

Nottingham Friends of the Earth

Nottingham needs a Clean Air Zone

PLEASE EMAIL YOUR MP AND LOCAL COUNCILLORS TO ASK THE GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL COUNCILS TO SET UP A CLEAN AIR ZONE FOR NOTTINGHAM WITHOUT DELAY

(find them at www.writetothem.com)

Air pollution kills around 40,000 people in the UK every year, mostly from traffic pollution – including around 200 in Nottingham City and 600 in the rest of the County killed by air pollution every year.

It is estimated that particulates are associated with 29,000 deaths per year in the UK, and nitrogen dioxide with 23,500 deaths. Because of overlap between these figures the overall total is around 40,000 with a cost to society over £20bn p.a.

In spite of a number of Air Quality Management Areas¹ being declared over ten years ago, a number of cities in the UK, including Nottingham, had failed to meet EU limits on air pollution by 2015 (which should have been met by 2010).

Following action in the courts by an activist legal group Client Earth, the government eventually produced an Action Plan at the end of 2015 requiring non-compliant local authorities, including Nottingham, to implement Clean Air Zones “to reduce NO₂ levels to the necessary level in the shortest possible time and by 2020 at the latest”.

But Client Earth had to go back to the courts in October 2016 to order the government to act more quickly and to allow for evidence that the actual pollution from vehicles is higher than in lab tests.

Clean Air Zones will mean restricting or charging HGVs, buses, coaches and taxis which don't meet required pollution standards. But we are still waiting for Scoping Studies which are the first step to agreeing what the Zones will cover. And we want to see cars and vans included as well in Nottingham's Clean Air Zone.

Friends of the Earth wants to see:

- action on Clean Air Zones as a matter of urgency (in all cities and large towns);
- Clean Air Zones to include restrictions on the most polluting vans and cars, both petrol and diesel, as well as buses and HGVs;
- a national scrappage scheme for dirty diesels.

¹ Nottingham City has two Air Quality Management Areas – covering roads around the city centre and Dunkirk Island on the ring road. There are also AQMAs in surrounding boroughs:

- Rushcliffe – roads leading to Trent Bridge
- Gedling – A60, Daybrook
- Broxtowe – next to M1 at Trowell and Nuthall

The Director of Public Health reported on the impact of air pollution in 2014 (to Nottinghamshire Wellbeing Board in July 2014, City Wellbeing Board in October 2014). The City Overview and Scrutiny Panel received reports in July 2016.

ACTION ON AIR POLLUTION

Actions suggested by the Director of Public Health in 2014 included:

- Nearly 80% of car trips under five miles could be replaced by walking, cycling or using public transport;
- Promote active travel amongst local authority staff and major employers
- Improve street environments to prioritise walkability over cars;
- Inform susceptible individuals of the risks of air pollution and how to take avoiding action;
- Organise 'eco-driving' training for taxi drivers, for example to avoid engine idling;
- Replace boilers with least polluting models;
- Ensure new buildings are air quality neutral;
- Make full use of local authority powers to regulate types of traffic and traffic flows.

Friends of the Earth recommendations for individuals include:

- Leave the car at home (one trial found that car drivers are exposed to twice the air pollution compared to walking the same route, and 8 times the exposure of cycling);
- Walk away from the road edge;
- Avoid congested routes whether in a car or bus, cycling or walking;
- If driving, when stopped turn off the engine;
- Take note of pollution alerts;
- To reduce indoor air pollution: open windows, use natural cleaning products (and avoid air fresheners), don't smoke, maintain boilers and cookers;
- Note that plants and trees catch air pollution so prefer walking through green areas – and get planting!

Nottingham Friends of the Earth supports action being taken by Nottingham City Council, including:

- Workplace Parking Levy (which helps to reduce commuting by car as well as funding the tram);
- Low emission vehicles
- Electric vehicles, and electric charging points;
- Promoting business travel plans and 'Smarter Choices';
- Improved routes for walking and cycling;
- Support for electrification of the Midland Mainline.