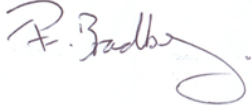


<b>LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN</b>	<b>WARDS:</b> All
<b>REPORT TITLE</b> Camden Clean Air Action Plan 2023-2026: Year One Progress Update	
<b>REPORT OF</b> Director of Environment and Sustainability	
<b>FOR SUBMISSION TO</b> Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee	<b>DATE</b> Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> July 2024
<p><b>SUMMARY OF REPORT</b></p> <p>The report provides an update on the progress made during the first full year of delivery of the Council’s statutory Air Quality Action Plan: the ‘Camden Clean Air Action Plan 2023-2026’. 69% of ‘Clean Air Outcomes’ set out in the Action Plan are categorised as ‘in progress’ or ‘completed (ongoing)’.</p> <p>The report also presents an overview of the latest full year of air quality monitoring data for Camden, which shows that annual nitrogen dioxide air pollutant reduced at the majority of automatic monitoring sites, and fine particulate matter air pollution reduced at all monitoring sites.</p> <p>Finally, the report sets out the priority activities for the forthcoming year and brings to the attention of the Committee some proposed activities and policy changes that may require the Committee’s consideration. These include the ‘Year of Clean Air for Camden Schools’, the continuation of the ‘London Wood Burning Project’, and the delivery of projects funded through successful bids to the Mayor’s Air Quality Fund.</p> <p><b>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</b></p> <p>No documents that require listing have been used in the preparation of this report.</p> <p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Tom Parkes, Air Quality Programme Manager Sustainability, Air Quality and Energy 5 Pancras Square London N1C 4AG</p> <p><a href="mailto:Tom.Parkes@camden.gov.uk">Tom.Parkes@camden.gov.uk</a></p>	
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	

That the Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee consider and comment on the following aspects of the report:

- i. Year-one delivery progress against the Camden Clean Air Action Plan 2023-2026
- ii. Headline actions for delivery during 2024/2025

Signed:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P. Badby', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Date: 2 July 2024

## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report gives a progress update on the first full year of the Council's statutory Air Quality Action Plan: the 'Camden Clean Air Action Plan 2023-2026'. The report also sets out the priority activities for the forthcoming year and brings to the attention of the Committee some proposed activities and policy changes that may require the Committee's consideration.
- 1.2. The report also presents an overview of the latest full year (2023) of air quality monitoring data for Camden.

## 2. Background and context

- 2.1. The [Camden Clean Air Action Plan 2023-2026](#) (CAAP 23-26) came into effect on 1 January 2023. The CAAP 23-26 fulfils the Council's statutory duty to have a current Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) in accordance with Part IV of the Environment Act 1995.
- 2.2. Air quality remains the largest environmental risk for public health and both short-term and long-term exposure to air pollutants can have an adverse impact upon human health. The burden of air pollution in London is equivalent to 3,600 to 4,100 deaths each year, and 7.7% of all mortality in Camden is attributable specifically to particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) air pollution.
- 2.3. Children, older people, and people with existing health conditions are more susceptible, and lower-income neighbourhoods and minority ethnic communities are generally exposed to higher concentrations of air pollutants, thereby increasing the risk for health. Consequently, air pollution is regarded as an important factor contributing to health inequalities and social injustice.
- 2.4. Camden Council was the first local authority to have aligned its air quality objectives with the guidelines recommended by the World Health Organization. In effect, this sets an ambition beyond UK legal requirements.
- 2.5. The purpose of the CAAP 23-26 is to set out a four-year delivery programme to progress the Council's efforts to achieve the World Health Organization (WHO) air quality guidelines borough-wide by 2034. These guidelines were adopted as Camden's local air quality targets in March 2022 and formalised in the [Camden Clean Air Strategy 2019-2034](#), which describes the community vision for a borough '*where no person experiences poor health because of the air they breathe*'.
- 2.6. The CAAP 23-26 was published for public consultation in August 2022. Consultation activities included online engagement, drop-in sessions in libraries, health engagement events and a parents' forum. A revised CAAP 23-26 was considered by Culture and Environment Scrutiny and Cabinet in December 2022, where it was approved and adopted.

