

MAYOR OF LONDON

THE LONDON PLAN



THE SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY FOR GREATER LONDON
MARCH 2021

Policy SI 1 Improving air quality

- A Development Plans, through relevant strategic, site-specific and area-based policies, should seek opportunities to identify and deliver further improvements to air quality and should not reduce air quality benefits that result from the Mayor's or boroughs' activities to improve air quality.
- B To tackle poor air quality, protect health and meet legal obligations the following criteria should be addressed:
 - 1) Development proposals should not:
 - a) lead to further deterioration of existing poor air quality
 - b) create any new areas that exceed air quality limits, or delay the date at which compliance will be achieved in areas that are currently in exceedance of legal limits
 - c) create unacceptable risk of high levels of exposure to poor air quality.
 - 2) In order to meet the requirements in Part 1, as a minimum:
 - a) development proposals must be at least Air Quality Neutral
 - b) development proposals should use design solutions to prevent or minimise increased exposure to existing air pollution and make provision to address local problems of air quality in preference to post-design or retro-fitted mitigation measures
 - c) major development proposals must be submitted with an Air Quality Assessment. Air quality assessments should show how the development will meet the requirements of B1
 - d) development proposals in Air Quality Focus Areas or that are likely to be used by large numbers of people particularly vulnerable to poor air quality, such as children or older people should demonstrate that design measures have been used to minimise exposure.
- C Masterplans and development briefs for large-scale development proposals subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment should consider how local air quality can be improved across the area of the proposal as part of an air quality positive approach. To achieve this a statement should be submitted demonstrating:

- 1) how proposals have considered ways to maximise benefits to local air quality, and
 - 2) what measures or design features will be put in place to reduce exposure to pollution, and how they will achieve this.
- D In order to reduce the impact on air quality during the construction and demolition phase development proposals must demonstrate how they plan to comply with the Non-Road Mobile Machinery Low Emission Zone and reduce emissions from the demolition and construction of buildings following best practice guidance.¹⁴⁷
- E Development proposals should ensure that where emissions need to be reduced to meet the requirements of Air Quality Neutral or to make the impact of development on local air quality acceptable, this is done on-site. Where it can be demonstrated that emissions cannot be further reduced by on-site measures, off-site measures to improve local air quality may be acceptable, provided that equivalent air quality benefits can be demonstrated within the area affected by the development.

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The Control of Dust and Emissions During Construction and Demolition Supplementary Planning Guidance, Mayor of London, 2014

- 9.1.1 **Poor air quality** is a major issue for London which is failing to meet requirements under legislation. Poor air quality has direct impacts on the health, quality of life and life expectancy of Londoners. The impacts tend to be most heavily felt in some of London's most deprived neighbourhoods, and by people who are most vulnerable to the impacts, such as children and older people. London's air quality should be significantly improved and exposure to poor air quality, especially for vulnerable people, should be reduced.
- 9.1.2 The Mayor is committed to **making air quality in London the best of any major world city**, which means not only achieving compliance with legal limits for Nitrogen Dioxide as soon as possible and maintaining compliance where it is already achieved, but also achieving World Health Organisation targets for other pollutants such as Particulate Matter.
- 9.1.3 The aim of this policy is to ensure that new developments are designed and built, as far as is possible, **to improve local air quality and reduce the extent to which the public are exposed to poor air quality**. This means that new developments, as a minimum, must not cause new exceedances of legal air

quality standards, or delay the date at which compliance will be achieved in areas that are currently in exceedance of legal limits.¹⁴⁸ Where limit values are already met, or are predicted to be met at the time of completion, new developments must endeavour to maintain the best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development principles.

- 9.1.4 Where this policy refers to 'existing poor air quality' this should be taken to include areas where legal limits for any pollutant, or World Health Organisation targets for Particulate Matter, are already exceeded and areas where current pollution levels are within 5 per cent of these limits.¹⁴⁹
- 9.1.5 For major developments, a **preliminary Air Quality Assessment** should be carried out before designing the development to inform the design process. The aim of a preliminary assessment is to assess:
- The most significant sources of pollution in the area
 - Constraints imposed on the site by poor air quality
 - Appropriate land uses for the site
 - Appropriate design measures that could be implemented to ensure that development reduces exposure and improves air quality.
- 9.1.6 **Further assessments** should then be carried out as the design evolves to ensure that impacts from emissions are prevented or minimised as far as possible, and to fully quantify the expected effect of any proposed mitigation measures, including the cumulative effect where other nearby developments are also underway or likely to come forward.
- 9.1.7 **Assessment of the impacts** of a scheme on local air pollution should include fixed plant, such as boiler and emergency generators, as well as expected transport-related sources. The impact assessment part of an Air Quality Assessment should always include all relevant pollutants. Industrial, waste and other working sites may need to include on-site vehicles and mobile machinery as well as fixed machinery and transport sources.
- 9.1.8 The impact assessment should provide decision makers with sufficient information to understand the **scale and geographic scope of any detrimental,**

¹⁴⁸ Air Quality Standards Regulations, 2010 (or subsequent revisions thereof), <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1001/contents/made>

¹⁴⁹ Land-Use Planning & Development Control: Planning for Air Quality, Institution of Air Quality Management, 2017, <http://www.iaqm.co.uk/text/guidance/air-quality-planning-guidance.pdf>. This guidance indicates that even very small impacts on ambient air quality cannot be considered 'negligible' where existing levels are within 5% of limits.