

**Suggestion for Scrutiny Work Programme Form
 (To be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee)**

Suggestion from:
Cllr Diane Hind: Referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from Full Council in December 2017.
What would you like to suggest for investigation / review?
Proposal to enforce Vehicle Non-idling Zones (develop a policy) at Schools, Homes for the Elderly, Hospitals, Day Care Centres, GP Surgeries, and similar.
What are the main issues / concerns to be considered?
<p>Air Quality is associated with a number of health issues and particularly affects the most vulnerable in society such as children and older people. Children (14 and under) and older people (65 and older) are particularly susceptible to the effects of air pollution, as are people with respiratory conditions, like asthma, or heart problems.</p> <p>The 2017 Air Quality Annual Status Report produced by West Suffolk councils said that Bury St Edmunds was the only town in West Suffolk to show exceedance of air Quality objectives for Nitrogen dioxide, areas included Sicklesmere Road, Roundabouts on Kings Road and Parkway. Also, at various times at Tollgate Green air quality levels are above the desired level which is of concern to my residents who wish to see improvements before the area officially fails air quality objectives.</p> <p>Of course it isn't just a poisonous gas like Nitrogen Dioxide that is harmful, it is also particulates (microscopic particles) that unfiltered vehicles emit.</p> <p>Obvious solutions are to use the car less, buy vehicles with low emissions etc. These though are solutions in our residents control so what can we do? We can set a good example and use electric vehicles where possible but currently that has operational challenges as well as a high cost, although costs will hopefully reduce in the coming years.</p> <p>There is however something positive the council could do immediately and that is to have no idling zones around our schools, homes for the elderly, hospitals, day care centres, and GP surgeries.</p> <p>The Highway Code (Rule 123) already advises that drivers must not leave a stationary vehicle's engine running unnecessarily on a public road. If a vehicle is likely to remain stationary for more than a couple of minutes, drivers should apply the parking brake and switch off the engine to reduce vehicle emissions and noise pollution.</p> <p>A couple of minutes though can cause a lot of pollution and we've all seen people running their engines to defrost windscreens whilst they have breakfast or pop in to the local shop or the parents keeping their cars warm for their children. I'm sure most are unaware of the impact this has on the health of others, and indeed their own health.</p>

I believe we could and should have an anti-idling policy in Bury St Edmunds and urge members to support my request that our Environment team action this policy as a matter of urgency. I have spoken with the Environment Officer and Service Manager (Environment) who are supportive of the idea.

Simple facts

A car idling for one minute can produce enough exhaust fumes to fill up to 150 balloons.

Public Health England estimates long-term exposure to particulate air pollution has 'an effect equivalent to' around 25,000 deaths a year in England. Road traffic is estimated to contribute more than 64% of air pollution in towns and cities.

A diesel car used for short journeys in urban environment will pollute more, this is because the Diesel particulate filter (DPF) won't reach sufficient temperature to regenerate. Regeneration, basically burning off soot etc. to ash occurs when travelling for 10minutes plus at over 40mph. Failure to regenerate can cause vehicle problems and the AA report that they are continually called to assist vehicles with a blocked DPF.

An idling engine can produce up to twice as many emissions as an engine in motion, impacting the surrounding the area and the air that we breathe.

The Royal College of Physicians estimate [40,000 deaths a year in the UK](#) are linked to air pollution, with engine idling contributing to this.

The residents of Northgate Ward are very concerned about this and I've received correspondence from other residents (outside my ward) who heard about my proposal and took the trouble to write to me in support of it. I've included some examples of residents support further on.

I appreciate that enforcement is an issue both financially and practically which is why I am suggesting that our Environment Team be asked to evaluate and report on two options for consideration:

1. System based on recommendation, notices being advisory, a means of educating people to better practice. A bit like the health warning that was placed on cigarettes. A polite notice can also be used by establishments as a way of drawing attention to the request without the need to be confrontational. One member of the public who contacted me on this thought collaboration with schools was the answer. Children are very good at getting adults to think about their actions and are usually enthusiastic and very earnest about citizenship and personal behavior.
2. A system with financial penalties.

In conclusion, can I just reiterate that we will need a combination of different actions to rid our towns and cities of dirty air but introducing no-idling zones is one simple step that we can take now that can lead to cleaner air for all of us.

Also one of our priorities as a Borough Council is Healthy Communities and this should be a part of that aim. I accept that there are financial implications but improved health is priceless.

Would this review benefit from a “West Suffolk” approach (i.e. joint scrutiny by both Councils), or is it relevant only to your council?
I think it could be a joint presentation or St Edmundsbury could trial first.
Who is responsible for providing this service, or tackling the issue in question?
West Suffolk councils are responsible for providing this service, as detailed in the Air Quality Annual Status Report and as required by the Environment Act 1995. I see this as a trial in St Edmundsbury to be rolled out across the County if other councils so desire.
Have you spoken to them, and if so, what was the response?
The Councils Environment Officer and Service Manager (Environment) are supportive of reducing idling within both Bury St Edmunds and the remainder of West Suffolk, and are already working on an anti-idling campaign that will be initially targeted at schools and expanded as deemed necessary.
What is the Portfolio Holders view on this issue?
The Portfolio Holder was at Full Council in December 2017, and accepted the referral to Overview and Scrutiny.
What would be the likely benefits and outcomes of carrying out this investigation / review?
Healthier Communities, plus we would be making a real difference to Air Quality. We would also generate a lot of positive publicity for the Council.
Estimated Committee and officer resource implications (eg research group, one-off report, dedicated meeting etc)
Possible One-off report.
Suggested witnesses, documentation and consultation
There is much support from the general public for example I cite the following unsolicited quotes: Email from resident and Council worker My wife and I live on Springfield Avenue about 50 metres away from the school. I asked Environment Officer about whether the volumes of cars arriving, idling and leaving could be affecting the local air quality. He informed me of the relevant idling regulation, of the work being done by other councils and that Cllr Hind may be taking on this issue. Our concerns began not long after moving here. As environmentalists we are concerned with the volume of vehicles each morning and afternoon, the parking arrangements and the lack of awareness shown for others during the drop off / pick up period. Email from a resident Knowing that the Tollgate junction is one of the most polluted in Bury St Edmunds has made me more aware and worry for those and myself who regularly walk through it. More importantly, It’s made me concerned for my children’s health who walk to tollgate school

