

Camden Residents' Association

Report on Traffic Congestion and Poor Air Quality

ABSTRACT

Camden Residents' Association has been discussing and consulting with residents in our area on measures to ameliorate congestion, speeding and poor air quality on our streets. Our 53 page report sets out proposals for actions that will limit dangers for our residents and those using our streets but it won't eradicate them.

We urge B&NES council to develop a comprehensive traffic reduction plan for Bath which also recognises the special difficulties in Camden and much of NE Bath.

Most of what has been achieved on Camden Road over recent years has been neutral in ultimate effect, soon eclipsed by adaptive behaviours from drivers or has simply made things worse. Long term problems **persist** and are now known to be a cause of poor air quality on what are essentially residential streets.

Camden Road is used by 7,000 cars a day. At peak time it is a **rat run** which offers an alternative to slow progress along the A4, ie London Road and the Paragon. The ultimate end-to-end rat run involves Lower Swainswick, Larkhall's back streets, Eastbourne Avenue, and culminates in Camden's streets and affects many people.

To put some scale on this, 7000 is 33% of that on the arterial London Road and yet Camden Road is single track in places with slow, stop-start traffic generating high emissions. Off peak the road can be very quiet, unlike London Road, which strongly suggests that at peak times the **comparative flows are much closer**. It is at these times that we see many **pedestrians also** using the road and being threatened by bad driving and forced to breathe in dirty air.

Congestion and poor quality air are probably a Bath-wide issue requiring a Bath wide solution, such as implementing Low Emissions Zones along the arterial roads. This might make an eye-catching headline but is at risk of **pushing yet more traffic** along constricted residential streets such as ours.

We are putting the case for **NE Bath to be considered particularly carefully** as it draws in traffic from the East and North, but also from the South of the city. The streets making up the principal rat-runs are narrow and appear **to hold on to vehicle emissions** (for various reasons we discuss in the report), so not only do those living on these streets endure congested traffic but they are also breathing illegally dirty air.

Our report lists 70 recommendations of which **30 address this bigger NE Bath picture**.

We commend our proposals to the decision-makers as they offer **fresh and viable solutions to long standing issues** and get back to root causes using hard evidence wherever possible.

In short, present conditions are condemning some of the population of NE Bath, as well as many visitors to one of UNESCO's finest world heritage sites, to heavy traffic with pollution levels already at dangerous levels **well beyond current legal standards**, and **85% higher than Bristol**, for example. **We don't believe this is a tolerable situation for NE Bath.**

Jeremy Labram, Chair, Camden Residents' Association

