

Calls for action after air pollution study records high levels of poisonous gas



Above: Stephen Taylor monitors air pollution on the Heath. Left: members of the Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum recording levels on residential streets

'Goblin Line' to close for 5 months

by ELLA JESSEL

A MAJOR overground route from Gospel Oak to Barking known as the "Goblin Line" is to close completely for five months.

The line will close from October next year with partial closures also in place between June and September as part of a £130million electrification scheme.

The existing two-carriage diesel trains will make way for a new fleet of "cleaner, quieter and longer trains" to ease congestion and improve air quality.

The extensive upgrade will see significant disruption to many passengers that rely on the service but rail bosses says the works are needed to meet growing demand.

Electrification work will mean the reconstruction of at least 12 bridges to accommodate new power cables.

To make room for the new infrastructure, four sections of the track will be lowered, four bridges will be rebuilt and a further six modernised.

Transport for London (TfL), which is funding the project in conjunction with the Department for

Killer fumes smash legal limits

by DAN CARRIER

KILLER fumes spewed out by cars are breaking all air pollution safety limits across Camden, researchers say.

Members of the Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum have been joined by Green Party campaigners in Gospel Oak and Kentish Town to monitor levels of nitrogen dioxide – a poisonous gas released through traffic exhaust fumes – at 90 different locations.

The results from the month-long study, which took place in December, have been seen by the *New Journal* and show levels of the fumes in the air smash legal limits in every neighbourhood and

therefore pose a serious health risk.

Legally, limits must not go above 40 micrograms of nitrogen dioxide per cubic metre – but in almost all cases, this level was breached.

The scientists and researchers behind the project say levels are particularly dangerous around schools, due to parents dropping children off and leaving car engines running.

The tests included results from devices in roads well known for jams, such as Hampstead High Street and Fitzjohn's Avenue, but

one was also set up in the heart of Hampstead Heath, where high levels of the gas were also recorded.

Stephen Taylor, of the Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum, said: "No one should suppose the air on

a dangerous level for children. On our main roads we measured annual exposures up to 70."

Gospel Oak test organiser Matthew Crampton said: "We have become a bit immune to the traffic but these results are terrible. Every

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Hampstead's leafy hill is safe to breathe. Nitrogen dioxide in the air turns to nitric acid in our lungs.

"There are no safe levels of long-term exposure. EU law forbids annual NO2 exposures above 40, and notes 30 is

part of Gospel Oak is above the legal limit. It is very frightening. I live 50 yards from Hampstead Heath and it feels like a clean part of London – but the fact is, all day, every day I am breathing in illegal levels of

nitrogen dioxide."

He added: "We have a high car ownership in Hampstead, and we need to look at how we can address this. We need better public transport and to create streets that limit car use."

Dee Searle, who organised the survey in Kentish Town, said a monitoring station placed on Kentish Town Road showed a reading of 98 micrograms per one cubic metre of air.

She added: "We are looking at chronic, long-term exposure to poison."

The researchers are now calling for urgent, Londonwide action.

Town Hall environment