



ISLINGTON

REPORT OF THE HEALTH AND CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

HEALTH IMPACTS OF POOR AIR QUALITY SCRUTINY REVIEW



**London Borough of Islington
March 2018**

CHAIR'S FOREWORD

We all know, or we think we know, that pollution and air quality is a problem in health, particularly for inner city dwellers, such as the population of Islington. However, it is sometimes quite complicated to identify the various sources of pollution, and also, to establish some causal relationships between the known pollutants and the health impacts which are held to result from the pollution.

Damage to air quality caused by pollution can emanate anywhere from someone burning wood in their fireplace at home in Islington, through local car journeys, (including dropping off at school) through lorry transport passing through the borough, to pollution clouds from industrial processes in other European countries being blown across Europe, and ending up in the UK. Obviously, the strategies to deal with these differing sources of pollution will vary depending on the source. This scrutiny report focuses on local initiatives that can be actioned locally, with additional recommendations to lobby Central Government on issues such as updating the Clean Air Act, which is woefully out of date.

There are various statistics available that inform the discussion about pollution and air quality: For example, TfL have identified that 95% of NO_x pollutants originate from diesel vehicles, which is a pretty clear direction to tackle this particular issue, especially when, by their own admission, buses contribute 52% of this figure. But then again, whilst there is a very high level of COPD sufferers in Islington, 90% of these cases are due to smoking, which is a very different social issue.

As Chair of the Committee, I think it is appropriate that the recommendations in this report respond pro-rata to the origin of the pollutants, and also the ability of the Council to directly influence the effect of pollutants on residents in the Borough.

I am also conscious that the Environment and Regeneration Committee reported on Air Quality in 2003. We have been mindful of the recommendations made at the time, but also believe that the willingness of society to attempt to deal with the issues has moved on somewhat since then, and whilst a number of recommendations have been met, our report reinforces some of those that have yet to be met, and I think we are at a point where the climate of opinion has changed to the point where we can start to talk much more specifically about issues as the contributing factors to pollution around schools, and the importance of this issue to young children. We are aware that some of the recommendations may not be universally popular.

During the course of the Scrutiny we received a very interesting diversity of witness evidence, and all the witnesses we heard were passionate about the need to improve air quality. To my mind, one of the most pertinent remarks we heard during the course of the scrutiny came from the witness from 'Client Earth,' who are a legally based charity campaigning for environmental improvements, who suggested the view that proposals for environmental improvements 'should not hide behind political and economic considerations.' This is in my view a very useful test to be applied when deciding if a suggested measure should be adopted.

COUNCILLOR MARTIN KLUTE - CHAIR

Health Implications of poor Air Quality Scrutiny Review

Evidence

The review ran from September 2017 until March 2018 and evidence was received from a variety of sources:

1. Presentations from witnesses – Ian Mudway – Kings College, Sam Longman – TfL, Andrea Lee – Client Earth
2. Presentations from council officers – Ian Sandford – Public Health, Paul Clift, Andrew Ford – Environment and Regeneration, Martin Cooijmans – Environment and Regeneration, Phil Wrigley – Islington CCG
3. Documentary evidence – Air Quality Review 2013, Progress report on Air Quality Review Recommendations May 2014

Aim of the Review

To understand the scale and nature of the negative health and wellbeing impacts of poor air quality in Islington, and the effectiveness of current arrangements and measures for tackling poor air quality and its adverse effects on health

Objectives of the Review

- **To understand the relationship between poor air quality and health and wellbeing in general, and specifically the impact of poor air quality on Islington residents' health and wellbeing**
- **To understand the direct benefits of improving air quality in Islington, including the wider health co-benefits of actions being taken to address it, including increased physical activity, reduced obesity, and reduced social isolation**
- **To make recommendations for increasing the impact of local measures to improve health in relation to air quality and make local resources more effective**

The detailed Scrutiny Initiation Document (SID) is set out at Appendix A to the report

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Executive be recommended to -

