

## **Presentation to the Communities Transport & Environment PDS**

**13 March 2017**

I speak to ask for 2 things:

1. That B&NES Director of Public Health take ownership of the mission to produce an aggressive, ambitious and measurable Air Quality Action Plan for Bath; and
2. That the Council consider the needs of communities outside the current AQMAs.

Both of these things are what DEFRA want Councils to do in their toolkit on Air Quality published just this month. DEFRA wants Directors of Public Health to act as leaders, influencers and scrutineers, and to shape local approaches to cleaning up our air. Yet in our Director of Public Health's 2016 Annual Report, there is but one small, oblique reference to Air Quality. Air Quality should be his cornerstone, the one public health issue that impacts on all others in his portfolio, not an afterthought. Please reassure us that Dr Laurence will be our greatest, most vocal advocate for an innovative and robust Action Plan – to declare war on air pollution in our City.

Long term exposure to PM and NO<sub>2</sub> emissions has a dramatic impact on human health. There are no safe levels of PM, and DEFRA stress that impacts on health for both PM and NO<sub>2</sub> exposure are observed *well below* the levels permitted by law. The absence of an AQMA does not mean an absence of a public health issue. In Batheaston, annual NO<sub>2</sub> levels are routinely in the 30s, against a legal limit of 40. But being outside the AQMA, there is no focus on air quality here, despite a major transportation proposal – the Bathampton Meadows Park & Ride, which the council itself predicts will increase NO<sub>2</sub> emissions in this community. Unless B&NES examine air pollution in areas outside the current AQMAs then how will DEFRA's objectives be met?

DEFRA showcase what other Councils are doing. Retrofitting council vehicles and sightseeing buses, hospital travel plans, cycle friendly measures, zero emissions initiatives for businesses, LEZs. Particularly interesting was a project in Bradford on Avon where Air Quality Groups decided to test their theory that local air pollution was caused by commuters, by commissioning an origin and destination study which revealed that in fact over 80% of the traffic air pollution was caused by residents' traffic. This focused attention on the local nature of the problem, so that tailored solutions could be devised. Wouldn't it be wonderful if this Council could be so strategic, and invest in understanding the origin and destination of traffic on the London Road? We might discover that a congestion charge for our most polluting vehicles, however unpalatable, would be a cost effective solution, providing revenue to fund other air quality initiatives, whilst a Park & Ride in Bathampton will take few if any cars off the road and make the air breathed by its residents worse.

**Annie Kilvington**