

# LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

**Report to:** Climate Change and Ecology Policy and Accountability Committee

**Date:** 1 July 2025

**Subject:** Tackling air pollution in Hammersmith & Fulham

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## SUMMARY

This report and accompanying presentation provide an overview of the Council's numerous workstreams aimed at improving air quality across the borough. Air pollution is the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK, with the adverse short- and long-term health impacts of pollution well understood. The Council has statutory duties related to air quality, and our work in this area also has strong synergies with our wider work on the climate and ecological emergency.

The first part of the report sets out the context of air pollution in Hammersmith & Fulham: pollution levels, sources of emissions and trends. It also summarises the health impacts of pollution, pollution as an inequalities issue, and the relationship between air pollution and the climate emergency and our Net Zero targets.

The second part of the report focuses on our approach to air pollution: our Air Quality Action Plan 2025-30, our ambitious commitment to meeting the World Health Organisation guidelines for pollution, and our Better Air Better Health partnership with key stakeholders Imperial College London and the Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust.

Finally, the report looks at some of the key new areas of focus for the Council moving forward. This includes our approach to reducing emissions from outdoor burning, which was the topic of a recent paper to Cabinet.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. For the committee to note and comment on the paper and the attached presentation.

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**Wards Affected:** (All)

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Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Values
Building shared prosperity	Tackling air pollution will result in a cleaner, greener, healthier borough.
Creating a compassionate council	All residents across the Borough deserve the same opportunities to live in healthy and happy

	neighbourhoods. Tackling air pollution is a key component of our wider environmental work that will support our ambitions of being a net carbon zero borough by 2030.
Doing things with local residents, not to them	As well as consulting on our Air Quality Action Plan with residents, many of the policies and projects we're working on include strong elements of consultation and co-production.
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	Tackling air pollution will result in a healthier borough, with reduced associated healthcare costs.
Taking pride in H&F	Tackling air pollution will result in a cleaner, greener, healthier borough.
Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency	Tackling air pollution is a key component of our wider environmental work that will support our ambitions of being a net carbon zero borough by 2030. Whilst the health of residents is the primary driver of this proposal, this programme supports the Council's climate and ecological emergency commitments and supports our work to make our communities and environments more resilient.

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## Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

None

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## DETAILED ANALYSIS

### Air Pollution in context

1. Air pollution is a complex mix of gases and particles of both natural and human origin. Our focus tends to be on two key types of pollutants: the gas nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub> or NO<sub>x</sub>), and Particulate Matter, which is fine dust particles made up of a number of sources (with PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> the sizes of particulates we are most concerned with). Other pollutants such as sulphur dioxide and ground level ozone are also of concern. These pollutants are distinct from carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions that are the focus of our Net Zero work. The sources of air pollution emissions and carbon emissions are however often very similar.
2. According to Public Health England (PHE), poor air quality is the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK. Long term exposure to man-made air pollution in the UK has an estimated annual effect equivalent to 28,000-36,000 deaths. Air pollution can lead to a variety of health problems including cardiovascular disease and lung cancer<sup>1</sup>.
3. Air pollution is also an inequalities issue: PHE says that people at higher risk of negative health impact due to air pollution include older people (65 years and older), children, people with cardiovascular (heart) disease and/ or respiratory

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<sup>1</sup> [Health matters: air pollution, PHE](#)

(lung) disease, pregnant women, communities in areas of poor air quality, and poorer communities. PHE has also noted that “In 2010, the Environment Audit Committee considered that the cost of health impacts of air pollution was likely to exceed estimates of £8 to 20 billion”<sup>2</sup>.