1. **Car transport:** Roll out electric charging points as speedily as possible across the borough. Continue with the policy of increased parking charges for diesel vehicles. Implement a staged introduction of higher charges for higher polluting vehicles.
2. **Schools:**
 - a. **Parking near schools:** Implement a 'zero tolerance' approach to parking near schools for parents dropping off and picking up children from school, including abolishing the '10 minutes grace' informal rule currently applied, with the only exception being disabled/blue badge holders.
 - b. **Close roads near schools:** At the beginning and end of the school day, as is currently being piloted in Hackney and Camden.
 - c. **Educate parents:** Support schools to educate parents on the health benefits of walking and cycling to school.
 - d. **Air quality monitoring:** Monitor air quality outside all schools (including PM2.5), and use results to leverage Local Safety Scheme funding from TFL, and to support applications for physical environmental improvements.
3. **Through traffic:** Council to investigate a borough-wide neighbourhood cellular zoning policy to both reduce rat-running and overall traffic volumes.
4. **Idling vehicles:** Put up signs in zones where idling is a common problem asking people to switch off their engines. Investigate using Public Space Protection orders to give the Council greater powers to sanction engine idling, and also for the Council to enforce current legislation on engine idling more robustly. (See also recommendation 7 below).
5. **Communications strategy:**
 - a. The Council to develop a communications strategy to inform and engage residents on the implications of poor air quality.
 - b. Promote the use of mobile phone apps eg 'Air text' to advise residents of poor air quality days, and to assist those with respiratory problems.
 - c. Promote the health benefits of active travel, walking, cycling, and the use of public transport.
 - d. Educate residents about dangers of wood burning, open fires, and the impacts on air quality.
 - e. Promote the issue of 'less vehicles as well as less polluting vehicles'.
6. **Officer Forum:** Given that the work on air quality is often fragmented across different Council departments, establish an officer forum in order to more effectively coordinate the work on air quality and the establishment and implementation of new strategies, with Forum proposals being approved by the executive.
7. **Lobby the Government:** Work with other London Boroughs and campaigning organisations to lobby Government to introduce a new Clean Air Act, to include car tax penalties for diesel engines, a scrappage scheme to support people to dispose of diesel vehicles, to make engine idling an immediate offence, and to standardise legislation to include Canals and Waterways.
8. **Mayor of London's Clean Air Strategy:** Support the Mayor's strategy in order to improve air quality and to reduce traffic, and to urge the Mayor to support additional funding for schemes to improve air quality in Islington.

9. **Whittington NHS Trust:** Islington CCG and NHS Trusts should ensure that energy efficiency is considered and implemented, wherever possible, in all future proposals and strategies for the Whittington NHS Trust, and as already identified in their current Estates Strategy.
10. **Health and Wellbeing Board policies:** HWB to incorporate air quality considerations into its future policies, given the impact of poor air quality on health and the costs of the provision of services to deal with combating respiratory diseases

MAIN FINDINGS

- 1) The Committee considered an initial presentation at its meeting on 14 September 2017, from officers in Public Health and Environment and Regeneration, in relation to the scrutiny review
- 2) The Committee were informed that air pollution is a gas or a solid, dispersed through ordinary air, that is released in a big enough quantity to harm the health of people or animals. Air Pollution can also kill plants or stop them growing, damage or disrupt some aspect of the environment, or cause some other kind of nuisance. It is the quantity of or concentration of the chemicals in the air that makes the difference between harmless and polluted air
- 3) The Committee were also informed that particulates are sooty deposits in the air that blacken buildings and cause breathing difficulties. In London, and most particulates come from traffic fumes, brake and tyre wear and increasingly wood burning. Most worrying is the fine PM 2.5 and ultrafine PM1 particulate matter, as these can enter deep into the lungs and into the bloodstream. Particulates of different sizes are referred to by the letters PM followed by a number, so PM10 means particles of less than 10 microns.
- 4) The south of the borough is the most polluted, and 60% of the borough is over EU limits. Every Islington school is near an area of high pollution
- 5) Another major source of pollutants are nitrogen oxides, NOx, and both nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), and nitrogen oxide (NO) are gas pollutants, made as a result of burning, when nitrogen and oxygen react together. Islington's NOx emissions are by type – major roads 43%, minor roads 6%, domestic gas 13%, commercial gas 17%, NRMM 2%, industry 1%, and other 18%.
- 6) At ground level, ozone – O₃, is also a toxic pollutant that can damage health. It forms when sunlight strikes a cocktail of other pollution and is a key ingredient of smog
- 7) The Committee also received the previous report carried out by the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee into Air Quality in 2013/14, and the Committee noted that the Council has been active in work to improve air quality in the borough. Further measures are challenging to deliver, as many sources of pollution are from outside Islington, or from traffic passing through
- 8) Poor air quality impacts from early life and before birth. High levels of PM_{2.5} are associated with low birth weight, and children are particularly at risk, due to immaturity of their respiratory organ systems. Infants have a high metabolic rate, so they breathe a greater volume of air per minute than an adult, relative to their size, and infants are also within greater proximity to air pollution source, such as vehicle exhausts
- 9) Research into early exposure to air pollution highlights the effects on lung function and respiratory infections, asthma exacerbation, cognitive development, and the development of the brain and co-ordination. There is some evidence that air pollution plays a part in causing asthma, but more definitive research is needed to establish this link
- 10) The Committee were informed that PM_{2.5} is attributable to mortality equivalent to 88 deaths in Islington, and NO₂ to 164 deaths in Islington. There is an estimated overlap of 30% of the effects on PM_{2.5} and NO₂, underlying the need to reduce both

