

7th Feb 15

Rt Hon Don Foster MP
House of Commons
Westminster
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear



B&NES Council's Motion on Air Pollution

1. I am writing on behalf of the Federation of Bath Residents' Associations (FOBRA) to express our strong support for the B&NES Council motion on air pollution, about which the Leader of the Council, Councillor Paul Crossley, wrote to you on 21st January.
2. FoBRA represents some 4500 Bath residents from 28 residents' associations across the city, together with five further affiliates, including both Students' Unions. Traffic congestion and air pollution have consistently been our members' top priorities. The entire main road network in Bath, and many lesser streets, is in the Bath Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), which by definition means that levels of air pollution there are damaging to health and unlawful. About 10,000 people live in the Bath AQMA and are suffering the effects of air pollution over the legal limit. Pollution levels have remained unchanged for ten years. The report on the health effects of air pollution, attached as Appendix 2 to Cllr Crossley's letter, makes it clear how serious a problem this is for people living and working in Bath.
3. Traffic also has a major impact on the overall appearance and amenity of the city. Except in a tiny central area, vehicles have priority over pedestrians and there is little provision for cyclists. Pollution and vibration from vehicles are taking their toll on the fabric of historic buildings. What would be an unsatisfactory situation in any city is an absurdity in a World Heritage City which depends heavily on tourism.
4. 92% of the NO_x pollution in Bath is due to road traffic, so it is clear that, in order to tackle the problem of air pollution, traffic volumes need to be reduced. We warmly welcome the Bath Transport Strategy, which was approved in November last year with all-party support, and has the vision of reducing the intrusion of vehicles in the

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city, especially the historic core. We support more pedestrian access, cycling, better public transport and improved freight delivery, as set out in the strategy. We also wish to draw your attention to the need for:

- A park-and-ride (or park-and-rail) facility to the east of the city.
- Action by the Department for Transport to provide an alternative route for the HGV traffic which currently uses the A46-A36 route through Bath, and makes a major contribution to air pollution in the city.
- Powers for B&NES to be able to enforce moving traffic violations, so as to enable effective introduction of a Low Emission Zone. B&NES also need these powers to enforce HGV weight limits in the city. The Police do not enforce the limits and HGVs currently travel right through the centre of the city with impunity.
- Monitoring of and action to reduce fine particulates (PM2.5) from diesels. We are very concerned about recent research on the adverse health effects of fine particulates at levels below the current legal limit.

5. Authorities in the UK have been slow to tackle the problem of air pollution, perhaps because it is largely invisible and the impact is slow and insidious. However, the issue can no longer be avoided: the Supreme Court has ruled that the UK Government has an enforceable duty to bring pollution down to the levels set by its own laws, and the EU has launched a legal action against the UK for its failure to deal with air pollution. The time has come to tackle air pollution seriously, and we urge you to support B&NES Council to bring about the changes that are needed.

With best wishes for your final few months as our MP and as a Minister,

Yours sincerely



Robin Kerr, Chairman