

**Report of: Executive Member for Environment and Transport**

Meeting of:	Date	Ward(s)
Executive	21 5 15	All

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## **SUBJECT: Islington’s Air Quality Strategy 2014 – 17: Updated action plan**

### **1. Synopsis**

- 1.1 The Environment Act 1995 requires that all local authorities with Air Quality Management Areas have in place an action plan to show how pollutant concentrations will be reduced.
- 1.2 The Air Quality Strategy 2014-17 (AQS) was adopted by Executive on 6 February 2014 following a public consultation and sets out the actions the Council will take over the next three years to improve air quality.
- 1.3 This report sets out progress against the action plan within the Strategy.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 To note the revised AQS action plan as attached at appendix A. New items are in italics.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 Air pollution is a largely invisible problem which means that often people are not aware it is an issue that needs to be addressed. Poor air quality has a range of harmful effects. It can exacerbate existing lung and heart conditions and cause reduced lung function.
- 3.2 It is estimated that 100 Islington residents die each year from illnesses exacerbated by exposure to air pollution and the biggest local health inequalities issue is the large numbers of deaths from long-term conditions at relatively young ages. The main causes of death across all ages in Islington are

cardiovascular disease, cancer and respiratory diseases (accounting for 33%, 28% and 13% of deaths in Islington respectively). Exposure to high levels of air pollution, including diesel emissions, is known to exacerbate these existing health conditions.

Diesel engine exhaust includes soot, aerosols such as ash particulates, metallic abrasion particles, sulphates, silicates and nitrogen oxides. The black carbon element of diesel emissions has a particularly adverse effect on human health. Diesel exhaust also contains nanoparticles, which have additional health impacts, though not fully understood. The adverse health effects of diesel particulates are linked to cancer, heart and lung damage, and mental functioning. Exposure has also been linked with acute short-term symptoms such as headache, nausea, coughing, difficult or laboured breathing, irritation of the eyes, nose and throat and the onset of asthma in vulnerable individuals.

In 2012 the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) (part of the World Health Organisation (WHO)) classified diesel engine emissions as “carcinogenic to humans”. This decision was made after a review of scientific evidence gathered from international experts. Their research showed that exposure to diesel engine exhaust causes lung cancer. Many studies have also found a firm link between traffic related air pollution and the risk of cardiovascular disease.

- 3.3 Islington declared a whole of borough Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in 2003 for the pollutants Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and Particulate Matter (PM<sub>10</sub>). An air quality action plan (AQAP) was produced to reduce concentrations of both pollutants across the borough through Council policy and behaviour change.
- 3.4 Islington had made good progress in delivering the actions in the AQAP but whilst some concentrations had reduced, Islington still exceeded the annual mean objective for NO<sub>2</sub> at the roadside. Islington’s local air quality is significantly better than neighbouring authorities and levels are at their highest in the south of the borough along the border with Hackney, Camden and The City of London.
- 3.5 The current AQS was agreed by Executive on 6 February 2014. The AQS includes an action plan which needs to be delivered in partnership, making it clear that progress will not be made unless change is delivered by the Mayor of London as well, as our pollution hotspots are on the TfL road network.
- 3.6 In order to verify that our planned actions had validity, the AQS committed the Council to commissioning a source apportionment study. This would look in more detail at emissions in Islington and their source. This study was undertaken and confirms the actions of the AQS but in addition, has pointed to diesel vehicles other than buses and coaches contributing more to poor air quality than had been envisaged.
- 3.7 Actions currently proposed by the Mayor of London include the extension of the Ultra Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ). This would include part of Islington in the south. There have been discussions about whether Islington would benefit from its own ULEZ or one covering a far wider area of London, at least neighbouring boroughs. The AQS committed to examining this further and a cost benefit analysis has been undertaken. It concludes that an extended ULEZ and the infrastructure to enforce it would not bring the improvements in air quality and health desired at a proportionate cost.
- 3.8 The action plan has now been updated to reflect the results of these studies and show progress, and is attached as Appendix A. Actions relating to influencing use of vehicles, including ownership, switching to cleaner fuels and parking policy, have been updated in order to respond to the increased prominence of diesel vehicles in causing poor air quality.

## 4. Implications

### 4.1 Financial implications:

The actions proposed can be funded from existing budgets or external funding in 2015/16. If projects need to extend into future years, further funding may be required.

### 4.2 Legal Implications:

The Council is required to meet air quality objectives in order to comply with the requirements of the Environment Act 1985 and also to avoid any financial penalties applied to the UK from the EU.

### 4.3 Environmental Implications:

The overall environment will be improved by implementing the recommendations.

### 4.4 Residents Impact Assessment:

The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The Council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The Council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding

A full resident impact assessment was carried out as part of the adoption of the Air Quality Strategy.

## 5. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 5.1 Improving air quality is a high priority for the Council as it has a detrimental effect on health. The achievement of the actions in the AQS will do much to improve quality of life of our residents and visitors

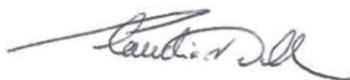
### Appendices:

Appendix A - AQS Action Plan 2014 – 17 (note that new items are in italics)

**Background papers:** None

Final report clearance:

**Signed by:**



7 May 2015

Executive Member for Environment and Transport

Date

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