

## Cabinet Meeting 9 September 2021 – Public Speaking – Ceris Humphreys

The primary purpose of Cleveland Bridge was, and always has been, as a link between northern and southern Bath in the East. Most traffic using Cleveland Bridge is **local** traffic.

Five relevant things happened since this council was elected:

1. Climate Emergency made Active Travel a national and local priority and you adopted a policy of major switch to Active Travel modes.
2. In the last 18 months footfall on London Road and Bathwick Street greatly increased, and new businesses opened & thrived – local people “built back better” as you asked.
3. A Prevention of Future Deaths Report flagged the need for Local Authorities to act more strongly on air pollution to stop it making kids sick and sometimes killing them.
4. A temporary weight limit on Cleveland Bridge brought an immediate drop in pollution levels on London Road and improvement in traffic flows across eastern and central Bath – visible for several weeks before the pandemic impact.
5. Officers conceded the extra life bought by the repairs may be little more than a decade or so (an opinion given before finding the bridge was worse than expected).

On London Road and Bathwick Street Active Travel will be destroyed by return of the HGV through-traffic. These are the main North-South connection for thousands of residents in eastern Bath. What will be the point of creating small local cyclable neighbourhoods when normal cyclists – cycling to school, Uni or work – can't access them because to get there they'd have to cycle along main roads they share with 2 HGVs every 2 or 3 minutes?

With all that happened in the last 2 years, how could you accept return of 1000 HGVs a day to a road they would be sharing with cyclists, with life-threatening pollution levels? This should be non-negotiable; how could you make it safe?

Will you build segregated lanes to protect those who started walking and cycling on these main roads as you asked them to?

How will you get hauliers to continue using routes outside B&NES they are currently using?

How will you avoid the Bridge being used by 48 Tonne HGVs the Government already plans to introduce on some UK roads?

Will you have the courage to make the Class C CAZ Class D? The CAZ modelling showed parts of London Road are expected to remain illegally polluted for years.

Your duty to preserve the Heritage Asset and your duty to residents point in the same direction – the more HGVs use the bridge, the worse the air quality along the local main roads **and the sooner the bridge will cease to be available as a vital connecting route for B&NES residents and businesses.**

The recommendation before you is to just allow HGV through-traffic back and kick the can down the road for a decade or so. That isn't good enough. Please reject the recommendation before you and insist that residents of eastern Bath are given a fairer deal.