

Councillor Whitehead
Correspondence by email

February 9th 2021

Dear Councillor Whitehead

Thank you for your letter dated 21 November 2020 and I must apologise for the delayed response.

As the modelling we have shared suggests, small numbers of non-compliant vehicles may seek to avoid the Clean Air Zone we are implementing in Bath. Whilst your officers may be sceptical about these forecasts, I can reassure you that they have not only been reviewed and validated by my own officers, but also the government team and their panel of independent experts. As such there is a good likelihood that the modelling is correct. In addition these forecasts ignore the impact of the supporting measures we have put in place, in particular the work being done with local and national operators to redistribute and upgrade their fleets so as to ensure as many compliant vehicles as possible come into Bath, thereby mitigating any diversionary impact.

I note from your letter that you also have a number of towns in Wiltshire that, like Bath, have air quality exceedances. It would be helpful for my officers to understand what work is already being done or planned to bring levels in those towns back within legal limits - like you we too are concerned about the potential impact of any measures being introduced by other authorities to address air quality issues elsewhere on our own towns and villages. In addition as we are introducing the country's first charging Clean Air Zone outside London, and as part of this have been working closely with both government and other leading local authorities, it may be that we have useful learning that can be shared.

Whilst our request to government for additional funding to extend our monitoring network into your own authority area was unfortunately rejected at full business case stage, we remain committed to working with your officers to monitor for any impact. I am unaware of what monitoring infrastructure you already have in place, but I expect that in combination with our own monitoring network (and an understanding of the likely impact of the measures to address your own air quality exceedances) we can develop a joint approach to monitoring that addresses any concerns you may have regarding traffic displacement as a result of the Clean Air Zone in Bath.

Finally, I would like to reaffirm our commitment to working closely with you and your officers as neighbouring Authorities and of course as part of the Western Gateway Strategic Transport Board that is seeking to address the wider transport issues that affect us both. I understand that there is already progress between the members of this important sub-national group and we look forward to delivering on the themes identified in the plan that has been produced - including a commitment to improving air quality across the region - over the coming months and years.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Dine Romero', written in black ink.

Cllr Dine Romero
Leader of Bath and North East Somerset Council