

Subject: Diesel Emissions

Report to: Environment Committee

Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat

Date: 4 December 2014

This report will be considered in public

1 Summary

- 1.1 This paper sets out background information for a discussion with invited guests about toxic emissions from diesel exhausts.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Committee notes the report as background to a discussion with expert guests about diesel emissions, and notes the discussion.**

3 Background

London's air pollution issue

- 3.1 In common with most large urban areas, London has elevated levels of toxic pollutants, such as airborne particles (particulate matter or PM, often with a number indicating maximum particle size: PM_{2.5} is the finest fraction and is absorbed most deeply into the lungs and body; PM₁₀ also includes somewhat larger particles) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂).
- 3.2 These pollution levels have serious health effects. Official scientific estimates are that long-term exposure to PM_{2.5} is responsible for over 3,000 additional deaths in London annually - more than 6% of all deaths. The public health impacts of NO₂ are so far less well-quantified, but emerging scientific findings suggest that they may be comparably serious.
- 3.3 There are therefore limit values in national and European law for the concentrations of PM and NO₂ (and other pollutants) in the air in any one place. The NO₂ limit is currently breached in many places across Europe; the UK has some of the worst breaches and is subject to infraction proceedings by the European Commission that could result in fines in the hundreds of millions, which could under the Localism Act 2011 be passed to responsible local authorities such as the GLA.
- 3.4 London suffers the biggest cluster of pollutant limit breaches in the UK and, based on current policies, including those in the Mayor's Air Quality Strategy, is not projected to comply with the NO₂ limit until 2030.

Mayoral proposals

- 3.5 There have been a number of recent publications from the Mayor, including a brief Air Quality Manifesto¹ and a more detailed Transport Emissions Road Map (TERM)². These echo a call made in July 2014 for the Government and EU to join the Mayor in urgent action to achieve compliance with the limit values by 2020. The detail of the TERM outlines a package of measures which, again with Government and EU support including funding, the GLA anticipates could achieve NO₂ limit compliance by 2025.
- 3.6 The TERM 2025 compliance package includes ten headline measures:
- 1) A central Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) applying emissions standards to all vehicle types from 2020, and requiring cars to be near zero emissions by 2025;
 - 2) Tightening the all-London Low Emission Zone (LEZ) for heavy vehicles from 2020, and to be as strict as the ULEZ from 2025;
 - 3) Smarter traffic management - small measures to 2020, but seeking road pricing by 2025;
 - 4) Behaviour change – campaigns and mass publicity, and a no idling regulation, for 2020;
 - 5) Uptake of low emission vehicles (LEVs) - reducing cost of ownership and providing infrastructure, with a small effect by 2020, much larger by 2025;
 - 6) Cleaner electricity (a measure directed at reducing CO₂ from electric vehicles);
 - 7) Cleaner buses - complying with the ULEZ standards (central 2020, pan-London 2025);
 - 8) Delivering a zero emissions taxi fleet - complying with the ULEZ standards;
 - 9) Cleaner public and private fleets - promoting ULEZ standards for all public fleets; and
 - 10) Low Emission Neighbourhoods - targeted measures including local ULEZ enforcement and 'geofencing' (making capable buses and taxis run at zero emissions in certain areas).
- 3.7 The TERM projects that the 2020 measures (primarily the ULEZ) could get London two-thirds of the way to NO₂ limit compliance, and that the 2025 London-wide measures could achieve compliance on 99% of the road network, with the remaining 1% tackled by targeted local measures.
- 3.8 The TERM proposals, especially to 2025, would be dependent on supportive action including funding and regulation from both national and European levels.

4 Issues for discussion

- 4.1 This is the Committee's second meeting in this investigation; the meeting in November 2014 heard from King's College London experts and the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders. A report is expected in early 2015.
- 4.2 The Committee is to discuss with representatives of the GLA and Transport for London (TfL) the above plans to reduce diesel emissions, the challenges facing these plans, and potentially alternative proposals. There is also to be a discussion specifically of taxis and private hire vehicles, with

¹ www.london.gov.uk/priorities/environment/clearing-londons-air/mayors-air-quality-manifesto

² www.tfl.gov.uk/cdn/static/cms/documents/transport-emissions-roadmap.pdf

representatives of the sector.

4.3 Guests are expected to include:

- Matthew Pencharz, The Mayor's Senior Adviser on Environment and Energy;
- Officials from the GLA and TfL; and
- Representatives from the taxi and private hire sectors.

5 Legal Implications

5.1 The Committee has the power to do what is recommended in the report.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications to the Greater London Authority arising from this report.

List of appendices to this report: None

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
List of Background Papers: None
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