- 11) The Committee noted that often deaths are attributed to heart or respiratory disease, however, air pollution exacerbates heart and lung conditions, which hasten death. The above deaths represent an average of 8.9 months lost attributable to PM2.5, and 4.8 months attributable to NO2 across all deaths, although these will be greater for people who die of heart or lung disease
- 12) Short term effects of poor air quality include increased deaths and hospital admissions in London. as a result of PM2.5 emissions. This results in 818 deaths being brought forward, there are 2072 respiratory hospital admissions, and also 769 cardiovascular hospital admissions. As a result of NO2, 461 deaths are brought forward, and there are 419 respiratory hospital admissions. There are no estimates available on a local Borough level
- 13) The Committee are of the view, that given the evidence that the absorption of small, particulate matter, especially PM2.5, is extremely harmful to residents, especially young children, whose lungs are still developing, consideration should be given to measuring these emissions, and any appropriate action that should be taken. Measurement around schools is particularly important
- 14) Other impacts on health and wellbeing include time off school or work due to illness, the economic impact of long term health conditions, including loss of earnings, and increased costs of keeping the home warmer for longer. It also acts as a deterrent to people engaging in physical and/or social activities, particularly amongst people with existing conditions, and poor air quality also impacts negatively on self-reported wellbeing
- 15) Whilst the entire population is exposed to air pollution, the health impacts of this exposure are experienced much more commonly in vulnerable people, particularly those people with pre-existing heart and respiratory conditions
- 16) It is interesting to note that in a study, the most deprived 20% of areas in London, had 8.6% more PM10, compared to the least deprived 20%, and 8.1% more than NOx in 2001, the most recent high resolution air quality data available to the study authors
- 17) Areas of London with more than 20% of non-white residents had 6.6% more PM10, compared with areas with less than 20% non-white residents and 8.1% more NO2 in the 2001 study
- 18) Local programmes to improve air quality include, a combination of policies agreed at a national level, such as vehicle and fuel taxes, policies to promote uptake of cleaner technologies. There are also city wide policies such as congestion charging and low emission zones, in addition to investment in public transport. At borough level, local travel infrastructure parking policy has been influencing trends to date, and will continue to do so. The impact of such policies is a cumulative one in the improvement of air quality
- 19) The improvement of air quality can include measures, such as the promotion of active travel and public transport, higher parking charges for the most polluting vehicles, energy efficiency schemes to help reduce NOx from boilers, electric charging points along Regents Canal, idling action, and low and zero emission networks

- 20) The Committee were informed that the Healthy Streets initiative is the Mayor's framework of 10 indicators for healthy streets, including local borough streets. The approach aims to encourage everyone to walk, cycle and use public transport, reduce road danger and tackle air quality and noise, reduce car dependency, improve the environment, and deliver an accessible and inclusive transport system
- 21) Local programmes to mitigate poor air quality also include AIRTEXT, which forecasts high pollution, in order to enable subscribers to take action to avoid exposure or reduce the impact of exposure. In addition, there are GP and hospital services available for early diagnosis, and better management of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), and the Whittington Health also has an asthma kite mark scheme in schools, which supports better management of the condition. Air Quality learning in schools, forms part of KS2 learning, and there are also planning policies in place to limit air pollution from developments
- 22) The Committee noted that there are barriers and challenges to further improvements in air pollution. These include air pollution sources outside the Council's control, such as transboundary, international, national, and regional sources through traffic, and diesel sources, such as freight, buses and taxis. Air Quality is a cross cutting issue, which impacts on multiple and diverse policy issues across the Council. There is a need to improve and target public awareness and change attitudes, and in addition, more funding and resources need to be provided, in order to develop new initiatives and apply enforcement effectively
- 23) The Committee at its meeting on 12 October 2017, received evidence from Ian Mudway of Kings College, in relation to the health implications of poor air quality
- 24) The Committee were informed that, in addition to air pollution caused by diesel emissions, car pollutants also included things like brake and tyre wear, resuspension of road dust, particulate matter, oxides of nitrogen, carbon monoxide, ultrafine particles, black carbon soot. metal and such other pollutants
- 25) There is now a significant evidence base, in order to identify the effects on health of pollution, and that it affects the quality of life, and increases the vulnerability of members of the population to illness and premature death
- 26) Pollution can cause inflammation, impaired lung function, injury/remodelling, (part of the healing process), impaired microbial defences, blood viscosity, and promotes atherosclerosis, impaired vascular function, ischaemia and arrhythmias
- 27) The recent results of a pollution survey have shown that air pollution PM2.5, results in 29000 premature deaths each year, across the UK, 4300 of these in Greater London, with significant associated costs. The effects of air pollution of young children, whose lungs are developing, and are smaller to be able to cope with the effects of pollution, can cause problems later in life with illness and premature death
- 28) There is evidence that improving air quality delivers measurable health benefits, and that health benefits would increase if people avoided busy roads, and the pollution that they contain. Drivers needed to be made aware that when sitting in traffic jams in their cars, they are inhaling a combination of toxic pollutants

