

Scrutiny Panel Meeting 13th March 2017

According to "Getting Around Bath" adopted by the council in 2014, there is a strategy to make Bath the UK's most walkable city. However apart from a few pilot schemes and tinkering around the edges, none of the measures suggested to reduce the impact of vehicles in Bath has yet been achieved and pollution has not been reduced. Drastic action needs to be taken to effect change and whilst there are some excellent schemes being considered within this document, we do not believe this plan goes far enough to have an impact on improving the levels of air pollution in Bath.

1 Fund for tackling congestion relating to sustainable or public transport In last week's budget the chancellor announced a £690m competitive fund for tackling congestion and wants to encourage bids based on sustainable transport solutions and investment in public transport, rather than, for road building. None of the current proposals in the Bath Air Quality Action Plan Review appear to qualify for these funds, so what is the council going to bid for under this scheme? Should the Bath Air Quality Action Plan be modified to include sustainable transport solutions which would also address issues of pollution eg trams, funiculars, cable cars, or even just cycle racks on the front of buses?

2 Clean Air Zone Bath needs to adopt a Clean Air Zone restricting access to the most polluting diesel vehicles (the Class D CAZ modelled by Defra) including buses, taxis, delivery vehicles, private cars, motorcycles and mopeds. We would like an ambitious approach to allow for the total ban on certain classes of vehicles (e.g. diesel bans introduced in Paris and Madrid) and partial ban of non-ULEV vehicles in the city centre, except for residents. Without extra public funding for local government to implement CAZs, charge based restrictions (e.g. the Nottingham workplace parking levy or London's congestion charge) offer a viable means of changing people's travel behaviour. Nottingham's workplace parking levy has raised £9 million in revenue for reinvestment in transport projects across the city (eg bus and tram networks, with an associated package of support measures e.g. personal travel planning and season ticket loans) however I note that a similar scheme has not been included in the suggestions.

3 Active Travel We need to create safer more convenient conditions for active travel. It is not enough to keep saying that walking is given the highest priority in Bath and cycling second, but funds have to be made available to support improvements to both the walking and cycling environment. In addition we dispute the council figures that only 7% of traffic is down to the school run, when the national average figure is 20% and we believe this is a major contributor to congestion and air pollution in Bath. Bristol City Council currently funds a Walk to School coordinator. This led to a drop in car use of almost a third from 39 to 27 per cent within 1 year. Behaviour change interventions work best when paired with removal of barriers to walking and cycling identified by communities – for example, by linking recent Community Street Audits conducted by Sustrans to modest capital budgets. It shows how community involvement can make a tangible difference and builds confidence in local authorities.

In 3 minutes I could only cover 3 main areas we believe are fundamental to reducing Bath's air pollution over the next 5 years. However Transition Bath would like answers to the questions raised in this submission summarised below:

- 1. what is the council going to bid for under the congestion scheme announced in last week's budget?*
- 2. should the Bath Air Quality Action Plan be modified to include sustainable transport solutions which would also address issues of pollution?*
- 3. why are you not considering a more ambitious approach to allow for the total or partial ban on diesel vehicles?*
- 4. why has a workplace parking levy, modified to the needs of Bath not been included in the suggested packages?*
- 5. would consideration be given to funding a Living Streets schools post to reduce the number of children driven to school and this be included within the current review?*
- 6. can funds be found to remove barriers to walking and cycling identified by local communities*