very regularly.

Letter to Bury Free Press

As attached

Comments on social media From Bury St Edmunds Town Talk page on Facebook

Comment 1

I'm concerned about pollution levels in and around Bury streets, particularly where cars are idling in traffic jams.

Comment 2

Idling when waiting such as just to keep the heater on, can be legislated against. It has been illegal in the whole of Braintree District for many years.

Will this investigation / review contribute to one or more of the Council's Strategic Priorities? If so, which (please tick)	
Growth in West Suffolk's economy for the benefit of all our residents and UK plc	
Resilient families and communities that are healthy and active.	X
Increased and improved provision of appropriate housing in West Suffolk in both our towns and rural areas.	

Will this investigation / review contribute to the achievement of one or more of the commitments within the Council's West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2018-2020 Priorities? If so, which (please tick)	
Growth in West Suffolk's economy for the benefit of all our residents and UK plc.	
1. Lobby for a better connected West Suffolk, in terms of transport and digital connectivity.	
2. Promote West Suffolk as a place to do business, so as to attract investment and innovation that increases salary levels and encourages the right mix of jobs to grow our economy.	
3. Invest in and promote our local places by building on their unique qualities through specific local strategies, projects and environmental services	
4. Develop our current and future local workforce through education; training and opportunities for all.	
Resilient families and communities that are healthy and active:	
1. Foster supportive networks to improve and sustain the lives of individuals; families and communities.	X
2. Use our community, leisure, open space and heritage assets to support wellbeing and education.	
3. Work with and influence partners including the voluntary sector in our shared endeavour of improving the health, wellbeing and safety of families and communities.	X
Increased and improved provision of appropriate housing in West Suffolk in both our towns and rural areas:	
1. Plan for housing to meet the needs of current and future generations throughout their lifetime that is properly supported by infrastructure, facilities and community networks.	
2. Improve the quality of housing and the local environment for residents.	

3. Enable people to access suitable and sustainable housing.	
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Will this investigation hit one of the essential elements of a scrutiny review when analysing potential scrutiny reviews? If so, which (please tick)	
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Public Interest: The concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen by overview and scrutiny.	X
Impact (Value): Priority should be given to issues that make the biggest difference to the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the area, and which have the potential to make recommendations which could lead to real improvements. The outcome must also be proportionate to the cost of carrying out the review in terms of staff and councillor time.	X
Relevance: Overview and scrutiny must be satisfied that an issue identified for review is relevant and does not duplicate existing work being undertaken elsewhere by various Working Groups, Cabinet, partners etc.	
Partnership working or external scrutiny: The focus of scrutiny is moving towards joint action and community leadership, so anything which offers this opportunity should be given serious consideration.	

Would you like to be involved in the investigation / review?	
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Yes	
Date of request: 6 February 2018	Signed Councillor Diane Hind

Please return this form to the:

Scrutiny Officer, Forest Heath District Council, College Heath Road, Mildenhall, Suffolk, IP28 7EY

Email: Christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk

Updated: July 2013
Updated: June 2014 (Revised West Suffolk Strategic Priorities)
Updated: March 2015 (Amended as a Joint Form)
Updated: February 2018 (Revised West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2018-2020)

MASTER PLAN

Time to tackle pollution danger

Cllr Alaric Pugh (Readers' Views, January 12) makes several points about the Town Centre Master Plan (TCMP), and asserts that the borough council is looking "at ways to improve the pedestrian experience in our town centre".

BBC 2 undertook an experiment, broadcast on January 10, that was shown in a programme called Fighting for Air.

What it made very clear is the damage done to the lungs of young children due to emissions from vehicles passing through town.

They undertook a one-day experiment and were able to reduce traffic flow and vehicle emissions around a local school by 30 per cent. It is vital viewing for those who come into our town – particularly parents on the school run.

One might expect that the council and the town centre schools would work together to tackle the risks to health for children as well as visitors, residents and others in the town centre.

A viewing of this programme shows just how much damage is done to children's health by the intense pollution around schools at dropping off and collection times. Yet the TCMP and the schools seem to ignore the health risks presented by

traffic in the town centre. The programme also measured significantly reduced pollution levels in a street used by pedestrians for shopping, so if the council ignores the health issue of traffic pollution in Bury, it is certainly not improving "the pedestrian experience".

Those responsible for the present and future health of those they represent, and for whom they have a duty of care, cannot continue to ignore the growing problem of traffic pollution in Bury St Edmunds. They cannot carry on regardless of the health risks to those who live, visit, and work in town, and ignore the health risks to future generations.

Antony Hurden
Bury St Edmunds