- 29) The Committee also heard evidence that wood burning stoves are also a contributor to air pollution and we felt that residents should be educated about the dangers of wood burning stoves in terms of air quality, and that they should be encouraged to use DEFRA approved wood burning stoves
- 30) The Committee also noted that there needed to be a behaviour shift, and that people needed to be encouraged to walk and to cycle more. There were many unnecessary journeys made by car, and that journeys of under 1km by car should be discouraged. Some Local Authorities restrict town car parking spaces, and this encourages people to take public transport, walk or cycle
- 31) The Committee were also informed, that because the effects of pollution were more detrimental to young people, and whilst schools could not change where they were located, they could be encouraged to take additional measures, such as the installation of air filters, which would improve air quality, and also to take other appropriate measures
- 32) The Committee noted evidence that it was felt that people should be encouraged to change behaviour, however this is often not always particularly effective, especially in the short term, and that often it was more effective to impose regulation. However, the Committee were pleased to note that air quality has slowly started to improve in London, as a result of measures taken over a number of years to reduce pollution
- 33) Reference was also made to the air quality on the London Underground and that discussion were taking place with TfL, as to a possible investigation into the air quality on the London Underground
- 34) The Committee at its meeting on 14 December 2017 considered evidence from TfL, in relation to measures that were being taken/proposed by the Mayor of London
- 35) The Mayor's London's strategy sets out a strategy for London Transport until 2041, and consultation has already taken place, with the final strategy to be published in early 2018
- 36) There are 3 key themes, Healthy Streets and Healthy People, A good Public Transport experience, and New Homes and New Jobs
- 37) By 2041 the aim is for 80% of Londoners trips to be on foot, by cycle or by using London Transport
- 38) The London Plan consultation opened in November 2017, and closes in March 2018. This considers the relationship between land use, planning and transport and is critical to sustainability and improving air quality. The principles of good growth include good access to public transport, high density mixed use developments, people choosing to walk or cycle, car free and car light places, which is inclusive of accessible design, carbon free travel and efficient freight
- 39) Air Pollution is one of the most significant challenges facing London, affecting the health of all Londoners. There are locations in every London Borough that exceed the limits for NO₂. The health impacts associated with air pollution fall disproportionately on the most vulnerable communities, affecting the poorest and those from ethnic minorities more acutely

- 40) The Mayor's clean action plan includes – emission surcharge (T charge), in Central London from October 2017, introducing the ultra- low emission zone sooner and expanding it, cleaner buses, national diesel scrappage scheme, and encouraging the uptake of ultra- low emission vehicles
- 41) The T charge was launched in October 2017, with the same boundary and times as the congestion charge, and has similar exemptions to the congestion charge. There is a £10 surcharge on top of the congestion charge, and the charge will apply to all Euro 4 vehicles, (broadly equivalent to vehicles from 2005 and older), and is an important stepping stone towards the ultra- low emission zone
- 42) There has been a 30 per cent fall in the number of non- compliant vehicles in the congestion charging zone since the announcement, and there are around 1000 fewer vehicles per day, with around 2000 vehicles per day paying the charge.
- 43) The impact of the proposals will be that in 2020 there will be a 21% reduction in road transport NOx emissions in inner London, and 19% in outer London, London wide a total of 19%
- 44) By 2021, the combined impact of the proposals will mean there would be a 31% reduction in road transport emissions in inner London, 28% in outer London and 28% London wide. By 2025, the combined impact of the proposals is forecast to be a 24% reduction in road transport NOx in inner London, 21% in outer London and 21% London wide. All reductions are compared to baseline i.e. Central London Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) only
- 45) The changes in concentrations by 2021 will result generally in a 5-10% reduction in concentration levels at roadside, but up to 20% in some locations and a 64% reduction in road km exceeding NO2 limit values
- 46) The impact on population exposure will mean over 100,000 fewer people living in areas exceeding NO2 limits London wide in 2021, a 77% reduction London wide, 96% in outer London, and 71% fewer schools in areas exceeding legal limits in 2021. Other measures to be introduced include single decker buses in central London, having to meet minimum Euro V1 standard in 2019, and be all electric or hydrogen in 2020. Double decker buses in Central London will also need to be Euro V1 hybrids by 2019, and there will be 12 Low Emission bus zones implemented, tackling the worst pollution hotspots by concentrating cleaner buses on the dirtiest streets
- 47) Only hybrid or zero emission double deck buses will be procured from 2018, and the Euro V refit programme will be expanded from over 800 to 4000 buses, to achieve a Euro V1 standard fleet by 2020
- 48) The Committee noted that TfL are using licensing measures to reduce emissions from the taxi and private hire fleets, and to increase the number of vehicles operating with zero emissions. Both fleets will be entirely Zero Emission Capable (ZEC) by 2033
- 49) The Low Emission Zone delivery plan, a go ultra-low city scheme, local environment networks, neighbourhoods of the future, Lo City, car clubs, zero emission capable taxis, increasing rail capacity and improving quality, and more walking and cycling will all contribute to reducing air pollution

