

**Planning, Transport and Environment Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel, 16 September 2014 - Item 12, Air Pollution**

**Notes by Patrick Rotheram, Transport Lead, Federation of Bath Residents' Associations**

Good morning. I'm speaking on behalf of FOBRA, which has some 5000 members across the city. We are pleased to see this report on the health implications of air pollution, as air pollution is one of our members' top concerns.

The entire main road network in Bath, and many lesser streets, is in the Bath AQMA, which by definition means that there are unhealthy and unlawful levels of air pollution. Some 10,000 people live in the Bath AQMA and are suffering the effects of air pollution over the legal limit. This is a really serious issue, and we want the Council to get serious about dealing with it. Monitoring and studying doesn't cut it.

There has been much concern recently about the harmful effects of fine particulates (PM2.5). These are not currently monitored in Bath and are not covered in the report.

The study barely mentions the damage that air pollution does to buildings and the related economic cost. But this is surely an important matter in a World Heritage Site in which the heritage comprises fragile limestone buildings which are highly susceptible to air pollution.

We are sceptical about the predicted drop in pollution levels between 2012 and 2015. NO2 levels have remained fairly constant over the past ten years and show little sign of dropping. What factors is the prediction based on? Latest evidence is that diesel cars cause more pollution so increasing numbers of diesel cars will make matters worse, not improve them.

Even if this reduction was really happening, air pollution in 2015 would still be above the legal limits across the city.

On a positive note, we are pleased to see that funding is being sought for an LEZ in central Bath (Option 4).

Sadly it is realistic for the study to assume that B&NES can't do anything which would directly result in HGV being diverted onto existing roads in Wiltshire, which is the reason why the other Options appear not to be viable. The logical conclusion is that the only way to

reduce pollution from HGV is to provide a new alternative route avoiding Bath, eg an A36-A46 link.

Air pollution in Bath is mainly due to road traffic. The only way to reduce it is by reducing traffic volumes. The only way of doing that is through a comprehensive transport plan. We don't need more exploratory work or another literature survey, we need action. We want the Council to get on with the transport strategy, and hope the Panel will support the strategy when it comes before them shortly.

The 'Actions taken in B&NES to improve air quality to date' (page 219) is misleading. None of these plans contain measures which will make a significant reduction in traffic and air pollution in Bath. The only measure in the AQAP which has any serious potential for reducing pollution is the LEZ, and the present report makes it clear that this can be introduced only in a limited central area. A transport strategy aimed at reducing traffic volumes in residential areas and across the city is essential.