

19th February 2021

Cllr Dine Romero
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Cabinet Office
Wiltshire Council
Bythesea Road
County Hall
Trowbridge
Wiltshire
BA14 8JN

Our ref: PW/PT/PW21016

Dear Cllr Romero

Re: Clean Air Zone

Thank you for your letter of 9th February. It is unfortunate that your response to my letter of 21st November comes so close to the introduction of the Clean Air Zone in Bath when the issue of monitoring has not been resolved.

We are indeed sceptical of the forecasts and assumptions from your modelling, not least because we understand from Defra that they only fund monitoring of the CAZ and its immediate periphery, which does not include the impact on our west Wiltshire towns. Defra are not saying there is no need to monitor across a wider area, merely that they do not fund that, and you have confirmed this in your letter. It does not, however, absolve you of your responsibilities to monitor the impact further afield.

It is irrelevant to ask us what we are doing to bring the air quality exceedances in Westbury and Bradford on Avon (the two nearest AQMAs) within legal limits. The fact remains that as Bath's CAZ limits the more polluting vehicles (unless HGVs, for example, pay a fee of £100, which is highly unlikely), they will be diverted from Bath through our Wiltshire towns and have an additional adverse impact on an already existing air quality problem. Shunting the problem away from Bath and not caring what the impact will be elsewhere is simply not acceptable as clearly stated in government guidance.

We therefore expect BaNES to fund monitoring of the wider area as discussed at the earlier stages of scheme development, and produce evidence of the impact on the following towns in Wiltshire:-

Westbury
Trowbridge/Southwick/North Bradley
Melksham
Bradford on Avon
Box
Atworth

Cont...

We are particularly concerned about the impact in Westbury which has many residential properties opening straight on to the A350. We are already aware of additional HGV traffic diverting through our towns because of the weight limit on Cleveland Bridge. We have accepted this with good grace while the repairs are carried out, but not for the long term, which the CAZ will impose. There may be a change in vehicular traffic once Cleveland Bridge has reopened, but with the CAZ it will still mean that all the more polluting vehicles will be diverted elsewhere. Many other vehicles may also seek to avoid the CAZ because they do not understand whether they are permitted to drive through it or not without incurring a charge. Roads in west Wiltshire are the only alternatives for many of those journeys. It is all these impacts that we require to be monitored.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Whitehead', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Philip Whitehead
Leader

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