- 50) Bold action will however be required to achieve 100% zero emission road transport, and for the whole of the London fleet to be zero emission at tailpipe by 2050. Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEV's), need to represent 100% of vehicle sales by 2040 at the latest
- 51) The ULEZ starts in April 2019, expanding into Inner London, and increases the charges in relation to emission standards. The discounts and exemptions are very limited and in line with the Low Emission Zone, and blue badge holders do not get a 100% discount, unlike the T-charge. There is a 'sunset period', a time limited exemption for residents, and also for the disabled and disabled passenger tax class vehicles
- 52) A London wide zero emission zone by 2050, would likely be required to drive full conversion and a slower transition of heavy vehicles, as zero emission solutions are developed, and this may require a significant intervention to achieve full transition. This will mean an expansion up to the North and South Circular roads
- 53) The Committee were informed that the next steps were the statutory consultation on the proposal to expand the ULEZ. The Mayoral decision will take place in Spring 2018, and then further work on developing what comes after the ULEZ, e.g. zero emission zones will be considered
- 54) The Committee supported the Mayor's Clean Air strategy in order to improve air quality and to reduce traffic, and urges the Mayor to support additional funding for schemes to improve air quality in Islington
- 55) The Committee also received evidence in relation to the work taking place in Islington, in order to improve air quality. It was stated that the Council faced challenges, including a reduction in TfL's funding, and it was also noted that the LIP funding, which is allocated to the borough, did not favour Islington, as it is a small borough, and has less roads than other boroughs. However, the Council were endeavouring to raise the issue of funding with TfL
- 56) The Committee were of the view however, that further measures are needed to reduce air pollution, and the Council need to work with other London Boroughs, TfL and the GLA to improve air quality. There is also a need to improve how different Council departments and different teams work together to improve air quality and make necessary recommendations to the Council. It would be beneficial, as the work on air quality is currently fragmented across departments, for an officer Forum to be established to more fully develop and co-ordinate the work on air quality, and for the establishment of new strategies
- 57) The Committee noted that Islington's core strategy is to reduce health inequalities, encourage active travel, and have car free developments and this strategy is currently under review. In addition, the Street Book supplementary planning document is shaping the public realm, in order to promote active travel
- 58) Islington's transport strategy is to reduce negative transport related health impacts, particularly noise, NOx and particulate emissions. In addition, the Council are attempting to reduce the number of road casualties, reduce the proportion of trips by car and encourage active travel, by creating a walking and cycling friendly environment. The Committee noted that the transport strategy is currently under review

- 59) The Committee also noted that the Council's response to the Mayor's Transport strategy is to support the objective to have a zero carbon London by 2050, to request an interim target of diesel free London by 2025, faster transition to cleaner taxis, and the electrification of all rail lines in London
- 60) The Committee heard evidence that higher charges for polluting diesel vehicles has been introduced by the borough, however they feel that there should be further 'staged' increases for higher polluting diesel vehicles, in order to improve air quality
- 61) In addition, the Council support the Mayor's Transport strategy objective to have a Vision Zero to eliminate road traffic casualties by 2031, to request a London wide 20mph speed limit as standard, and highlight the need for resources to achieve this
- 62) The Council also support the reduction of travel volumes, by encouraging the Healthy Streets approach, and considering a cellular system. In terms of delivery, the Council to date have delivered air quality improvements, by instituting emissions based parking charges for residents, emission based pay and display parking charges, and by installing electric charging points. In addition, there is a 20mph speed limit on all borough roads, cycle training and driver training for fleet and HGV
- 63) The Committee were pleased to note that there has been a reduction in traffic growth, despite the population of the borough increasing, due to the Council's car free policy, car clubs, school travel plans and other initiatives
- 64) The Council has also delivered, or are in the process of delivering, a number of initiatives, including on air quality with the Zero Emissions Network (ZEN) and Low Emissions Neighbourhood (LEN), the Archway and City Fringe scheme, sensitive streets, and electric vehicle charging points. With regard to safer streets, the Council has improved cycle infrastructure, gyratory removals, cycle training, road safety education programmes/school travel plans, traffic management/road safety programmes (LIP), and Healthy Streets. There is also a quiet way between Farringdon Road and Finsbury Park, 12 play streets and cycle parking and secure bike hangers
- 65) The next steps for the Council will be to institute what is likely to be a new transport strategy for Islington, following on from the final Mayor's Transport strategy, which will include zero carbon/air quality targets, vision zero accident reduction, and a healthy streets approach, active travel and further reductions in traffic volumes. In addition, in relation to air quality, there will be a further electric vehicle charging points 'roll out', car clubs electrification, and increased take up, and reduction of emissions from Islington Council's vehicle fleet
- 66) The Committee are of the view that the 'roll out' of electric charging point should continue as speedily as possible, and also the policy of increased parking charges for diesel vehicles and that there should be a staged introduction of higher charges for the higher polluting vehicles
- 67) Major schemes are taking place at the moment to improve air quality and the environment in the borough and these include Clerkenwell Green, Old Street roundabout, Highbury Corner, Kings Cross gyratory, Finsbury Park/Nags Head, Holloway Road, and a cycle network including Old Street and Clerkenwell Road

