

22 April 2012

## Guide to solutions

**Mayoral election: Boris Johnson caught reducing health protections for Londoners**

**Vote for Jenny Jones (Green) or Brian Paddick (Liberal Democrat); and give your second preference to Ken Livingstone (Labour). Boris Johnson offers no new policies to reduce air pollution and has shown he does not understand the health impacts**

Perhaps in a first for the leader of a world city, Boris Johnson has been caught actively working to undermine the two measures most likely to protect the health of Londoners and address the biggest public health risk after smoking. In particular, he is actively suppressing public awareness of air pollution while orchestrating a major campaign, behind the scenes with the Government, to weaken UK and international air quality laws. With no new policies and these two discoveries, Boris Johnson scores minus two and ranks last

Jenny Jones, Ken Livingstone and Brian Paddick have all condemned the use by Boris Johnson of the Pollution Suppressor by official air quality monitors. These monitors are used to warn the public of smog episodes and report legal breaches

Other issues that must be addressed by the next Mayor include: air pollution in the London Underground; harmful emissions from buildings and within them; and ensuring air quality laws are fully complied with during the London 2012 Olympics

**CAL congratulates The Green Party, Labour Party and Liberal Democrats for giving proper consideration to air pollution in their Mayoral and London Assembly campaigns**

London needs to address 'invisible' air pollution as the [biggest cause of early deaths after smoking](#).

On 2 February 2012, Clean Air in London (CAL) [published](#) its [manifesto](#) for the Mayoral and London Assembly elections which set out the steps needed to address the biggest public health crisis for decades. The manifesto argues that through a mixture of political will, behavioural change and technology London can lead the world in tackling air pollution as it did after the Great Smog of 1952.

CAL's manifesto describes five themes, 12 key policy areas and 45 measures to reduce dangerous airborne particles (PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>) and/or nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and ensure full compliance with air quality laws that are breached by a factor of [two or more](#) near London's busiest roads. These are:

- **Lead the fight to improve London's air** by championing the tightening of health and legal protections, ensuring good governance and improving public understanding of poor air quality
- **Clean up London's transport** by reducing traffic emissions, cleaning up the public transport system, reducing emissions from non-road mobile machinery and supporting active travel
- **Build a low emission city** by using planning powers and other opportunities to reduce emissions from buildings and improve indoor air quality

- **Protect the most vulnerable** through a focus on children, the elderly, the poor and ethnic minorities
- **Ensure a legacy from the Olympic Games** by delivering a low emission Olympics and more

Underpinning these themes are several principles. First: ‘The London Matrix’ which shows that by complying fully with air quality laws in London (or any large city) it is possible to show the world how to tackle wider air pollution, climate change and sustainability issues in all big cities. Second: ‘The London Circles’ which are two overlapping circles representing traffic measures to address congestion and harmful emissions with each offering secondary benefits for the other. Third: ‘The London Principle’ which states it may be necessary to accept a 1% increase in carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions to achieve a 10% reduction in harmful emissions (and vice versa). Fourth: sustainable solutions require emissions to be reduced at source; off-setting measures are never sound since they do not stop human exposure to harmful emissions and sooner or later they have no effect.

CAL’s analysis of the Mayoral manifestos focused on their commitments to reduce air pollution over the next four years including statements and actions during the election campaign. Only Boris Johnson offers no new policies. In general, the other main candidates have aligned their policies with CAL’s manifesto and prioritised: (i) leadership to address poor air quality; (ii) cleaning up the bus fleet; (iii) a new approach to low emission zones (LEZs); (iv) improving suburban rail services; and (v) supporting cycling. More specifically, the issues that distinguish the candidates include:

#### Jenny Jones (Green)

The [Greens](#) have made the most strident commitment to air quality, stating that they will ‘comply with air quality laws, urgently developing plans to meet this commitment whether the Government plays its part or not’. Only the Greens make a commitment to address immediately emissions from buses promising to ‘retrofit all buses immediately if technology is shown to work’. The Greens will ‘ensure that all new buses are low emission hybrid, hydrogen or electric models within one year of being elected and that the entire fleet runs on this technology by 2016’. The Greens and Liberal Democrats want a new approach to LEZs and advocate an additional smaller LEZ for central London. The Greens also advocate an additional LEZ around Heathrow. Only the Greens specifically mention working with the Government to reduce emissions from trains.