- 2.7. The CAAP 23-26 presents 36 ‘Clean Air Outcomes’: distinct achievements with a deadline no later than the end of 2026, that will help to reduce air pollution or population exposure to air pollution, and with a particular focus on activities that proactively help to tackle the unequal health burden caused by poor air quality.
- 2.8. The CAAP 23-26 also details interim targets as part of a longer-term trajectory for achieving the Council’s WHO-aligned objectives in Camden by 2034.
- 2.9. This report provides an overview of progress on the 36 Clean Air Outcomes as of the end of 2023 (the statutory air quality reporting year), offers further detail on headline activities, and summarises the latest full year of air quality monitoring data.
- 2.10. Additionally, the report describes five headline activities that have commenced or are due to start during 2024 and 2025, with a note of potential need for consideration by the Committee.

### 3. Progress against the 36 Clean Air Outcomes during 2023

- 3.1. Table 1 below shows progress made during 2023 on the 36 Clean Air Outcomes in the CAAP 23-26, by thematic grouping.

Theme	Total no. Outcomes	Not yet started	Early steps	In progress	Complete (ongoing)
Reducing emissions from construction	5	1		3	1
Reducing emissions from buildings	4	1	1	1	1
Reducing emissions from transport	5		1	2	2
Supporting communities and schools	10	2	3	4	1
Indirect emissions and lobbying	5				5
Public health and awareness	4			3	1
Indoor air quality and occupational exposure	3	1	1	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>5 (14%)</b>	<b>6 (17%)</b>	<b>14 (39%)</b>	<b>11 (30%)</b>

- 3.2. At the end of 2023, 30% of Outcomes had been completed and 39% of Outcomes were in progress. 17% of Outcomes involved activities in their infancy, including for example the formation of partnerships and stakeholder groups, identification of funding, and project ideation. 14% of Outcomes were yet to start but were programmed to commence during 2024 and 2025.
- 3.3. Outcomes ‘not yet started’ were for:
- reducing emissions from construction site generators;
  - reducing emissions from standby diesel generators on buildings;
  - working with NHS to undertake anti-idling engagements in the vicinity of hospitals and healthcare centres;
  - reducing emissions from street food vending;

- producing indoor air quality and occupational exposure guidance for businesses.
- 3.4. Some of the Outcomes cannot truly be ‘completed’ because they require ongoing work to ensure positive effects are maintained. These Outcomes are considered as ‘ongoing’ which infers that the necessary steps have been taken to achieve the desired outcome but that continued work is required.
- 3.5. The CAAP 23-26 contains Clean Air Outcomes for “Reduced emissions from building heating systems” and “Reduced emissions from road vehicles” (Outcomes 6 and 11, respectively). These Outcomes seek to address two of the most significant sources of air pollution in Camden, however, they are not discussed in this report because the majority of the activity towards the Outcomes is covered principally by the Climate Action Plan 2020-2025 and the Camden Transport Strategy (and its associated Delivery Plans). The content of this report therefore focuses on activities which are delivered solely within the scope of the CAAP 23-26 and the Council’s air quality programme. The full list of Clean Air Outcomes in the CAAP 23-26 can be viewed in [pages 62-68](#) in the Camden Clean Air Strategy 2019-2034 and Camden Clean Air Action Plan 2023-2026 document.

#### 4. **Headline activities during 2023**

- 4.1. Camden jointly led the Defra-funded **London Wood Burning Project (LWBP)** alongside Islington. During 2023 the project undertook a survey of 5,000 Londoners, published two reports and delivered a significant awareness-raising campaign throughout the 19 participating local authorities. Please see this link for further information about the project: [London Wood Burning Project](#).
- 4.2. The LWBP public survey identified that 19% of households across the 19 participating boroughs have access to solid fuel burning stoves or open fireplaces, with approximately 80% being owner-occupiers. The most common reason given for using a solid fuel burning stove was that it “creates a nice atmosphere”, and a larger portion of fireplace and stove users believed that solid fuel burning had a positive impact on air quality. Among respondents who were thinking of installing a stove, the main justification for doing so was that “it’s cheaper than central heating”.
- 4.3. The project’s Air Quality Data Collection report, produced by Imperial College London, highlighted the potential for all types of wood and solid fuel burning appliances to adversely affect local air quality and identified that the smell of woodsmoke is a good indicator for an elevated presence of health-damaging particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) air pollution.
- 4.4. A Health Impact Evaluation report, produced by Ricardo Energy and Environment, presented a quantification of the healthcare costs associated with wood and solid fuel burning in London. The report concluded that wood and solid fuel burning costs London £197m per year through healthcare costs and economic losses, causing the equivalent of 284 deaths, 80 respiratory

hospital admissions and 90 new cases of asthma among children every year. The estimated costs specific to Camden were £4.5m per year.