- 68) The Committee were informed that physical exercise, even in areas with poor air quality is beneficial, and that being in a car, results in high pollution rates for drivers and passengers, especially where there is heavy traffic congestion. The Committee were of the view that a communication strategy should be put in place to better inform residents of the implications of poor air quality. The new strategy should include information on the dangers of air pollution, whilst sitting in heavy traffic, and promote the benefits of walking and cycling and the use of public transport
- 69) In addition, it should include details of applications such as AIRTEXT, LONDON AIR AND CITY TEXT, in order that residents with respiratory conditions can get information on when there are poor air quality days, and also to inform drivers that they should restrict their use/desist from driving on poor air quality days
- 70) The Committee were concerned at the lack of parking enforcement around schools, especially during 'school runs', that contribute to poor air quality, with engines often left idling, and that the Council did not have at present sufficient powers to prevent drivers from leaving their engines idling. The Committee felt that there should be a policy of zero tolerance, rather than the present policy of a 10 minute 'dropping off' period for parents of children, except for disabled/ blue badge holders
- 71) However, the Committee were informed that in April 2009, the Council took a decision, under the Road Traffic Regulations 2002, to enforce statutory engine idling offences in all areas of the borough. To date though, there have been no fixed penalty notices issued for idling. Since July 2014, Islington has carried out targeted enforcement action to tackle engine idling hotspots in the borough, however the existing legislation makes it very difficult to issue a fixed penalty notice for statutory idling. There are currently over 30 officers currently authorised to enforce statutory engine idling offences. However, of these there are 15 compliance officers, who attend reports of idling, and deal with idling hot spots around the borough, as part of their day to day duties
- 72) The law requires authorised officers to give the opportunity to drivers of idling vehicles to turn off their engines before serving a Fixed Penalty Notice. There have been no Fixed Penalty Notices issued to date in the borough, as typically drivers have turned off their engines when requested to, or have driven away. In addition, no persistent offenders have been identified
- 73) The Council does not receive many idling vehicle complaints, but where they are received the Council does respond. As stated earlier, authorised officers work both day and night, and can respond to a variety of environmental issues, including idling engines. The Council also undertake targeted campaigns and proactive enforcement during events (such as Arsenal home matches, or at known hotspots, including bus stands and taxi ranks, or known minicab locations), as part of awareness raising campaigns, such as anti-idling outside schools
- 74) Islington is working with 14 other boroughs, as part of a co-ordinated anti-idling campaign, funded by the Mayor of London and the boroughs. A combination of community volunteers and Council staff take part in idling engine days, asking drivers to switch off, explain the reasons why, and get a commitment from the driver not to leave their engine running when parked in the future. Businesses and other relevant groups are being asked to support the campaign, and areas targeted are selected by the Council e.g. outside schools, construction sites, bus stops etc.

- 75) The Committee were of the view however, that the current policy around schools is hampered by the general provisions in the Traffic Management Orders, and that this states 'that a vehicle may be allowed to wait if the vehicle is waiting for a period not exceeding two minutes, or such longer period as a civil enforcement officer may approve this, to enable a person to board or alight from the vehicle, or load thereon or unload therefrom their personal luggage'
- 76) The Committee noted that previous experience suggests that Adjudicators have in the past found in favour of drivers on appeal, where they give credence to the idea that drivers have the right to leave vehicles unattended, for a 'reasonable' period of time, to escort children to and from school
- 77) The Committee are of the view however, that this issue needs to be addressed, and that there should be zero tolerance of parents being allowed to drop off/ pick up children from school, and also on idling and that representations, where necessary, should be made to the Government in this regard. Stronger enforcement should also take place by the Council, where this is currently allowable. These measures should be included in a new Clean Air Act, and in addition the provision of Public Space Protection Orders should be investigated, as well as a scrappage scheme to support people to dispose of diesel vehicles
- 78) . There should also be measures introduced to close roads around schools at appropriate times, and education programme for parents and the abandonment of the current 10 minutes waiting time policy that the Council currently operates. In addition, there should be measurement of air quality around school premises
- 79) The Committee feel strongly that, as long term exposure to poor air quality, from activities such as idling vehicles, shortens the life of everyone who lives, works and studies in Islington, and action to tackle the source of air pollution is key. Vehicles parked with their engine idling are an unnecessary source of local air pollution. Whilst various methods are employed in Islington, in order to get drivers to switch engines off, there is a real need for long-term change in behaviour, so it does not happen in the first place. The Council has been successful in reducing the idling of vehicles in Islington, through enforcement teams and public information campaigns. However, the Committee reiterate their view that the Government should be requested to introduce more effective legislation in this regard
- 80) The Committee are also of the view that with regard to 'through traffic', an investigation should take place as to a borough wide zoning/cellular policy to reduce traffic volumes by reducing 'rat runs'
- 81) The Committee heard evidence from Client Earth, a campaigning organisation for the improvement of Air Quality, and who had initiated successful legal judgements to enforce the Government to meet Air Quality standards. It was noted that at present, the Government were bound by European Commission legal requirements on clean air, however Brexit may mean a relaxation of regulation by the Government, and this would need to be monitored. Client Earth expressed the view that this was the reason that they felt that a Clean Air Act should be introduced, in order to ensure satisfactory legal measures were in place, and to deal with the improvement of air quality
- 82) Client Earth supported the Mayor of London's clean air strategy, and reiterated that Client Earth were of the view that a new Clean Air Act should be introduced to effectively

deal with the problems caused by poor air quality. Client Earth stated that they were in discussions with the Mayor on this

