

**Council: Tuesday, 8 December 2015**

**Administration Motion: Cllr Helena Hart**

Tackling the Growing Problem of Shisha

Council notes that the popularity and consumption of Shisha has steadily increased in the UK over recent years and that the number of premises offering the substance in London has expanded by over 600% in the last six years.

Locally, there are twenty known Shisha businesses in the borough – an increase of over 50% compared to January 2014. Council notes that young people are more likely to be drawn into Shisha smoking if there are outlets operating near their homes or schools.

Council is very concerned about this trend given the serious impact Shisha smoking can have on people's health. The average Shisha smoking session lasts about an hour, during which time the smoker can inhale up to 200 times more smoke than from a cigarette. Council notes that the health effects are similar to those of other tobacco products, including increased risk of cancer, heart disease, respiratory disease and complications during pregnancy. In addition, Council notes that by users sharing the same mouthpiece there is the further risk of transmitting infectious diseases such as Tuberculosis.

Council believes that many people are unaware of the dangers of Shisha smoking and that current regulations are not stringent enough. Council was shocked that of thirteen premises inspected by Environmental Health in the last two months, ten were found not to be compliant, but notes that previous prosecutions proved costly, time-consuming and resulted in insufficient penalties to constitute an effective deterrent.

Whilst Council is clear that it does not wish to impose a total ban on the provision of Shisha in the Borough, in view of the overriding health considerations associated with its use, Council requests the appropriate officers to urgently investigate how local residents, especially young children, can best be educated about - and protected from - the harmful effects of Shisha. Council requests these investigations centre on Borough-wide educational campaigns led by Public Health, adherence to existing and possibly additional Planning and Licencing laws and, above all, far tougher enforcement and penalties for contravention of existing legislation.