

Press release: Government approves Nottingham's air quality plan

The Government today announced it has approved Nottingham City Council's new plan to tackle air pollution in Nottingham city centre.

For the past three years, the council has been working with officials from Defra and the Department for Transport to identify measures to reduce levels of pollution in the shortest possible time and deliver compliance with legal air quality limits.

The plans were assessed by government officials and cleared by Ministers who have issued a Ministerial Direction for the plan to be implemented. Nottingham is the first local authority to have their air quality plan approved as part of the government's wider £3.5bn plan to tackle harmful emissions from road transport across the country.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

I am delighted to approve Nottingham City Council's new air quality plan. Air pollution is the top environmental risk to health in the UK and these government-funded plans will clean up the air in the city centre, protecting residents and visitors alike.

The plans have been finalised thanks to hard work and collaboration – a brilliant example of what can be achieved when local and national government work together towards a common goal.

We will continue to work with local authorities across the UK to improve the quality of the air we breathe.

Nottingham's plan will see the council improving air quality by:

- Retrofitting 171 buses with technology to reduce emissions, funded through the Government's Clean Bus Technology Fund;
- Changing the age and emissions policy for hackney carriages and supporting an increase in low emission taxis. £1m from government will be used to provide a licensing discount for drivers, a taxi rank with charging points, fund home chargers and expand the council's 'try before you buy' scheme, which started this week
- In addition, Nottingham City Council has received funding from the Government to support the conversion of its own fleet, including replacing heavy, high polluting vehicles such as bin lorries with electric vehicles.

Councillor Sally Longford, Portfolio Holder for Energy and Environment, said:

We worked hard on a plan that would reduce air pollution in the shortest possible time for our citizens, and we're thrilled this has now been agreed, along with nearly £1m funding for extra measures to support taxi drivers.

We're looking forward to progressing these schemes to clean up the city's buses and taxis, building on our strong track record in improving air quality through investment in sustainable transport, such as the electric tram, our award-winning electric and biogas bus fleets and cycle network.

Air pollution is a significant threat to public health today, and road transport emissions are a big part of that. We're confident we can deliver our plan and go even further to improve the quality of the air in our city.

While Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) levels have fallen significantly in recent decades, including a 27% drop since 2010, The UK Plan for Tackling Roadside Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations outlines how councils with the worst levels of air pollution at busy road junctions and hotspots must take action. Due to the highly localised nature of the problem, local knowledge is crucial in solving pollution problems in these hotspots. This is why local authorities, like Nottingham City Council, take the lead on developing air quality plans, with support and funding from central government.

Work continues on air quality plans in towns and cities across the rest of the UK. Final plans have also been received from Birmingham and Leeds, while 33 other local authorities are still working to develop theirs. Once their plans are finalised and approved by Defra and DfT Ministers, the government will ensure sufficient funding is in place for the agreed measures.

The government is also taking wider action to tackle air pollution:

- Our new world leading Clean Air Strategy which was welcomed by the World Health Organisation sets out how we aim to halve the harm to human health from air pollution in the UK by 2030.
- Through our new Road to Zero Strategy we have set out our ambition for the UK to be the best place in the world to develop and manufacture zero emission vehicles, consulting on plans for every new home and lamppost to be equipped with an electric vehicle charge point.
- We will introduce new legislation to give local government new powers to take decisive action in areas with an air pollution problem.
- We will ensure only the cleanest home burning fuels will be available for sale and only the cleanest stoves will be available to buy and install.
- For the first time, we will take concerted action to tackle ammonia emissions from farming by requiring and supporting farmers to invest in the infrastructure and equipment that will reduce emissions.
- By ending the sale of conventional new diesel and petrol cars and vans from 2040, the UK is going further than almost every other European nation.

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Nottingham City Council's plans to improve air quality have been approved by government

Speech: PM statement in Downing Street: 22 November 2018

Throughout these difficult and complex negotiations with the European Union I have had one goal in mind: to honour the vote of the British people and deliver a good Brexit deal.

Last week we achieved a decisive breakthrough when we agreed with the European Commission the terms for our smooth and orderly exit from the EU.

Alongside that withdrawal agreement we published an outline political declaration setting out the framework for our future relationship.

Last night in Brussels, I had a good, detailed discussion with President Juncker in which I set out what was needed in that political declaration to deliver for the United Kingdom.

We tasked our negotiating teams to continue working overnight and as a result, the text of that declaration has been agreed between the European Union and the United Kingdom.

