



City of Westminster



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

15th June 2012

Dear Mayor,

**Working together to improve Air Quality in Central London**

We are writing as leaders of Camden and the City of Westminster, and Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee at the City of London Corporation, because poor air quality is one of the most pressing environmental and health issues facing Central London. A study you commissioned attributed over 4,000 premature deaths to it in London in 2008. Poor air quality also has significant economic effects e.g. through exacerbating sick absence due to respiratory and other diseases. It is a major concern for our residents and workers.

We support your Air Quality strategy, but further action needs to be taken urgently. Members and officers from our authorities have started to work with the GLA and TfL to this end. We met recently with them and outlined what needs to be done. A note of this is attached. In brief the actions we believe are necessary are:

For buses - which account for nearly half the NOx emissions:

- ^ a review of the network to reduce congestion, and improve load factors, particularly on the routes with the poorest air quality.
- ^ deployment of those buses fitted with the NOx abatement equipment on such routes – provided your people can assure us it really does achieve the amazing reductions (88%) claimed.

For taxis - which account for nearly half the PM10 emissions:

- ^ to reduce the age limit from 15 years to 10 years
- ^ a review to identify a lower limit than 10 years for private hire vehicles
- ^ a review of taxi licensing and the possible use of new technology to reduce pollution
- ^ to offer funding or grants to taxi drivers to help them upgrade their taxis

For the LEZ a number of actions to make phase 5 effective.

Your new term offers a real opportunity to deliver significant improvements in the air quality of Central London. We jointly look forward to working with you and your team to seize this opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

**Cllr Philippa Roe**  
Leader  
Westminster City Council

**Cllr Sarah Hayward**  
Leader  
Camden Borough Council

**Cllr Mark Boleat**  
Chairman, Policy and Resources  
Committee  
City of London Corporation

## Key points raised at the air quality meeting, held on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2012 at the Guildhall, City of London.

### Buses

Buses are the most significant source of Nitrogen Oxide (NO<sub>x</sub>) emissions in the three authorities, accounting for almost half of all emissions from vehicles. Whilst we acknowledge the steps that are already being taken to reduce NO<sub>x</sub> from the bus fleet, we do feel that more action could be taken before 2015 as buses contribute such a large amount to local levels of pollution.

In particular, we would like:

- △ A review of the bus network, to determine whether there are any opportunities for route and timing improvements to reduce bus congestion, low passenger numbers on buses outside of peak times and emissions, particularly on the routes with the poorest air quality
- △ Formal assurance that the NO<sub>x</sub> abatement equipment, which is being retrospectively installed onto 1,000 buses in the fleet, will reduce emissions by 88% when driving in heavily congested urban areas. If this is the case, we would like you to consider installing the equipment on more London buses as a cost effective way of reducing concentrations of roadside nitrogen dioxide in central London
- △ Information on which routes will have the lower NO<sub>x</sub> buses and the reasons that these particular routes have been chosen

### Taxis

Emissions from taxis are the most significant source of Particulate Matter (PM)<sub>10</sub> across the three authorities, accounting for almost half of the emissions from vehicle exhausts.

To address this, we would like:

- △ The age limit on taxis reduced from fifteen years to ten years
- △ A review of the private hire vehicle age limit to establish if this can feasibly be tighter than ten years
- △ TfL to conduct a 'taxi review' to focus on taxi licensing, the use of new technology to reduce the time spent plying for hire and to advance the uptake of the use of low emission technologies. We would be very happy to work with you, your advisors and officers on this

### London Low Emissions Zone (LEZ)

We acknowledge the good work already being undertaken by the implementation of the Phases 1 to 4 of the London Low Emission Zone. However, we remain concerned about the high levels of roadside nitrogen dioxide in central London and consequently, we would like:

- △ To be advised of the next steps that you are intending to take to push the Government for an appropriate NO<sub>x</sub> certification scheme for LEZ phase 5
- △ To have a greater understanding of your intentions to ensure the successful implementation of both the certification scheme and LEZ Phase 5
- △ To be advised on what you intend to do to reduce PM<sub>2.5</sub> and black carbon emissions through the LEZ