

Chronicle Letter on Bath Transport Strategy

The Federation of Bath Residents Associations (FOBRA) welcomes the news that the Council is making a start toward the construction of a park-and-ride to the east of Bath (Report, 9 July). An eastern park-and-ride is much needed and has been delayed far too long.

The article states that Bath's levels of air pollution 'are said to be' above EU guidelines. There is no hearsay about this. According to B&NES monitoring data, nitrogen dioxide levels along most of the main road network in Bath and in the city centre are well above the limit set by British and EU law (not 'guidelines'). Along the London Road and parts of the city centre, pollution levels are 50% over the legal limit. Pollution has remained at these high levels for more than ten years and shows no sign of reducing. The data can be seen on the FOBRA website <http://www.bathresidents.org.uk/> at the 'Papers' tab.

There are well-established links between nitrogen dioxide pollution and respiratory and other diseases. Particulates from diesel vehicles are linked to both lung and heart disease. Some ten thousand people live within the worst affected areas, and their health is daily being put at risk. This is a serious public health issue, and the Council must take action to reduce air pollution. As 92% of nitrogen dioxide pollution in the city comes from motor vehicles, this means reducing the amount of traffic.

The Bath Transport Strategy was approved last November by the Council with all-party support. Its aim is to promote sustainable transport and reduce the intrusion of traffic in the city, particularly the historic core. We urge the Council to press on urgently with the implementation of the transport strategy. The eastern park-and-ride is one part of the strategy. Action is also needed in accordance with the strategy to reduce traffic volumes in the city by reducing visitor parking in the centre as park-and-ride capacity expands, and by traffic management. A Low Emission Zone (LEZ) should be created covering the whole central area to deter the most polluting vehicles.

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12th July 15