- 83) Client Earth expressed the view that the Government often delegated responsibility for ensuring air quality measures were undertaken to Local Authorities, who often did not have the relevant powers or funding to be able to implement the measures that they wished to. Whilst the Mayor and London Boroughs could implement measures, there needed to be action from central Government action as well, if air pollution is to be tackled effectively
- 84) Client Earth stated the diesel emissions were the biggest contributor of pollution in London, and that this is now more of a problem, given the encouragement by Government to purchase diesel vehicles in the past
- 85) It was felt that people needed to be encouraged to take public transport, and to walk or cycle to reduce emissions, and it was stated that there is a particular problem with particulates and the levels were above the limits recommended by the World Health Organisation. Client Earth stated that they would like to see ULEV'S extended across all London. In addition, they supported road charging, in order to address the issue of the large number of vehicles using London's road network
- 86) The Committee also received evidence in relation to measures taking place in Islington schools, in order to assist in improving air quality
- 87) The Committee were informed that currently 4 Islington Primary schools have cleaner air quality in their curriculum, and are also studying citizen science. Air Quality monitoring is taking place in 4 schools, and pupils use hand held monitors to measure this and map pollution around their schools. Once these results have been analysed, the Committee were of the view that any measures that need to be taken should be taken, and the possibility of sourcing from the TfL local safety schemes budget should also be looked at
- 88) In addition, the Committee were informed that the Cleaner Air for Finsbury Park and Manor House project involves joint working with Hackney and Haringey, and includes 3 Islington schools with air quality lessons, workshops and citizen science. The 'Save the Walk There', is a production of a 5 and 10 minutes walking map, and there is also involvement in the production of a film on air quality
- 89) Car Free Day 2016 took place in 3 schools with lung function tests, air quality games, a pedal powered cinema showing a short film on sustainable travel, and a get to know your bike session
- 90) Current projects include a School TV Screen Project, running from March 2017- March 2018 in 10 schools, workshops with children producing low pollution walking routes, air quality monitoring outside schools, a TV screen located in the playground, drop off/pick up point, information on air quality etc.
- 91) There is also an anti-idling campaign spreading the message of air pollution, particularly the impacts of keeping a car engine running, and Idling Action London, is an initiative of 15 boroughs. In addition, there is an air quality audit, as part of the Mayor of London's Air Quality Audit Programme, to look at schools in polluted areas, to see how they can reduce pollution, and pupil exposure to it. Prior Weston launched the project with the Mayor, and the air quality audit has now been completed with the results due in March.

Further work proposed includes air quality monitoring outside every school, a road closure pilot outside schools, and implementation of audit recommendations, where possible. Monitoring outside schools will include diffusion tubes, currently at 11 schools, and the diffusion tubes measure nitrogen dioxide NO₂, one of the main pollutants of concern, and these are to be kept in place for a month, before the tubes are changed, and the results analysed. There are also more advanced sensors in some locations, to measure particulate matter

- 92) The Committee were informed that with regard to road closures outside schools, there is a pilot scheme closing roads, during drop off and pick up times, and the next steps are to consult and engage with users, installation, monitoring of impact and adaptations and expansion of the scheme
- 93) The Committee are of the view that the policy of measuring air quality outside schools should continue and that the results should be used to leverage any possible funding from TfL to reduce the effects of air pollution, which could include physical improvements to schools in order to improve air quality, particularly PM_{2.5} particulates
- 94) The Committee also received evidence from Islington CCG, in respect of services available, and issues related to poor air quality. Evidence on prevalence and local health service usage, in relation to respiratory conditions, and in relation to COPD for 2016/17, shows that the reported prevalence of COPD is better than the UK average, and there are lower levels of asthma mortality. However, it should be noted that admissions for COPD and asthma are increasing
- 95) There are no respiratory services directly commissioned to target the effect of air pollution, however there are Locally Commissioned services (LCS) in primary care, for the early diagnosis for COPD/Disease management
- 96) In addition, there are locally commissioned vaccination and immunisation programme, e.g. flu jabs for all patients over 65, and at risk younger patients, community respiratory service etc. There is also an acute exacerbated service and home oxygen service
- 97) In relation to asthma, there is an asthma nurse, working together with local primary and secondary schools, to provide guidance and training on asthma and to support schools to achieve a 'national standard kite mark, increasing awareness, understanding triggers, and reducing stigma. There are also self - management programmes, with pulmonary rehabilitation, long term exercise programmes, and other programmes, together with an integrated Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) service for COPD and diabetes
- 98) There are respiratory interventions and services planned, which include Asthma LCS Primary care, which is upskilling primary care staff, particularly around paediatric asthma, extended consultations, and written care plans with potential for 50% reduction in hospital admissions
- 99) The Committee noted that whilst air pollution does not directly cause COPD or asthma, it does have a significant impact on the experience of living with respiratory disease. The reported evidence of clinician's state that winter is no longer the main source of increased activity in secondary care, and that summer attendances in secondary care have increased

