved. In addition, Government must make available funding to assist the Mayor in tackling air quality. Over the coming months, the Mayor will work with Government to develop a joint action plan for air quality in the capital.

The Mayor is consulting on this Strategy with the London Assembly and Functional Bodies until 30 November 2009. At the same time, he would welcome comments from stakeholders and the public. He will then consider the responses to the consultation and make any necessary changes to the Strategy before publishing it for consultation with the public and stakeholders in early 2010. The Strategy will be published in its final form by autumn 2010.

## Other formats and languages

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### Public Liaison Unit

Greater London Authority  
City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
More London  
London SE1 2AA

Telephone **020 7983 4100**  
Minicom **020 7983 4458**  
**www.london.gov.uk**

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### Vietnamese

Nếu bạn muốn có văn bản tài liệu này bằng ngôn ngữ của mình, hãy liên hệ theo số điện thoại hoặc địa chỉ dưới đây.

### Greek

Αν θέλετε να αποκτήσετε αντίγραφο του παρόντος εγγράφου στη δική σας γλώσσα, παρακαλείστε να επικοινωνήσετε τηλεφωνικά στον αριθμό αυτό ή ταχυδρομικά στην παρακάτω διεύθυνση.

### Turkish

Bu belgenin kendi dilinizde hazırlanmış bir nüshasını edinmek için, lütfen aşağıdaki telefon numarasını arayınız veya adrese başvurunuz.

### Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦੀ ਕਾਪੀ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਫ਼ੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜਾਂ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਪਤੇ 'ਤੇ ਰਾਬਤਾ ਕਰੋ:

### Hindi

यदि आप इस दस्तावेज़ की प्रति अपनी भाषा में चाहते हैं, तो कृपया निम्नलिखित नंबर पर फोन करें अथवा नीचे दिये गये पते पर संपर्क करें

### Bengali

আপনি যদি আপনার ভাষায় এই দলিলের প্রতিলিপি (কপি) চান, তা হলে নীচের ফোন নম্বরে বা ঠিকানায় অনুগ্রহ করে যোগাযোগ করুন।

### Urdu

اگر آپ اس دستاویز کی نقل اپنی زبان میں چاہتے ہیں، تو براہ کرم نیچے دئے گئے نمبر پر فون کریں یا دیئے گئے پتے پر رابطہ کریں

### Arabic

إذا أردت نسخة من هذه الوثيقة بلغتك، يرجى الاتصال برقم الهاتف أو مراسلة العنوان أدناه

### Gujarati

જો તમને આ દસ્તાવેજની નકલ તમારી ભાષામાં જોઈતી હોય તો, કૃપા કરી આપેલ નંબર ઉપર ફોન કરો અથવા નીચેના સરનામે સંપર્ક સાધો.



