

Executive summary of Putney Society response to draft Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2025

1. We welcome many proposals in the AQAP. But we fear that they will, taken together, deliver only slight improvements, falling way short of what is necessary. Much more ambition is needed.
2. Air pollution causes the premature deaths of over 100 Wandsworth residents each year. Since publication of the draft AQAP, the World Health Organisation has greatly reduced its recommended limits on pollutants. All over London, pollution from small particulates is over twice the new limit. And on Putney High Street (PHS), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) pollution is around six times the new limit.
3. In order to make significant progress towards the new limits, there is only one feasible option – to shift from petrol and diesel vehicles to zero emission vehicles, cycling and walking. All this is now Government policy (to address global warming), but will take a long time. So the key role for WBC is to accelerate these shifts as much as possible, giving priority to the most polluted streets.
4. We have urged the Mayor to prioritise the most polluted streets, such as PHS, in deploying zero emission buses, first by replacing the old diesel buses on the 93 route; we welcome WBC's support.
5. We have also urged the Mayor to consult in the near future on tightening up the ULEZ standards, to take effect in 2024 or 2025, so that motorists have ample warning. We call on WBC to support us.
6. WBC's draft Walking and Cycling Strategy needs to be greatly strengthened. And a major communications campaign should explain air pollution to all residents, and what they can do to help.
7. We welcome Differential Parking Charges; they have potential to reduce pollution significantly, with careful design, by giving motorists a strong incentive to switch, soon, to less polluting vehicles.
8. We want all state primary schools in the Borough to have school streets by 2025, or equivalent protection provided for schools situated on main roads.
9. We support more tree planting; but the Council also needs to be much firmer in preventing the loss of mature trees, for instance by imposing, and enforcing, conditions in planning permissions.
10. Much more needs to be done to cut down on idling by stationary vehicles; idling engines must add considerably, and unnecessarily, to the pollution on heavily congested streets such as PHS.
11. The Council needs to use its power as a contractor to require the use of zero emission vehicles.
12. We agree that more priority should be given to particulate pollution:
 - the Mayor needs stronger powers to regulate wood-burning stoves, and WBC should play a leading role in encouraging all London Boroughs to provide vigorous support for this;
 - WBC should require, and stick to, the highest possible standards of thermal insulation in all new developments, both of its own and those of private developers;
 - WBC should do more to encourage solar panels, including in Conservation Areas.
13. Much more extensive monitoring is needed, of both particulates and NO₂. And we would welcome a stronger collaboration between the Council and community groups doing monitoring.
14. Putney High Street is Putney's town centre and main shopping street. The Council is spending a lot of money (which we support) to attract more people to the street. However, for many people the air pollution on our High Street is seriously dangerous. So the Council bears a heavy responsibility to do everything it possibly can to reduce air pollution to safer levels, and quickly.
15. We hope to work with WBC on this. But we are prepared to be more combative if needs be.