

## Mayor's Office

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**Our ref: KRtoMQ01**

**Date:**

Murad Qureshi AM  
City Hall  
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London SE1 2AA

Dear Murad

Thank you for your letter of 3 June welcoming me to my post. I am looking forward to working with the Environment Committee to improve air quality in London. As you are aware, the European Commission has endorsed our plans for meeting limit values for particulate matter, and our modelling shows that in a normal meteorological year, London would be compliant with these limit values from 2011. However, the Mayor recognises the need to improve air quality even beyond the limit values for health reasons, which is why a number of London-wide measures, such as tighter Low Emission Zone (LEZ) standards and age standards for taxis and PHVs will be introduced from next year.

I welcome the Committee's ongoing work on the Mayor's Air Quality Strategy (MAQS) and the role the Committee played in shaping it. I agree that it is important that we continue to inform Londoners about the health impacts of poor air quality, and I am keen to work with the Assembly on this issue. Below I shall deal with each of the issues raised in your paper.

### **Additional Low Emission Zones in London**

Transport for London (TfL) published a report 'Stricter emission standards for central or inner London: a provisional assessment of potential feasibility and effectiveness' and this was discussed by the Environment Committee at its meeting on 23 June. TfL will be discussing the findings of that report with boroughs over the next few months.

### **Particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>)**

#### *EU limit values for PM<sub>10</sub>*

The European Commission has accepted the updated air quality plan for the daily mean PM<sub>10</sub> limit value for Greater London that the Government communicated on the 9 June 2011. Our priority is to ensure that PM<sub>10</sub> limit values are not exceeded.

The Mayor's Air Quality Strategy included proposals for local measures at locations in central London most at risk of exceeding PM<sub>10</sub> limit values in 2011. Many of these measures are already underway, including trials of dust suppressant technology, focusing of the cleanest buses through priority locations and working with bus operators, taxi drivers and coach companies to raise awareness of the air quality impacts of vehicle

idling. The Government has recently provided a £5m Clean Air Fund to Transport for London (TfL) that will allow the local measures approach to be extended during the financial year 2011/12. Full details on the local measures being taken by TfL are available on the GLA website at: [www.london.gov.uk/air-quality/links](http://www.london.gov.uk/air-quality/links).

The Mayor acknowledges the Commission's meteorological assessment of the influence of cyclonic and anticyclonic weather systems on UK air quality during normal meteorological circumstances. This spring, however, saw exceptional abnormal conditions, with prolonged periods of easterly winds from continental Europe. The easterly winds experienced during the recent pollution episodes of March and April brought into London air that had travelled right across continental Europe. The low wind speeds also allowed pollution to build up in the air mass.

You state that the final strategy has no reference to margins of tolerance in the period up to 2011. The MAQS does include a reference to margins of tolerance – please refer to paragraph 1.4.5.

#### *Health effects and WHO recommended limit values*

I agree that it is important to improve air quality to benefit the health of Londoners even after national/ EU targets are met. That is why the Mayor is introducing new measures from 2012, such as tighter LEZ standards and taxi age limits, even though modelling shows that in a normal meteorological year PM<sub>10</sub> limit values will be achieved from 2011. These measures will also help to reduce PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations, which is important in terms of health protection.

#### *Localism Bill*

Given the complexity of the factors leading up to any infraction of EU air quality law, the Mayor believes that it is vital that there is an independent and transparent process in place for apportioning fines, particularly where one of the parties responsible for the breach is likely to be the Government itself.

#### *Air Quality Monitoring*

The Government is formally responsible for assessing compliance with EU limit values and the EU Air Quality Directive, through their ARUN monitoring sites, and reporting this to the European Commission. This information is included in Defra's report "Air Pollution in the UK in 2009" ([http://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/library/annualreport/air\\_pollution\\_uk\\_2009b.pdf](http://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/library/annualreport/air_pollution_uk_2009b.pdf)). As stated in the Mayor's air quality strategy, we will support the improvement of the air quality monitoring network in London so that it provides accurate and up to date information about air quality trends and current conditions in London. The GLA published report 'Review of the air quality Monitoring network in London' (April 2011) has been shared with Defra for them to consider as part of the review of their air quality monitoring network in London.

#### *Taxi Emissions*

The 60 per cent reduction in PM<sub>10</sub> emissions cited in the public consultation draft of the MAQS was based on the assumption of a 10 year age-based limits for taxis from 2015. Following the consideration of consultation responses by the taxis industry, it was determined that the economic impacts on some drivers would be too great and a 15 year age-based limit for taxis was adopted from 2012. Other changes were made to the taxi proposals in the final version of the MAQS. From April 2012, all new taxis entering the fleet will need to meet the Euro 5 standard (not Euro 4 as in the public consultation draft), eco-driving courses will become mandatory for all new taxi drivers by the end of 2011 and changes will be made to the annual taxi inspection regime to require two MOTs each year. We are also taking steps to reduce taxi idling, for example by introducing eco-marshals and raising awareness of the problem with drivers. These measures, along with measures to reduce emissions from private hire vehicles (PHVs), will achieve a 50 per cent

reduction in PM<sub>10</sub> emissions from the sector. The modelling analysis for the MAQS is included in chapters 2 and 5 and Appendix C of the final strategy.

### **Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>)**

The strategy provides a significant step forward in reducing NO<sub>x</sub> emissions within London, this amounts to a 35 per cent reduction in NO<sub>x</sub> emissions across London by 2015 (compared to 2008 levels), resulting in lower concentrations of NO<sub>2</sub> and health benefits for all Londoners. But we need support and action from the Government and others to achieve EU limit values for NO<sub>2</sub>.

The GLA has been lobbying the Government for national measures that would complement the measures to be taken by the Mayor through his Air Quality Strategy. Information on these measures was included in the document that the GLA sent to the Government to inform development of their NO<sub>2</sub> action plan. This document is on the GLA website at [www.london.gov.uk/air-quality/links](http://www.london.gov.uk/air-quality/links). Measures we are seeking to be implemented include changes to the vehicle tax regime to encourage uptake of the cleanest vehicles and targeted vehicle scrappage and retrofit schemes, as well as a national certification scheme for NO<sub>x</sub> retrofit equipment.

We are continuing to discuss the implementation of these measures as part of the Government's current consultation process on its draft NO<sub>2</sub> action plan. The GLA and TfL are also involved in discussions with the Government on the development of a possible NO<sub>x</sub> retrofit certification scheme. I would be keen to discuss ways in which we can work with the Assembly to encourage the Government to implement national measures that would improve London's air quality, as well as to provide the additional funding that is needed to implement measures such as a NO<sub>x</sub> standard in the LEZ and bus retrofit. I also support the Assembly's call for the Government to reassess the costs of air pollution in the UK.

The Mayor will keep his Air Quality Strategy under continuous review. The GLA will also publish annual progress reports. I would also be happy to discuss implementation with the Assembly at any time

Yours sincerely



Kulveer Ranger  
**Mayor's Director of Environment & Digital London**