4. Due to the main sources of pollution, London has the worst air quality in the UK. The level of population exposure to pollution is also highest within the capital. As a council, Hammersmith & Fulham is working towards Objective levels for pollutants set by national Government. The Council has also committed to an ambitious target of meeting World Health Organisation (WHO) guideline levels for air pollution by 2030, which are more stringent than our statutory requirements.
5. As part of our statutory duties as an Air Quality Management Area, air quality is monitored across the borough in real-time. We have a network of six air quality monitoring stations that meet the highest data standards. In addition, this is complemented by an extensive network of 60 ‘Breathe London’ air quality sensors, as well as a dense mesh network of Vortex pollution sensors.
6. Air pollution in H&F and across London is improving. Central London roadside levels of NO<sub>2</sub> have reduced by around 40% between 2019-24 (e.g. NO<sub>2</sub> has reduced by 38% over that period at our Hammersmith Town Centre monitoring station). Particulate Matter emissions are also reducing albeit at a slower rate, with construction emissions remaining the greatest source of PM in H&F (and elsewhere in London). However, there are no safe levels for pollutants, so reducing pollution as far as possible remains a council priority.
7. The sources of pollution vary between different pollutants. Historically for NO<sub>2</sub> there has been a rough split of around 60% transport emissions and 40% building emissions. However, in recent years transport emissions have been reducing at a far faster rate than building emissions, to the extent that building emissions now make up the largest single source of NO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the borough. For PM emissions, construction remains the largest source of emissions. The changing sources of emissions (due to policy interventions, technological change etc) are relevant to how we prioritise our work in order to maximise our impact.
8. Air pollution and carbon emissions are very different. However, many of the sources of pollution and carbon emissions are the same. Therefore, there are many synergies and co-benefits between our work on the climate emergency and on air pollution. Improving air quality across the borough will help reduce carbon emissions as well as improving the health and well-being of everyone who lives in, works in and visits our borough.

## **Our approach to tackling air pollution**

9. As part of our statutory duties, the Council has an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP)<sup>3</sup>. The current 2025-30 version was signed off by Cabinet at the end of 2024, and contains 40 key themed actions across 7 priority areas, which are designated to us by the GLA:

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<sup>2</sup> [Estimation of costs to the NHS and social care due to the health impacts of air pollution: summary report](#)

<sup>3</sup> The AQAP 2025-30 can be viewed on our main webpage [Air quality | London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham](#)

- Monitoring and other core statutory duties
  - Localised solutions
  - Emissions from developments and buildings
  - Public health and awareness raising
  - Delivery servicing and freight
  - Borough fleet actions
  - Cleaner transport
10. The actions in our Plan can be split into two key areas, addressing both systems change and behaviour change:
- Tackling the sources of pollution that the council can control – (e.g. our own properties and fleet, through our planning & transport policies, highways & maintenance.)
  - Raising residents’ and businesses’ awareness of what they can do to reduce their emissions and how to avoid exposing themselves to pollution.
11. These two priorities reflect that while we can act across a whole range of council activities to actively reduce pollution, there are many aspects of air pollution that are outside of the direct control of the council. This ranges from sources of pollution that are inside H&F but that we have no direct power over (e.g. bus and taxi emissions), to the fact that pollution is transboundary – pollution affecting us in H&F comes from not just the borough, but the rest of London, the UK, and further afield (e.g. multiple high pollution episodes in London in recent years have been the result of Saharan dust). As a result, it’s important that we raise awareness of pollution in our population to help people reduce their exposure to pollution.
12. Our approach also reflects efforts to tackle the inequalities aspect of pollution. On the one hand, because of the disproportionate impact of pollution generally, we know that all our work in this area will most benefit those most affected by pollution. However, we are also working to target interventions towards those who will benefit most. This includes programme such as School Streets Plus, which focuses not just on school streets but on other measures that can reduce the impact of pollution on children (such as green screens and mechanical ventilation). We are supporting the rollout of the awareness raising project Awair at GP surgeries and at H&F hospital sites, and much of the behaviour change pillar of our work is informed by using the right messages (and the right messengers) to communicate to our most at risk groups.
13. A key principle of our work that influences both the systems change and behaviour change pillars is collaboration and partnership working. In 2024 we entered a formal partnership with Imperial College London and the Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust to bring together experts in local government, academia, and the health sector to tackle air pollution together. The Better Air Better Health partnership aims to raise the profile of pollution in the borough, deliver joint innovative and impactful projects, and allow each of the partners to achieve more than if they were working alone.