- 4.5. Following the publication of these reports the LWBP produced and launched an awareness-raising behaviour change campaign to build public awareness. The campaign achieved 15.5 million (m) radio ‘impacts’ (opportunities for listeners to hear the campaign advert), 26.5m impressions from Google Adverts, 700k impressions via Meta platforms, additional impacts (although harder to quantify) from the 20 public billboard sites and 161 buses, and earned media coverage in national publications.
- 4.6. The **Camden Air Quality Monitor Loans Project** was launched in October 2023 following the success of the household sensor loan project trialled in Somers Town as part of the Somers Town Future Neighbourhood programme. The Camden Air Quality Monitor Loans Project involves the expansion of the concept to cover the rest of the borough, with five indoor air quality sensors available for residents to borrow for a one-month period. One additional sensor was purchased for the Kentish Town Library of Things.
- 4.7. The indoor air quality sensors display current particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) and volatile organic compound (VOC) air pollutant concentrations, as two of the most prominent indoor pollutants. The behaviour change information conveyed through the Project builds on learnings from the Camden Household Air Monitoring Project (CHAMP) that was led by London School of Economics with support from the Council. The CHAMP found that the provision of indoor air quality monitoring helped occupants to adjust ventilation and make other changes to substantially reduce indoor pollution levels.
- 4.8. By the end of 2023, ten Camden households had participated in the new Camden Air Quality Monitoring Loans Project, with a further 20 on a waiting list. You can read more about the project here: [Air quality monitor loans - Camden Council](#).
- 4.9. A bi-monthly **Clean Air for Camden e-newsletter** was launched in July 2023 and at the end of 2023 had 400 subscribers. Each edition provides a brief overview of the Council’s air quality projects, interesting news related to the air quality programme, and any opportunities for readers to get involved in projects or engagement activities. The newsletter has been used to promote the Camden Air Quality Monitor Loans project and the publication of each edition has led to an uptick in the number of requests for home indoor air quality sensors, suggesting that readers are engaging with the newsletter in a positive way. You can sign up to the newsletter here: [London Borough of Camden \(govdelivery.com\)](#).
- 4.10. **Securing £170,000 in Defra Air Quality Grant** funding for the ‘Clean Air for Schools’ programme, to commence in early 2024. Clean Air for Schools will involve engagement with schools in Camden to deliver air quality awareness-raising activities and to strengthen connections between existing projects including the school asthma nursing service, Travel for Life, Climate

Connectors, Asthma Friendly Schools, and Healthy School Streets to maximise beneficial impact.

- 4.11. The Clean Air for Schools programme will also help to identify viable technical projects to reduce the emissions of air pollutants from school activities, or to introduce practical measures to reduce pollutant exposure in the school.
- 4.12. Producing and submitting three **further grant applications to the Defra Air Quality Grant Scheme** for projects led by or delivered within Camden, and supporting two additional multi-borough projects led by other authorities. In total, in excess of £1.3m has been secured to support air quality projects in Camden. The proposed projects address pollution sources including street food trading, commercial kitchens, domestic wood burning, and household indoor air pollution.

## 5. Air quality data for 2023

- 5.1. Automatic nitrogen dioxide NO<sub>2</sub> monitoring data show that annual mean levels for 2023 were lower than for 2022 at three out of four monitoring sites, with only one site exceeding the legal limit for NO<sub>2</sub> (40µg/m<sup>3</sup>; Euston Road). Two sites had already met the Council's 2026 interim target (30µg/m<sup>3</sup>; Bloomsbury, Camden High Street) (see Graph 1 in Appendix).
- 5.2. Automatic particulate matter PM<sub>2.5</sub> monitoring data show that annual mean levels for 2023 were lower than for 2022 at all four monitoring sites, with all sites now meeting the Council's 2030 interim target (10µg/m<sup>3</sup>) (see Graph 2 in Appendix).

## 6. Headline activities for 2024 and 2025

- 6.1. The headline activities for 2024 and 2025 are currently as follows:
- 6.2. The **Year of Clean Air for Camden Schools** is the culmination of the Defra-funded Clean Air for Schools programme mentioned in section 4. School engagement activities will be delivered throughout 2024/25 to build awareness of air pollution among children, parents and teachers, and to deliver projects to help schools improve air quality and reduce air pollution exposure for pupils. You can visit the project website at [The Year Of Clean Air For Camden Schools](#).
- 6.3. The Year of Clean Air for Camden Schools will culminate in a large-scale celebration event on Clean Air Day in June 2025, highlighting activities that have taken place and announcing the next steps for further action.
- 6.4. As noted in section 4 above, **Domestic wood burning** is an avoidable but growing source of air pollution in Camden. The Environment Act 2021 amended the Clean Air Act 1993 to enable local authorities to adopt a civil enforcement regime and bring canal boats into scope of smoke control area rules.