I have just updated the Cabinet on progress and I will be making a statement to the House of Commons later this afternoon.

This is the right deal for the UK.

It delivers on the vote of the referendum. It brings back control of our borders, our money and our laws. And it does so while protecting jobs, protecting our security and protecting the integrity of the United Kingdom. The agreement we've reached is between the UK and the European Commission – it is now up to the 27 leaders of the other EU member states to examine this agreement in the days leading up to the special EU Council meeting on Sunday.

I will be speaking to my counterparts over that time, including meeting Chancellor Kurz of Austria here in Downing Street later today.

Last night I spoke to the Spanish Prime Minister, Pedro Sánchez, and I am confident that on Sunday we will be able to agree a deal that delivers for the whole UK family, including Gibraltar.

On Saturday I will return to Brussels for further meetings with President Juncker where we will discuss how to bring this process to a conclusion in the interest of all our people.

The British people want this to be settled. They want a good deal that sets us on course for a brighter future. That deal is within our grasp and I am determined to deliver it.

[Speech: OPCW conference statement on the review of chemical weapons](#)

I congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election, and also offer the United Kingdom's warm appreciation for all that Ambassador Puja has done to prepare for this Conference.

I also congratulate Director General Arias on his appointment and can assure him of the UK's support. Mr. Chairman, the United Kingdom fully supports the statement made by the European Union, and I'll tell you why.

Historical use of CW

This month I joined millions around the globe in commemorating the centenary of the end of the First World War. It was humanity's collective revulsion at the use of chemical weapons in that war that eventually led to the creation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Three years ago, one hundred years after the first significant chemical weapons attack in Ypres, all of the countries represented here today met at the scene of that battle and made a declaration. We all declared that any use of chemical weapons was not only immoral but illegal. Likewise, we all expressed our strong conviction that anyone found to have used such weapons should be held to account.

Recent use of CW

The United Kingdom's conviction on this remains absolute. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of all those who were present three years ago.

The tragic reality is that chemical weapons have been used repeatedly in the five years since the last Conference. Hundreds have been killed in chemical attacks in Syria and Iraq. One person was killed in Malaysia last year; and this year a Novichok nerve agent was used to deadly effect in my own country,

the United Kingdom.

This Conference must acknowledge the facts of those attacks, and the OPCW's excellent work in investigating the hundreds of reports of chemical weapons use in Syria. Because not doing so risks undermining the central purpose of the Convention, and would betray the efforts of our predecessors, who tried so hard to ensure that no-one else would suffer the horrific effects of chemical weapons.

Priorities for the OPCW

So, the priority for the OPCW must be to prevent any further use. This means that we have to ensure that States stick to the rules. We must also make clear to the potential users of chemical weapons – whether they be states or terrorist groups – that they will not get away with it: the OPCW can and will respond.

In order to do so, it is essential that the OPCW can always call on the most talented people and the best laboratories to track down violators. It also means we should update the Convention to add Novichoks to the schedules. And it means that the Organisation needs to keep up with the astonishing advances we see in science and technology so as to prevent their misuse, that means that we need to promote responsible research.

We were proud to join our fellow States Parties who voted overwhelmingly on Tuesday for a new OPCW budget, which included funding to identify the perpetrators of chemical weapons attacks in Syria. We welcome funding to improve the Organisation's cyber security so as to protect the information it holds from the range of threats it faces, which we saw just last month. And so we, the United Kingdom, are glad to pledge one million pounds to help the OPCW attribute responsibility for chemical attacks, modernise its laboratory, and assist states in implementing the Convention.

As we have shown by our own actions, the UK will not turn a blind eye to chemical weapons attacks, whether in Syria or in the UK. We look forward to the conclusions of the Fact-Finding Mission after its extensive investigation into the horrific attack in Douma. And the OPCW must promptly begin its own attribution work, as agreed. As so many countries have shown this week, supporting OPCW attribution is not about choosing sides in big power politics, it is about restoring the global taboo against chemical weapons.

The UK is playing an active part in discussions at this Conference and in work to strengthen the implementation of the Convention in the years ahead. In the face of today's threats, we must all reaffirm our shared commitment to work together to achieve the core objective of the Convention – we must prevent the use of weapons that were already deemed abhorrent one hundred years ago. Such weapons have no place in the 21st century. If we all work together, we can ensure that they are never used again.

Press release: Manufacturing of life-enhancing medicines boosted by new government funding

Patients could receive faster treatment following boost to streamline the production of medicines and treatments.