- 100) The key messages of poor air quality are the impact on patients and services, the poor quality of life, and the ability to self-manage and the disempowering effect of exacerbations. These can lead to need for support from services and also support from the voluntary sector
- 101) The Committee also considered evidence that wood burning stoves and open fires also contribution to air pollution and that residents should be informed of the dangers of wood burning stoves and open fires, and the impact that these can have on air quality
- 102) The Committee also considered evidence in relation to the future Whittington Estates strategy that had a focus on improved energy efficiency, and the Committee were of the view that in future, Islington CCG and NHS Trusts, should ensure that energy efficiency is considered, when looking at future strategies and policies
- 103) The Committee are also of the view that the Health and Wellbeing Board should incorporate air quality considerations into its future policies, given the impact of poor air quality on health, and the costs of provision of services to deal with combating respiratory diseases

CONCLUSION

The Committee have taken evidence from a wide variety of sources during the review, and we wish to thank all those outside organisations, partners and Council officers who gave evidence.

The effects of poor air quality, has implications for all of our residents and particularly for the young, whose lungs are still developing and the elderly and those suffering from respiratory diseases.

The Committee have made a series of recommendations, that we feel, both in the short and the long term, in combination with the proposals of TfL, will make Islington and the rest of London a cleaner and healthier place to live and work.

The Government also has a role to play in ensuring Local Authorities have the necessary legislation in place to ensure effective enforcement to improve air quality and we have also made recommendations in this regard

MEMBERSHIP OF THE HEALTH AND CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 2017/18

Martin Klute – Chair
Nurullah Turan – Vice Chair
Michelline Safi-Ngogo
Jilani Chowdhury
Gary Heather
Troy Gallagher
James Court

Co-opted Member:
Bob Dowd – Islington Healthwatch

Substitutes:
Alice Perry
Clare Jeapes
Satnam Gill
Angela Picknell

Janna Witt/Philip Watson – Islington Healthwatch

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Peter Moore – Democratic Services
Lead officer/s- Julie Billett/Ian Sandford – Public Health and Paul Clift – Environment and Regeneration

APPENDIX A

SCRUTINY INITIATION DOCUMENT

How the review will be conducted:

Scope: The review will look at the issue of poor air quality and its impact on health and wellbeing

Types of evidence to be assessed:

- National and local data on
 - a. Scale and location of poor air quality in Islington, including information on the different pollutants, severity etc., as well as the limitations of what is known.
 - b. Health and wellbeing impacts of poor air quality, including understanding evidence of causation and association.
 - c. Overview of local programmes and interventions to improve air quality in Islington, and information on their impact and effectiveness.
 - d. Overview of the health co-benefits of improving air quality, including increased physical activity, reduced prevalence of obesity, reduced social isolation, school absences etc.
 - e. Progress on the recommendations of the Air Quality Review scrutiny carried out by the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee in 2013
- Witness evidence from a range of relevant individuals and organisations
 - a. LBI
 - i. Public Health (health impacts, effective interventions, JSNA/HWB)
 - ii. Clinical Commissioning Managers (interventions, policy initiatives, targeted groups)
 - iii. Environmental Health (trends, apportionment, air quality projects, policy)
 - iv. Transport Planning (local implementation plan, traffic schemes e.g. Archway, modal shift)
 - v. Education (absenteeism due to poor air quality – HeadTeachers; school awareness campaigns incl. school gate engine idling – LBI School Travel Plan Officer/Public Protection)
 - vi. airTEXT
 - b. External partners - from
 - i. King's College London (Ian Mudway/Frank Kelly – also from COMEAP)
 - ii. Imperial College London (Audrey de Nazelle – modal shift & health)
 - iii. Representatives from Local GP consortia or Health/MedicalCentres
 - iv. Transport for London (Public Health – Lucy Saunders)
 - v. Whittington Health (CV & respiratory health overview, ie, Asthma kite mark in schools)
 - vi. Breathe Easy Groups
 - vii. Business engagement (ZEN; CRP)
 - viii. Campaigning organisations – Simon Birkett (Campaign for Clean Air in London); Doctors against Diesel; ClientEarth; Friends of the Earth (Jenny Bates/Quentin Given); Greenpeace (school campaign); Better Archway Forum; Barbecue Action Group

- c. Residents –from
 - i. Residents – open call for those interested to attend and give evidence
 - ii. Residents identified via members' casework
 - iii. Islington HealthWatch