- 6.5. Currently, smoke control contraventions in Camden are enforced by the Noise and Pollution Team within Environmental Health, however regulatory requirement for engagement with complainants and perpetrators places a significant burden upon enforcing teams. Furthermore, the challenge in obtaining sufficient evidence about contraventions means that no enforcement actions have taken place in Camden, nor in any other local authority in London.
- 6.6. A proposed new approach to this issue will be developed in 2024/25. The ambition is to create a viable enforcement mechanism whereby residents affected by chimney smoke are able to notify the Council, triggering correspondence with the contravening household to encourage cessation of the offending activity or, failing that, a financial penalty.
- 6.7. The significant interest in the Camden Air Quality Monitor Loans project has shown that there is a need to expand capacity for providing Camden residents with information about air quality inside their homes. A successful application was submitted to the Mayor's Air Quality Fund (MAQF) in January 2024 for a new **Community Air Quality Champions** project to be launched during 2024.
- 6.8. The project will engage with residents and build awareness about air pollution as a risk for health, to promote the individual actions to reduce emissions and exposure, and to empower and support local projects. This will include purchasing additional home indoor air quality sensors to reduce the waiting time for requests, with a subset of sensors ringfenced specifically for households with an identified or diagnosed vulnerability such as asthma or heart disease.
- 6.9. It will be highly advantageous for ward councillors to support the project by supporting the health-awareness messaging and facilitating participation in community activities where possible.
- 6.10. Camden submitted four additional applications to the **Mayor's Air Quality Fund** for projects aligned with different Outcomes from the CAAP 23-26. All four of these bids were also successful and the resultant projects will commence during 2024/25 as follows:
- The London Wood Burning Project will continue as 'LWBP2' and will be jointly led by Camden and Islington. The project will provide training and materials to support the investigation and enforcement of household wood burning complaints in smoke control areas across 19 London boroughs, with additional awareness-raising campaign activity utilising the assets developed through the original project.
  - The successful 'Idling Action London' project will resume with Camden and Hounslow jointly leading a consortium of 21 London boroughs. The project will reduce avoidable air pollution from vehicle engine idling, with a particular focus on idling within commercial vehicle fleets. Additionally, the project will improve the enforcement landscape across London and will build public awareness about the impact of vehicle engine idling by re-launching the 'Engine Off. Every Stop' campaign.



- The ‘Cleaner Filming for Camden’ project will reduce air pollution from filming in Camden. On-location film sets are usually powered by diesel generators and this represents a source of air pollution and carbon emissions in Camden, with 910 licensed filming days in the borough in 2023. The Council is partnering with FilmFixer to develop an air pollution reduction programme for the film industry.
- The ‘Healthy Waterways’ project is jointly led by Camden, Hackney and Newham councils with 11 additional participating boroughs. The project will gather evidence on how canal boaters are affected by air pollution and will help to identify opportunities for reducing emissions from heating, propulsion, and onboard electrical power. It will look to encourage changes to reduce air pollution and carbon emissions, improving health and building climate resilience, to make London’s waterways more sustainable and healthier for everyone.

## **7. Risks**

- 7.1. No new risks have emerged during the first year of CAAP 23-26 delivery.
- 7.2. The primary residual risks associated with CAAP 23-26 delivery relate to the availability of external funding to support work on the 36 Clean Air Outcomes, and the influence of ‘transboundary’ (non-Camden-derived) air pollution which may limit progress towards the Council’s WHO-aligned air quality targets.
- 7.3. The Council’s Air Quality Team has achieved significant success in securing external grant funding from the Defra Air Quality Grant Scheme and the Mayor of London’s Air Quality Fund (MAQF), which collectively have funded seven ongoing projects including three priority projects for 2024 and 2025 as noted in Section 6 above. The long-term availability of external grant funding is unclear and is expected to change. In any case, every effort will be made to fund delivery of the CAAP 23-26 from external grant funding.
- 7.4. Transboundary air pollution contributes a significant portion of the overall PM<sub>2.5</sub> in the air in Camden. Consequently, there is a risk that it will be challenging to meet the 2034 targets for NO<sub>2</sub> (10µg/m<sup>3</sup>) and PM<sub>2.5</sub> (5µg/m<sup>3</sup>), regardless of the success in reducing on-borough sources of air pollution.

