

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY  
Mayor's Office



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**Cllr Philippa Roe**  
Leader, Westminster City Council  
**Cllr Sarah Hayward**  
Leader, London Borough of Camden  
**Mark Boleat**  
Chairman, Policy and Resources Committee, City of London Corporation  
C/o Westminster City Hall  
64 Victoria Street  
London SW1E 6QP

Our ref: MGLA210612-6483

Date:

13 JUL 2012

Dear Philippa, Sarah and Mark

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

Thank you for your letter of 15 June which I have read with interest. I am pleased that you share my commitment to improving air quality in London and recognise that your authorities have taken considerable steps to improve local air quality. I am particularly grateful for your ongoing support of my Air Quality Strategy.

As you know I am delivering an ambitious package of measures which is already delivering significant reductions in pollutant emissions. This includes a number of measures to reduce emissions from buses, taxis and other heavy diesel vehicles through the London Low Emission Zone. Specifically:

- **Buses:** London has one of the cleanest bus fleets in the world, with an average bus age of 6 years. I have already delivered 300 new hybrid buses and will deliver 600 of my New Buses for London over the next four years. When combined with a further 104 hybrid buses already on order, I will be delivering 1,000 hybrid buses over the next four years, delivering significant reductions in air pollutant emissions. In addition, I am retrofitting up to 1,000 Euro III buses with Selective Catalytic Reduction, which has been demonstrated to reduce NO<sub>x</sub> emissions by around 70% on a London-specific drive cycle. These retrofitted buses will be prioritised to run through air quality focus areas with the highest concentrations of NO<sub>2</sub> combined with high levels of human exposure, many of which are in central London.
- **Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (PHVs):** I have introduced age limits, which will retire the oldest, most polluting taxis and PHVs. This will retire around 2,300 taxis over the course of this year alone, equivalent to around 10 per cent of the taxi fleet. There was a full public and stakeholder consultation on my proposals for age limits which involved significant dialogue with the taxi and private hire trades and stakeholders, including yourselves. Age limits of 15 years for taxis and 10 years for PHVs were introduced to ensure they go far enough to deliver a significant reduction in emissions while taking into consideration the impact such a policy would have on the taxi and private hire trades, which provide a vital service for the travelling public in London. In addition to the age limits from

April this year, all newly licensed taxis must, as a minimum, meet the Euro V standard for emissions (the highest current Euro standard). Transport for London (TfL) will also be introducing a more stringent testing regime for taxis from March next year including an emissions test twice a year, which will help ensure all taxis meet the required emissions standards and are maintained correctly. Finally, all new taxis drivers have to complete a smarter driving course.

- **Low Emission Zone:** London has the largest city wide Low Emission Zone (LEZ) in the world, covering 98 per cent of the Greater London area. In January 2012 the requirements were tightened so that all heavy diesel vehicles, such as HGVs, buses and coaches, must meet a minimum Euro IV standard for particulate matter (PM) or else pay a daily £200 charge for driving in London. Also in January 2012 the scope of the LEZ was extended to include larger vans and minibuses. These vehicles must meet a Euro III standard for PM or else pay a daily £100 charge for driving in London. Compliance rates are extremely high (98 per cent for larger vans and minibuses and 94 per cent for HGVs, buses and coaches) and around 150,000 vehicles had to take action to meet the new requirements, improving their air pollutant emissions.

In addition:

- **Building emissions:** retrofitting 65,000 homes through RE:NEW and 400 public buildings through RE:FIT with energy efficiency measures, saving tonnes of NOx emissions.
- **London Plan:** introducing a new requirement for "air quality neutral" development to reduce building emissions through better design and planning. Later this year I will be publishing emission standards for biomass and combined heat and power systems. I will also be publishing revised construction and demolition guidance which will have legal force for the first time.
- **Cycling and walking:** there has been record investment in cycling, including launching the Barclays Cycle Hire and Barclays Superhighway schemes. Legible London has provided a consistent and comprehensive pedestrian wayfinding system for London. All of London has been mapped and the system is being integrated across all TfL modes and within boroughs across London. These measures are supporting an accelerated mode shift to more sustainable modes of transport.
- **Clean Air Fund:** launching a Clean Air Fund (CAF) (with £5m of DfT funding) to trial innovative measures such as dust suppressants, green walls, taxi marshals, no engine idling and business engagement in central London. Over 120 cleaner Euro IV buses are being fitted with Diesel Particulate Filters (DPF) as part of CAF to further reduce their PM10 emissions by an estimated 77 per cent. This includes buses on several bus routes running through Westminster, Camden and the City. An evaluation of these measures will be available later this year.

This is amongst the most ambitious sets of measures of any city in Europe and they are expected to help London meet EU limit values for PM10. However, I accept more needs to be done. London – along with all major European cities – faces a major challenge in meeting EU limit values for nitrogen dioxide (NO2). This is mainly a result of problems with the Euro standards which have failed to reduce NOx emissions as expected and I am vigorously lobbying the European Commission and the Government to take action to accelerate the uptake of the new Euro VI standard which is expected to be more effective.

Of course, improving air quality is a shared challenge that requires concerted action from the European Commission, Government, me, and the London boroughs. I welcome your commitment to take the necessary action to improve local concentrations of air pollutants in your boroughs and look forward to hear what additional steps you will be taking: to reduce emissions and human exposure; to work with a wide range of stakeholders such as schools and businesses to raise awareness and promote action; and to integrate air quality into the public health system through your borough's Health and Wellbeing Strategy. To support boroughs in taking more action to improve local air quality I have recently made changes to TfL's Local Implementation Plan guidance to make it easier for boroughs to use this funding for air quality projects and to match-fund Defra air quality grants.

I am also determined to take all the action I reasonably can. For this reason I am currently preparing additional measures to be included in my Vision 2020 document. This will set out the strategic priorities for my second term, which I expect to publish by the end of this year. I would very much welcome your input and to take this forward I would like to suggest that the relevant environment leads from your authorities meet with my Environment Adviser, Matthew Pencharz, to agree what further action can be taken by each of our organisations so we can work together to improve air quality in our great city.

Thank you again for writing to me.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Boris Johnson', written in a cursive style.

**Boris Johnson**  
Mayor of London