## **Priorities and summary of air quality workstreams**

14. Our Air Quality Action Plan 2025-30 contains actions across a huge range of activities and areas. Similar to our work on the wider Climate Emergency, actions directly or indirectly related to reducing pollution take place across almost every team in the Council. This table below summarises the key levers and challenges we have in tackling the main priority areas for the council.

15. It is worth noting the new challenge we are addressing from indoor pollution. This is a new workstream for many boroughs, and relevant as we spend up to 90% of our time indoors. Indoor pollution concerns pollution that both originates outside (and enters into buildings) and from indoor sources. Many of the same pollutants are of concern compared to outdoor pollution, but there are additional challenges indoors from VOCs (volatile organic compounds) and from traditionally well understood dangers such as carbon monoxide. H&F's 2025-30 Action Plan is the first time we have addressed indoor pollution in an air quality strategy document.

Theme	Levers	Challenges	Example AQAP Actions
<i>Building emissions</i>	Planning policy – including the forthcoming Local Plan  Carbon co-benefits  Strong existing council policies and strategies	Influencing building operations in-use is difficult  Slow timeframes on planning policy  Policy pivot from transport towards buildings	Baseline evidence gathering for the forthcoming Local Plan. This includes new policy on reducing dust emissions from construction sites.  Promoting a move towards all electric buildings through planning policy  Seek to fund next stage of Envimo, a Defra funded project looking at dust management on construction sites
<i>Transport emissions</i>	Parking policy  Infrastructure and urban realm – EV charging, cycling and walking infrastructure  Council's and contractors' fleets  Localised neighbourhood solutions	Emerging Transport Strategy  High political and financial implications to levers  Lack of direct control – lobbying and public affairs piece	Supporting active travel work throughout the borough  Implementing our School Streets Plus programme  Working on a green fleet policy for our own operations
<i>Indoor air quality</i>	Planning policy  Statutory powers on wood burning, permitted fuels etc  Strong community engagement and co-	New area of work – is the science / baseline data there  Difficulty of influencing peoples' behaviour in their own home	Establishing guidance for indoor air quality through planning  Working groups on commercial cooking with other central

	creation  Links to wider work on fuel poverty and energy efficiency		boroughs  Supporting any future elements of Wellhome and other indoor monitoring projects
<i>Behaviour change</i>	Strong relationship with partners – Better Air Better Health  Co-benefits of AQ action and health  Commissioned research, focus groups	Council comms has its limits  Need to get the messaging right  Translating the science  Quantifying the impacts	Future focus groups on Air Quality  Better Air Better Health proposals for branding, new website and publicity campaigns  Supporting the Awair pilot project

16. Earlier this year Cabinet approved a new workstream to look at prohibiting outdoor waste burning in the borough, potentially through a new byelaw. This policy would reduce harmful PM emissions, as well as increasing community resilience to risks of fires in hotter, dryer summers. The latest data for Hammersmith & Fulham shows that in 2019, 14.3% of the borough's particulate emissions for PM2.5 can be attributed to domestic wood burning. In London this figure was 17%. Domestic wood burning includes emissions from both indoor and outdoor sources: this includes emissions from indoor wood burning stoves, as well as outdoor fires. It is not currently possible to ascertain the precise split within this figure between household wood burning (such as from stoves) and outdoor fires.
17. While there is well established data on the impact of the air pollution produced by the burning of solid fuel on health, there has been less research on outdoor fires specifically. Work has tended to focus on wood burning as a wider source of emissions, particularly from indoor wood burning stoves in homes.
18. Officers are now putting together options for the timescales of this work. We will be highlighting the potential gaps in the evidence base for the policy and how we can address them. This policy has a number of features common in our work on air quality: identifying an issue, producing evidence-based policy, and future engagement with our communities on our proposals.

## LIST OF APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 – Presentation slide deck

### Appendix 2 – Cabinet paper on 'Policy options for the boroughwide Prohibition of the Burning of Domestic Waste and Outdoor Fires in the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham'