

Improving Air Quality in Tower Hamlets

Update on scrutiny recommendations

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

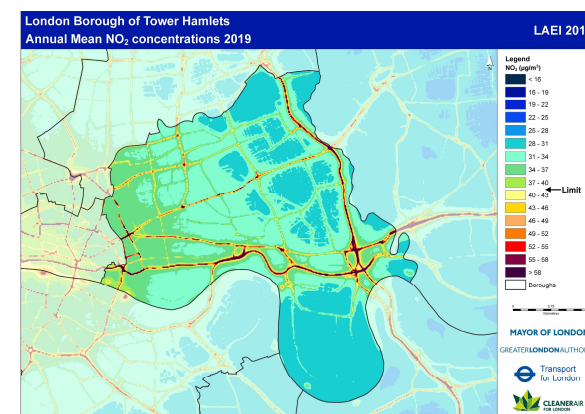
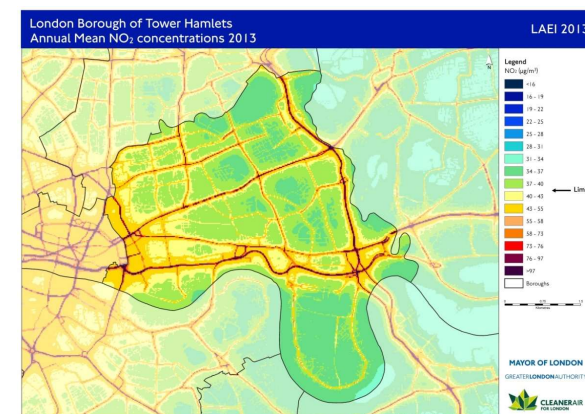
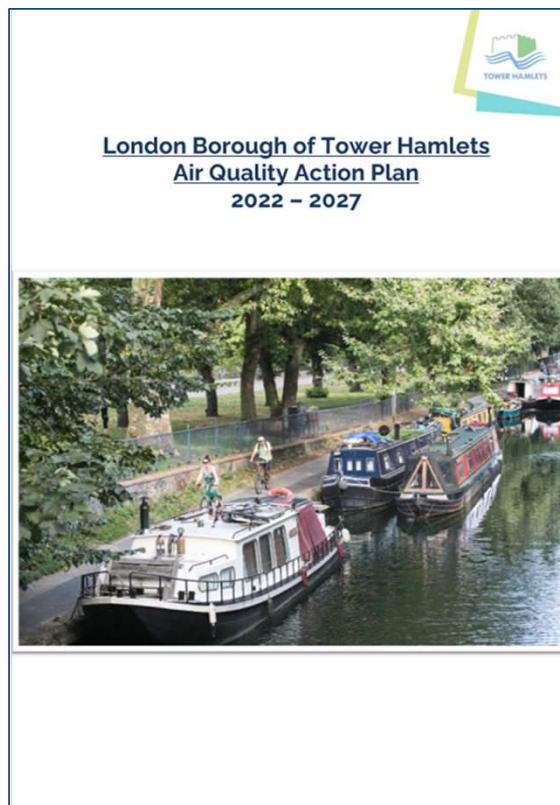
March 2023



Air Quality in Tower Hamlets



- Statutory duty to comply with the London Local Air Quality Management regime under the Environment Act 1995
- Air Quality Action Plan sets out remedial measures to address poor air quality and achieve the air quality standards in NO_2 , PM_{10} and $\text{PM}_{2.5}$
- Air quality has improved between 2013 – 2019 but still not WHO compliant



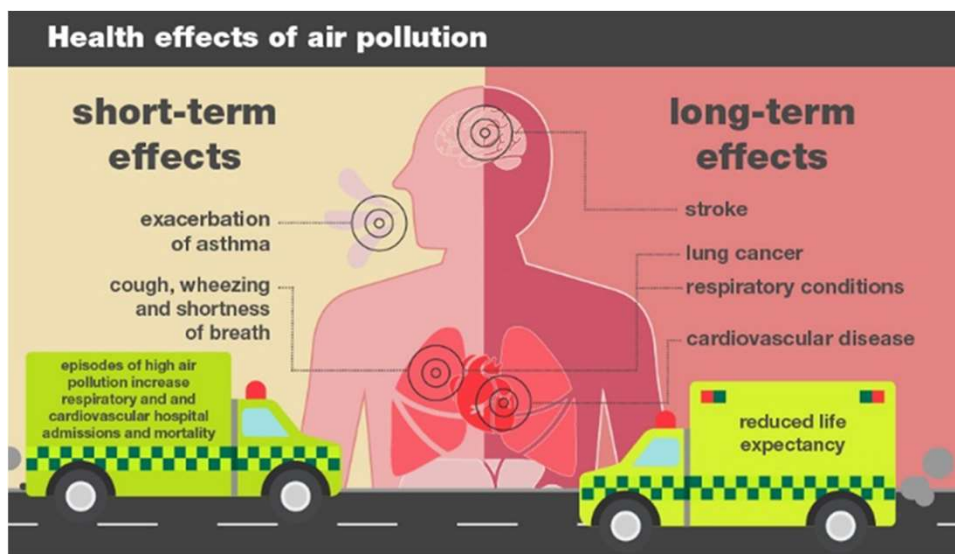
How does Air Quality in LBTH compare with UK legal limits



