Item 10 – Vehicle Pollution Information

Low Emission Strategy

The most significant local source of pollution in our borough that we can affect is vehicle emissions. A Low Emission Strategy (LES) has now been approved to address the health impacts of poor air quality. The primary objective of the LES is to reduce traffic emissions.

We can do this by promoting sustainable transport which includes the use of low emission vehicles and technology. We can also discourage the use of high emitting vehicles where possible.

The LES is based upon three key principles for the reduction of emissions:

- **Shift** - change mode of transport from cars to public transport, cycling or walking
- **Avoid** - reduce the distance driven, reduce emissions from stationary vehicles, chimneys and construction
- **Improve** - improve our use of the latest vehicle technology to reduce emissions (specifically low emission vehicles)

Air quality

Air quality across Cheshire West and Chester is generally good but there are a few locations where recommended levels have been exceeded. As a result, three Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) have been declared due to nitrogen dioxide emissions from road traffic:

- Whitby Road/Station Road in Ellesmere Port
- Chester city centre
- Fluin Lane in Frodsham

Another pollutant of concern is particulate matter, known as PM10 and PM2.5 (small particles less than 10 and 2.5 micrometres in size), which can be inhaled deep into the lungs.

Particulate matter comes from different sources including vehicle exhausts, open fires, wood burning stoves and natural sources. Although this doesn't exceed the standards locally, there is a significant health impact. Any reduction in airborne levels will deliver improvements in people's health.

The LES will deliver projects across the borough. It will also complement individual Air Quality Action Plans (AQAPs) needed for each AQMA.

- Low Emission Strategy (1.1MB)

A breath of fresh air anti-idling campaign

Turning your engine off when waiting can help improve air quality and protect your health.

One of our key priorities to help the borough thrive is to have clean, safe and sustainable neighbourhoods. This includes tackling air pollution.

The most important local source of air pollution in the borough that we can influence is pollution caused by vehicle emissions. The primary objective of our Low Emission Strategy is to reduce these emissions in order to improve the environment and the health of our residents.

You can find more information on our anti-idling myth busting webpage.

What can you do to help?

Drivers can avoid adding to unnecessary emissions by not leaving their engine running while waiting. It's called 'stationary idling' and it is already an offence under the Road Traffic Act.

The facts

- Excessive idling is a waste of fuel and money, resulting in unnecessary negative environmental and health impacts
- Fuel can represent 35% of your running costs, maybe even more
- Air pollution is linked to 40,000 early deaths in the UK each year
- People inside cars can be exposed to higher levels of air pollution than pedestrians or cyclists using the same road.
- Children and the elderly are especially at risk of harmful effects of air pollution.
- An idling vehicle emits much more pollution than one travelling at 30mph.
- For each litre of fuel used by a diesel engine, 2.64 kg of CO_2 is released into the atmosphere.
- Fleet operators can expect fuel savings of up to 5% by adopting anti-idling practices

Enforcing idling

Local authorities have powers to enforce stationary idling within The Road Traffic (Vehicles Emissions) (Fixed Penalty) (England) Regulations 2002.

Drivers who leave their engines running may be asked by a civil enforcement officer to switch off their engine.

If a driver does not comply with a request, they may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice if the offence takes place on the highway or Penalty Charge Notice if it takes place in a council owned car park. These regulations cover all vehicles on public roads including private cars, motorbikes, delivery vehicles, taxis and buses.

They do not apply to vehicles:

- Moving slowly due to road works or congestion
- Stopped at traffic lights
- Under test or repair

- Where the windscreen is being defrosted
- Where machinery on a vehicle requires the engine to be running. For example compaction equipment in a refuse vehicle or a tail lift that cannot be operated by the battery on board

Fixed Penalty and Penalty Charge Notices

The full penalty amount for a Fixed Penalty Notice is £40. The reduced penalty charge is £20 if paid within 28 working days. After 56 days the driver may be prosecuted for the offence and if convicted could receive a larger fine up to £1000.

A Penalty Charge Notice is £50 and is reduced to £25 if paid within 14 calendar days. Unpaid charges can ultimately be passed to an Enforcement Agency to recover, who will add their own costs.

Anti-idling myth busting

Idling gets you nowhere. Here we clear up some common misconceptions about engine idling.

Remember, as well as wasting fuel (and money), unnecessary engine idling means harmful vehicle pollution is released into the atmosphere, which is bad for the environment and our health.

My engine needs to stay on to keep the battery fully charged.
Fact: Modern battery design has largely eliminated this threat.

Turning the engine on and off wears it out.~Fact: Electronic ignitions in modern cars have eliminated this problem. Idling increases wear and tear.

Catalytic converters need to be hot to work properly.
True, but an idling engine does not keep a catalytic converter warm. They retain their heat for about 25 minutes after an engine is switched off anyway.

Idling keeps an engine in better condition.
Fact: Idling means incomplete combustion, leading to a build-up of residue in an engine, increasing wear and tear.

Starting an engine uses more fuel and produces more pollution than idling.
Fact: For a majority, engines idling for more than 10 seconds use more fuel and causes less pollution than starting the motor. This is one of the reasons why newer vehicles are fitted with stop-start technology.

The best way to warm up your vehicle is to leave the engine running for a few minutes.
Fact: Modern engines are designed so that you can commence driving straight after starting the car.

Idling reduces wear and tear on your engine particularly when cold.
Fact: Idling creates wear and tear on your engine because fuel does not combust completely, causing damage to engine components such as cylinders, piston rings and the exhaust system.

https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/pests-pollution-food-safety/pollution-and-air-quality/anti-idling-myth-busting.aspx

Negative effects of idling vehicles

Did you know?...

A recent study conducted by King's college in London found that children are particularly at risk from the effect of idling vehicles because:

- They tend to be more active and therefore breathe more deeply
- They spend more time outdoors, so they are much more exposed to the effects of air pollution
- They have smaller lungs, and a higher ventilation rate, which means that they will have more toxic air in their lungs, per unit area of their lungs

And also that…

- Excessive idling is a waste of fuel and money, resulting in unnecessary negative environmental impact
- People inside cars are exposed to high levels of air pollution, with children especially at risk of harmful effects
- An idling vehicle emits 20 times more pollution than one travelling 32 mph
- For each 1 litre of fuel used by a diesel engine, 2.64 kg of CO_2 is released to the atmosphere

https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20052/air_quality/1258/anti-idling_air_quality_campaign/3