#### Brian Paddick (Liberal Democrat)

The [Liberal Democrats](#) will ‘revise the Air Quality Strategy to set out exactly what needs to be done and by whom to achieve clean, healthy air for Londoners’. While Labour and the Greens have produced proposals to electrify the London bus fleet, the Liberal Democrats have made a very convincing case for their ‘Big Switch’ to move London’s bus, taxi and public service vehicles to battery electric propulsion. The Liberal Democrats and Greens want a new approach for LEZs and advocate an additional smaller LEZ for central London. The Liberal Democrats, Greens and Labour support measures to make cycling safer and more attractive. All three want to expand London’s network of ‘Greenways’ and support London boroughs to expand 20 mph zones in residential areas.

#### Ken Livingstone (Labour)

[Labour](#) will engage directly with the European Commission ‘to agree a plan for how London can meet European air quality standards’. Labour has made a commitment to run a trial of battery electric

buses that use induction (i.e. wireless) charging. Labour wants to establish 'Clean Air Zones' around schools. Labour, Greens and Liberal Democrats support measures to make cycling safer and more attractive. They all want to expand London's network of 'Greenways' and support London boroughs to expand 20 mph zones in residential areas.

## Boris Johnson (Conservative)

Astonishingly, [Boris Johnson](#) has no new policies in his manifestos to reduce air pollution. The Conservatives (mistakenly) downplay air quality as a significant problem for London and include it in their economy manifesto. Mayor Johnson demonstrates his lack of understanding of the issues by promising to 'continue a 100% congestion charge discount for low emission vehicles so there is a real financial incentive for Londoners to drive the cleanest vehicles available' when it is a measure aimed at reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions that increases the number of vehicles entering the zone and encourages those producing the most harmful emissions i.e. diesel. In a separate [media release](#), Boris Johnson's campaign team claims Stockholm and Zurich have worse air quality than London which is laughable if it did not show such a serious lack of understanding. Boris Johnson has also confirmed his commitment to measures at PM<sub>10</sub> hotspots which include using the Pollution Suppressor in front of air quality monitoring stations (despite this being condemned by the three other candidates).

With no new policies, Boris Johnson has been given a negative score because he has been caught:

- Actively suppressing public awareness of air pollution
- Using the [Pollution Suppressor](#) in front of the air quality monitors most-used to warn the public during smog episodes and report legal breaches; and
- Failing to warn people during [smog episodes](#) even when [healthy people](#) may be at risk.
- Actively campaigning, with the Government, to weaken UK and international air quality laws
- [Helped establish](#) an organisation involving other 11 European regions to weaken air pollution laws
- [Lobbying to weaken](#) air pollution laws including through the media
- [Refusing to disclose](#) details of his communications with other lobbying [European regions](#)

Boris Johnson is being supported by the Government in both negative activities. More particularly, the Government has: confirmed its support for the use of the [Pollution Suppressor](#) and issued a [non-smog alert](#) on 3 April in response to [media concern](#) on the [issue](#) and; and stated it will 'use the European Commission [review of air quality legislation](#), expected in 2013, to seek amendments to the Air Quality Directive which reduce the infraction risk faced by most Member States, especially in relation to nitrogen dioxide provisions' (page 7).

After a detailed analysis of the manifestos for the Mayoral election, CAL encourages voters to: choose Jenny Jones (Green) (who scored nine out of 10) or Brian Paddick (Liberal Democrat) (eight out of ten); and give their second preference to Ken Livingstone (Labour) (seven out of 10). Boris Johnson (Conservative) scored minus two out of 10 and ranks last.

Other issues that must still be addressed by the next Mayor include: air pollution in the London Underground; harmful emissions from buildings and within them; and ensuring air quality laws are fully complied with during the London 2012 Olympics.

There is a stark choice for Londoners on 3 May. At its simplest, all the candidates, except Boris Johnson, would warn Londoners about smog episodes not use the Pollution Suppressor in front of official air quality monitors. Vote for change if you want clean air in London.

*This is the third in a series of six articles being written for Politics Home by Simon Birkett, Founder and Director of Clean Air in London, about air quality in the lead up to the London 2012 Olympics. The six articles will address [health impacts](#), [legal issues](#), [sources](#), [solutions and opportunities](#); indoor air quality; and the Olympics.*

<http://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/99482/response/289680/attach/html/3/2012%2006%2018%20IR%20response.pdf.html>

[CAL 187 AIR position paper](#)