

Environment and Sustainable Transport Committee (EAST)

11 February 2020

Citizens' Assembly on Air Quality

Report by Chief Executive

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainable Transport and Portfolio Holder for Engagement and Continuous Learning.

Purpose

To consider the recommendations and actions arising from the Citizens' Assembly on Air Quality.

Recommendation that -

To present a summary of the findings and recommendations from the Kingston Citizens' Assembly on air quality, which was held in November and December 2019.

To resolve that the report of the Assistant Directors, and the Assembly findings are considered by the Environment and Sustainable Transport Committee.

To resolve -

1. to consider the recommendations arising from the Citizens' Assembly on Air Quality (see report at Annex 1)
2. to agree for these recommendations to be explored by the Lead Officers within the relevant services, together with the Air Quality Working Group, and an update on progress against these recommendations to be brought to the EAST committee within the next 6 months.

Benefits to the Community:

Poor air quality is an important issue for Kingston, contributing to shortened life expectancy. It disproportionately impacts the most vulnerable. This Citizens' Assembly facilitated a randomly selected group of residents to create a set of recommendations that aim to tackle poor air quality.

Key Points

- A. Kingston delivered its first Citizens' Assembly on the topic of Air Quality in November and December 2019. This was the first Citizens' Assembly in the UK to specifically address the issue of air pollution.
- B. This Citizens' Assembly was designed and delivered by the Involve Foundation, an organisation that specialises in participatory democracy. The learning from this Citizens' Assembly will inform the Council's future approach to new ways of engaging the community on matters that are important to them.
- C. The summary report arising from this assembly was presented to the Full Council meeting on 17 December 2019, at which time it was referred for further consideration by the Environment and Sustainable Transport Committee.

- D. The Involve Foundation have now produced a more detailed report on the process of the assembly and the recommendations arising which is included at Annex 1.
- E. This assembly developed five recommendations, with each gaining over 85% support or strong support from the assembly. These were to:
1. Remove pollutants within school boundaries;
 2. Prioritise changes to planning rules and enforcement to place indoor and outdoor air quality as the highest priority;
 3. Plan to urgently invest in greener and accessible transport and infrastructure for all;
 4. Increase residents' awareness of air pollution and encourage positive behaviour change;
 5. Accelerate the transition to sustainable vehicles.
- F. The assembly members also developed 26 actions to support the delivery of these recommendations. Participants are aware that these were not presented to the Council as SMART actions and will need to be developed into deliverable and time specific pieces of work. Officers from relevant teams across the council are considering these actions.
- G. Officers met with the Citizens' Assembly members on 5th February 2020 to discuss these recommendations and actions.
- H. The council declared a climate emergency in June 2019 and will be working both as a council and with partners through the Kingston Strategic Partnership to develop a roadmap to carbon neutrality by 2038. Recommendations arising from this assembly will be discussed with the Kingston Strategic Partnership and will be considered as part of the council response to the climate emergency.

Context

The RBK Citizens' Assembly on Air Quality brought together 38 randomly selected residents from across the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames for two weekends during November and December 2019 to develop recommendations on how to collectively improve air quality in the borough.

Over the course of four days, assembly members heard evidence, questioned expert witnesses and deliberated with one another, before reaching conclusions and developing recommendations for how we can collectively improve the air quality in the borough. The recommendations formed by the Citizens Assembly are as follows:

Recommendation 1: Remove pollutants within school boundaries

- Action 1: Stricter building regulations around schools
- Action 2: Council to lobby government to assess schools on air quality and environmental credentials of schools;
- Action 3: Effective plant placement for green screens around schools;
- Action 4: Disseminate the "Love Your Lungs" campaign (see recommendation 4) via schools, possibly including a Childrens' Assembly on Air Quality
- Action 5: Temporary road closures and restrictions for parking and idling at relevant times
- Action 6: Create a fleet of electric school buses and use electric vehicles for all external school activities.

Recommendation 2: Prioritise changes to planning rules and enforcement to place indoor and outdoor air quality as the highest priority

- Action 1: Target raising awareness and education of the community, backed up by effective enforcement
- Action 2: Improve and enforce site construction regulations to exceed current air quality standards for equipment and working practices to reduce construction airborne pollutants by 50% over 2 years
- Action 3: Encourage clean vehicle use by implementing an Ultra Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ)
- Action 4: Enable wider electric vehicle adoption and use within the borough through preferential access to bus lanes and certain restricted access zones
- Action 5: Create planning regulations that ensure new developments deliver clean air for communities

Recommendation 3: Plan to urgently invest in greener and accessible transport and infrastructure for all

- Action 1: Replace diesel buses with electric buses as soon as possible, including school buses
- Action 2: Increase the number of bus routes and the frequency of services
- Action 3: Lobby Transport for London and South Western Railways for changes to the zones system for the Kingston area resulting in cheaper fares
- Action 4: Promote and expand public e-bikes and provide charging points across the borough
- Action 5: Making footpaths and cycle lanes safe, accessible and attractive through design, maintenance and greening

Recommendation 4: Increase residents' awareness of air pollution and encourage positive behaviour change

- Action 1: Design and deliver a "Love Your Lungs" communications campaign to target all groups and demographics
- Action 2: Increase number of monitoring stations and develop communications tools:
 - a.) Real time air quality levels (i.e. Red / Amber / Green visuals with percentage) (i.e. mobile app);
 - b.) Liaise with Dyson to explore opportunity to have mobile monitoring systems (e.g. kids backpack) and use it as a case study and communication opportunity;
 - c.) Equip schools with visible monitoring systems.
- Action 3: Design a rewards / incentives campaign to encourage individual behaviour change;
- Action 4: Incentivise public and private employers to utilize existing Employee Benefit Schemes (e.g. Cycle to Work) and initiate new practices (e.g. lift sharing and flexible working)
- Action 5: Introduce an accreditation system for business to strive to achieve resulting in a "Reward and Recognition" certification