Pollutant	UK legal limit (Annual mean) ug/m ³	Is LBTH compliant?	WHO 2005 guideline Annual mean) ug/m ³ (interim)	Is LBTH compliant?	WHO 2021 guideline (Annual mean) ug/m ³	Is LBTH compliant?
NO₂	40	No	40	No	10	No
PM₁₀	40	Yes	20	No	15	No
PM_{2.5}	25	Yes- except some major roads	10	No	5	No



Air Quality in Tower Hamlets



- One of 5 London boroughs with highest number of people living in London's worst air quality areas
- Between 88 and 97 deaths per year due to human made NO₂ and PM_{2.5} air pollution exposure (Imperial College London)
- Children in Tower Hamlets have reduced lung function
- 7.0% of mortality in Tower Hamlets is due to long term exposure to PM_{2.5}. Third worst in London (Public Health Outcomes Framework)

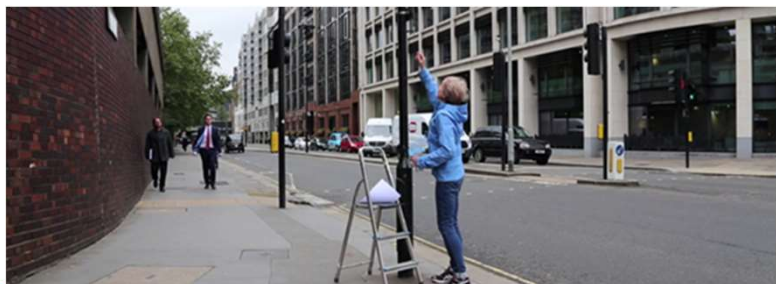


Recommendation progress update



✓ Prioritise funding for more air quality monitoring stations in key areas including around construction sites & publish data

- Two NO₂ diffusion tubes installed at depot. 2 new reference monitors in King Edward Memorial Park
- Air Quality monitoring data available on Council's website
- PM₁₀ planning condition incorporated for major construction / development sites



✓ With TfL, take a more proactive approach to manage and reduce traffic on the most polluting TfL roads

- Traffic reduction measures introduced by previous administration (Liveable Streets and School Streets)
- Some traffic reduction measures incorporated into current air quality action plan
- New Parking Enforcement Plan will look at some areas of traffic reduction



Recommendation progress update



✓ Develop evaluation methods for the Air Quality Action Plan

- Annual Status Report produced
- New Air Quality Action Plan. GLA All GLA standard foundation actions incorporated.
- Latest LAEI modelling data used to support action planning & air quality needs assessment drafted, to be published in next few months

✓ Include air quality priorities into the remit of the Climate Emergency Partnership Board

- Incorporated into *cleaner and greener future of Tower Hamlets* programme and Mayor's Advisory Board for Climate Change

<https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Documents/Climate/Cleaner-Greener-Leaflet.pdf>

✓ Identify existing air quality measures in the current capital programme and prioritise them for delivery, such as EV charging points

- Promoting Zap-Map on our website
- EV delivery plan produced
- More charging points due to be delivered in 2023+ (subject to funding)



We have installed **351** electrical vehicle charging points across the borough



Recommendation progress update



✔ Develop plans to install air purifying green walls and green spaces in schools that currently have none

- Living green screens installed at 4 schools.
- Further greening projects are subject to LIF/s106 funding
- At least three school audits per year

✔ Develop plan to convert unused open spaces in the borough to green spaces

- Over 1,000 trees planted over past three years. Tree location and species assessments undertaken yearly
- Mayor's pledge to fund for 1,000 trees over a three-year period (£1.5m)



Recommendation progress update



✓ Display anti-idling signs, to discourage idling to reduce emissions and help drivers save fuel

- Signs installed at a total of 41 primary schools exceeding legal limit for NO₂

Since the OSC in March 2021:

- Anti idling engagement visits carried in idling hot spot locations & Over 70 anti-idling signs installed
- Anti-idling education, advice and guidance from Enforcement Officers



✓ Investigate a new approach for stricter enforcement of anti-idling FPNs

- Regular weekly idling awareness patrols carried out
- Powers and infrastructure not in place for Tower Hamlets to use powers for PCNs



Issues and risks



Issues:

- 1. Lack of available funding to deliver the projects and initiatives in our statutory air quality action plan**

Risks:

- 1. Potential sanction (direction) from the Mayor of London**
- 2. Reputational damage**



How can scrutiny add value?



Be an advocate in the community:

- Raise awareness of air pollution
- Help prioritising Council projects that could reduce air pollution
- Encourage active travel amongst constituents e.g walking, cycling. This has triple benefit: improve air quality, carbon reduction and health benefit.
- Supporting local projects that could reduce air pollution

[Air Quality Action Plan \(towerhamlets.gov.uk\)](https://towerhamlets.gov.uk)

