

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

**Suggestion from:**

Councillor Diane Hind

**What would you like to suggest for investigation / review?**

I would like Overview and Scrutiny to request that permission is sought for our Civil Parking Enforcement Team (CPE) to be able to issue fines for drivers who allow their car/van/lorry engines to idle when the vehicle is parked and stationary. Obviously, there would have to be exemptions such as refrigerated vehicles.

This follows on from two projects, a review by the old St Edmundsbury Overview and Scrutiny committee who received a report at their final meeting. At that time the then committee expressed the hope that in 12 months firm action might be taken regarding fines, but this hasn't happened.

As you will know from a report by me circulated to the committee in early July 2021, an Association of all the Town Residents Association has made Air quality a focus and they have taken steps to try to inform the public about the consequences of allowing their engines to idle.

This group of residents has been told that it is possible for our CPE officers to issue tickets, but they would need to officially be given the power to do so. I understand this means applying for revised terms of reference or permissions and that is what I would like Overview and Scrutiny to recommend.

Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary

### **What are the main issues / concerns to be considered?**

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.

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.

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.

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 into 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.

Simple facts:

A car idling for one-minute produces enough harmful chemicals to fill 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 Bury St Edmunds are very concerned about this as you'll have learnt from my report.

One of our priorities as a District 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.

<p>Matt Axton Environmental officer and Cllr Everitt (Portfolio holder Families and communities) who chairs the meetings of the Bury Association of Residents Associations can confirm that it has been declared possible for CPE officers to take on this role and that it would be welcomed by the various Residents Associations.</p>	
<p><b>Who is responsible for providing this service, or tackling the issue in question?</b></p>	
<p>I have been advised that CPE falls under the remit of Car parks which is Councillor Peter Stevens (Cabinet Member for Operations) responsibility.</p>	
<p><b>Have you spoken to them, and if so, what was the response?</b></p>	
<p>Councillor Peter Stevens, Cabinet Member for Operations has been emailed a copy of the suggestion form, but to date, no response has been received.</p>	
<p><b>What is the Portfolio Holders view on this issue?</b></p>	
<p>To date, no response received from Councillor Peter Stevens.</p>	
<p><b>What would be the likely benefits and outcomes of carrying out this investigation / review?</b></p>	
<p>The health benefits would be immediate and be totally in keeping with our Climate change and environment strategy.</p>	
<p><b>Estimated Committee and officer resource implications (e.g. research group, one-off report, dedicated meeting etc)</b></p>	
<p>One off meeting hopefully culminating in a request to give CPE Officers the powers they need to be able to issue fines.</p>	
<p><b>Suggested witnesses, documentation and consultation</b></p>	
<p>N/A</p>	
<p><b>Will this investigation / review contribute to one or more of the Council's Strategic Priorities? If so, which (please tick)</b></p>	
<p><b>Growth in West Suffolk's economy for the benefit of all our residents and UK plc</b></p>	
<p><b>Resilient families and communities that are healthy and active.</b></p>	x
<p><b>Increased and improved provision of appropriate housing in West Suffolk in both our towns and rural areas.</b></p>	

<b>Will this investigation / review contribute to the achievement of one or more of the commitments within the Council's West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2020-2024 Priorities? If so, which (please tick)</b>	
<b>Growth in West Suffolk's economy for the benefit of all our residents and UK plc.</b>	
1. Encourage economic growth in West Suffolk that benefits our local economy, our workforce, our families and communities and our global and local environments by tackling climate change.	X
2. Secure improve infrastructure and facilities to support new and existing communities.	
3. Invest in our towns, villages and countryside areas by building their unique strengths	
<b>Resilient families and communities that are healthy and active:</b>	
1. Support communities to fulfil their ambitions so as to improve the lives of residents and the local environment.	X
2. Work with partners to build resilience in families and communities, so that problems can be prevented at the earliest opportunity.	
3. Use our community, leisure public open space, countryside and heritage assets so that they give maximum benefit to West Suffolk communities.	
<b>Increased and improved provision of appropriate housing in West Suffolk in both our towns and rural areas:</b>	
1. Ensure a variety of new housing is provided in appropriate locations, that meets the needs of current and future generations.	
2. Improve the quality of housing and the local environment for our residents.	
3. Support people to access suitable housing, including by working in partnership to addresses their wider needs.	

<b>Will this investigation hit one of the essential elements of a scrutiny review when analysing potential scrutiny reviews? If so, which (please tick)</b>	
<b>Public Interest:</b> The concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen by overview and scrutiny.	X
<b>Impact (Value):</b> 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
<b>Relevance:</b> 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.	X

<b>Partnership working or external scrutiny:</b> The focus of scrutiny is moving towards joint action and community leadership, so anything which offers this opportunity should be given serious consideration.	
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<b>Would you like to be involved in the investigation / review?</b>	
<b>Yes</b>	
<b>Date of request:</b>  24 <sup>th</sup> July 2021	<b>Signed</b>  <b>Diane Hind</b>

**Please return this form to the:**

Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny), West Suffolk Council, College Heath Road, Mildenhall, Suffolk, IP28 7EY

Email: [Christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:Christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk)

Update: February 2018 (Revised West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2018-2020)  
Update: 1 April 2019 (New Logo – West Suffolk Council)  
Update: February 2020 (Revised West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2020-2024)