## **8. Finance Comments of the Executive Director Corporate Services**

- 8.1. This report does not introduce a financial risk for the Council as the costs of the programme are contained within existing budgets. The Camden Clean Air Action Plan 2023-2026 was approved by Cabinet in December 2022 and came into effect in January 2023. The continued delivery against the CAAP 23-26 does not incur additional revenue or capital costs, and the majority of the projects started as part of the CAAP 23-26 are funded from external grants.

8.2. Camden's Finance service was consulted during the governance process involved in taking the CAAP 23-26 to Cabinet in December 2022.

## **9. Legal Comments of the Borough Solicitor**

9.1. The CAAP 23-26 maintains the Council's compliance with the statutory responsibility for local authorities to have an up-to-date Air Quality Action Plan under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995.

9.2. Legal comments are contained in the body of the report.

## **10. Environmental Implications**

10.1. The CAAP 23-26 commits to the delivery of projects that improve local air quality and protect public health. Many projects and behaviour change activities have benefits for climate because local air pollutants are often caused by the combustion of fossil fuels that drive global heating. For example, work to reduce pollution from domestic wood- and coal- burning will provide a climate and ecological benefit in addition to the local improvement in air quality and public health, because wood and coal fuels are the most climate-damaging heating fuels.

10.2. Camden's air quality, climate and transport strategy programmes are coordinated to ensure that the CAAP is implemented in a mutually supporting way. As such, the CAAP has a positive impact upon Camden's environment.

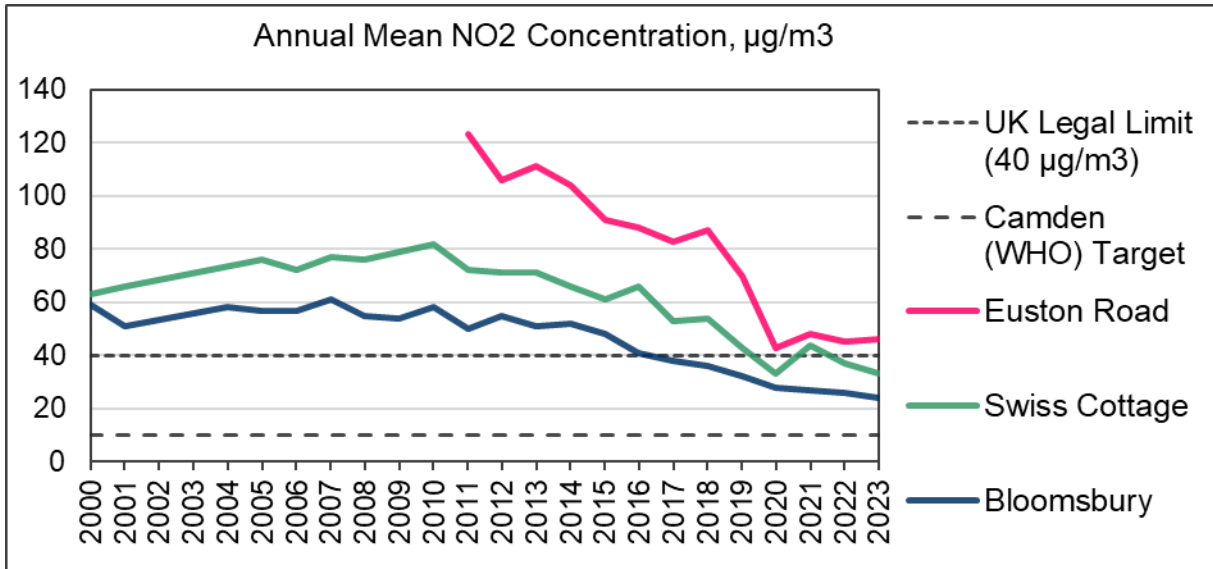
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**Appendix:**

**Appendix: Air Quality Data for 2023**

## APPENDIX

Graph 1: Annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> concentration at automatic air quality monitoring sites, 2000-2023. Data series are listed in descending order from highest 2023 annual mean to lowest. UK legal limit shown at 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup> and WHO-aligned Camden target at 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.



Graph 2: Annual mean PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration at automatic air quality monitoring sites, 2000-2023. Data series are listed in descending order from highest 2023 annual mean to lowest. UK legal limit shown at 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup> and WHO-aligned Camden target at 5 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. Note that data for the Coopers Lane monitoring site are not included in Graph 2 because monitoring only commenced in 2022.