Recommendation 5: Accelerate the transition to sustainable vehicles

- Action 1: Enhance and simplify the charging infrastructure for electric vehicles [see plug in Suffolk presentation on contactless EV charging points]
- Action 2: Incentivise switching to electric vehicles for both private and organisational users
- Action 3: RBK should lead by example and ensure its entire fleet is sustainable (e.g. electric, hydrogen, etc.)
- Action 4: Increase restrictions for polluting vehicles through Ultra Low Emissions Zone in the centre for example and Low Emissions Zone in the rest of the Borough
- Action 5: Reintroduce Park & Ride using electric buses

Proposal and Options

1. The Committee is invited to discuss these recommendations and accompanying actions.
2. The Council is required, as a result of declaring an Air Quality Management Area for the whole of the Borough in 2003, to develop an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) setting out the measures it intends to put in place in pursuit of National Air Quality Objectives. The current Plan was approved in 2016 to last for a period of five years, and the process of reviewing the Plan will start in the Spring 2020.
3. Many of the recommendations developed by the Citizens' Assembly will be used to inform the review of the Air Quality Action Plan.

Consultation and engagement

4. Residents' ideas influenced the topics and potential solutions discussed at the Citizens' Assembly. These were received through the following types of engagement:
 1. submitted through the 'Let's Talk' portal (169 ideas and 27 detailed pieces of evidence)
 2. submitted through 'Ideas trees' in Kingston libraries
 3. suggested by residents during the Kingston: Let's Talk engagement events including an Air Quality Forum held in July 2019.
2. This assembly represents the first step in RBK's journey to embed participatory democracy and putting residents at the heart of decision making. The lessons learned from this Citizens' Assembly will be used to develop our participatory democracy framework.
3. The next steps include the development of an Air Quality Action Plan, which will require further consultation and engagement with the community.

Timescale

5. A report introducing the review of the Air Quality Action Plan will be brought to the next meeting of this Committee on 31st March 2020. The council is required to follow a statutory process for reviewing the Action Plan, and also to follow the Greater London Authority template and action matrix in doing so.
6. However, Members are invited to determine that the Air Quality Working Group - a member-officer group of this Committee - is delegated to develop the recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly into actions that can be included in the Action Plan.
7. Following this process, a draft Air Quality Action Plan will be brought to this committee for endorsement ahead of a period of consultation and engagement. The findings of this will be developed, by the Working Group, into a final Action Plan which will be approved by this Committee at the end of the year, for implementation in 2021 - 2026.

Financial Context

Everything the council does needs to be seen in the context of an increasingly challenging financial environment. Kingston is not alone in its challenges, one in three of all councils fearing they will run out of funding to carry out their legal duties by 2022/23.

However, this position is particularly stark in Kingston. The demand for services is increasing while the funds available to meet these needs continues to fall. In 2010 the council received £66m in government grant - by 2018 that had been cut to zero. This means that it is a continual challenge to find adequate funds to meet needs.

Despite these challenges the council has a drive and commitment to ensure it is doing the best for residents and communities.

Resource Implications

8. The design and facilitation of the Citizens' Assembly was provided by the Involve Foundation at a cost of £57,900. The Involve Foundation was selected to deliver the assembly through a competitive procurement process, and were evaluated as the most advantageous to the Council on both quality and price.

Participant recruitment, travel expenses and honorarium (£150 per weekend)	£18,600
Event facilitation (weekend staff costs)	£22,300
Project management, process design, participant onboarding, reporting	£17,000

9. Further costs were incurred as follows:

Facilities and IT Support	£161
Venue provided free by Kingston University	£0
Catering	£6,761
Stationery	£67
Speakers' Travel and Subsistence	£76

10. The Council expects that there will be resource implications to deliver the Action Plan developed to respond to these recommendations. These resource implications and financial considerations of any relevant commissioning strategies or decisions taken as a result of the Action Plan will be explored during the next stage of the development of this Action Plan and will be taken on a case-by-case basis.
11. Any call for resources to be spent in this area which are not within existing budgets will be considered within the context of the council's overall budget position and traded off against other competing priorities.

Legal Implications

1. There are no legal implications at this stage. The recommendations and actions will be considered by Officers in consultation with SLLP where appropriate.
2. The preparation and revision of an Air Quality Action Plan is a legal requirement of Local Authorities that have declared one or more Air Quality Management Areas.

Risk Assessment

12. Risks will be assessed as these recommendations are developed into specific and deliverable actions.

Health Implications

1. The Citizens' Assembly heard that poor air quality has significant impacts on health.
2. Poor air quality contributes to the equivalent of one in twenty deaths for people who live in Kingston. It has been linked to strokes, heart disease, asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and it particularly affects vulnerable people, including children, older people, those with health problems and those who live in deprived communities ([JSNA, 2018](#)).
3. The main health impact of air pollution builds up over a long time and comes from exposure throughout life. It contributes to long-term illness as well as to deaths. If babies born in London in 2010 were exposed to the same levels of particulate matter throughout their lives as they were at their birth, then on average, they would lose at least nine months of life expectancy. [sources King's College London, Understanding the health impacts of air pollution in London, 2015 and COMEAP, Cardiovascular disease and air pollution, 2006]

Equalities Analysis

1. There are no equalities impacts to be highlighted at this time.
2. Equality considerations were considered within the design and delivery of the Citizens' Assembly, and are set out in the full independent Citizens' Assembly report from the Involve Foundation (Annex 1).
3. Equality implications arising from the recommendations of the assembly will be assessed as the action plan is developed.

Background papers - none other than those referred to in this report (annex 1).

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