



Wednesday 4th April 2018

David Williams
Chief Executive Officer
Portsmouth City Council
Civic Offices
Guildhall Square
Portsmouth
PO1 2BG

Dear David Williams,

Re: Bring air pollution in Portsmouth within legal limits

Portsmouth's air quality is among the worst in the UK, with pollution levels in continuous breach of both legal limits specified in the EU Air Quality Directive, English law and World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines. The Let Pompey Breathe campaign calls for stronger action to tackle the problem, including releasing an Air Quality Action Plan for consultation as soon as possible.

In February 2018 the High Court ruled the Government's plans to reduce air pollution are inadequate and unlawful. The Court explained that the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) 2017 Air Quality Plan does not contain sufficient measures for 33 local authority areas to ensure substantive compliance with the Article 13 of Directive 2008/50/EC and Regulation 26 of the English Regulations (the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010 (2010/1001)). Portsmouth is the most polluted of those 33 local authorities. The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs select committee has called on Defra to take stronger measures and clarify its guidance.¹ Defra has set a deadline of 31 July 2018 for councils to produce an action plan.²

PTO...

¹ <http://www.ehn-online.com/news/article.aspx?id=17027>

² <https://www.airqualitynews.com/2018/03/29/deadline-set-by-Defra-for-air-quality-plan-councils/>

The Department of Health has identified air pollution as one of the biggest public health risks nationally. The most immediate action is tackling nitrogen dioxide (NO²) concentrations around roads – a statutory air quality limit value that many UK cities are failing to meet. Defra’s analysis has suggested that exposure to nitrogen dioxide (NO²) has an effect on national mortality “equivalent to 23,500 deaths” every year. Portsmouth shares in that death toll.

Pollution has not appreciably decreased in the last 5 years. Portsmouth faces potentially worsening pollution from the new city centre road and Eastern Road schemes. Further road capacity increases should be avoided unless air pollution modelling shows the traffic schemes enable Portsmouth to quickly become compliant, and unequivocally demonstrates that residents’ health and life expectancy will not be compromised by increased congestion. Despite publication of the Council’s Air Quality Strategy in June 2017, which is sadly unambitious and lacking specifics, the draft action plan setting out how safe air quality levels will be met is not yet released for consultation and no timeline has been given on when this will be available. To ensure compliance, the action plan should include implementation timetables, estimates of improved air quality to follow, and indication of the expected time required to attain the objectives.

We urgently need better solutions to address traffic pollution in the city. Not just around tourist areas such as Gunwharf Quays, but including Fratton Road, Kingston Road and London Road where residents live, work and learn. Consultation on the draft plan will ensure all residents can have their say.

One key measure to reduce traffic pollution is provision of alternatives to car travel, including improved walking, cycling and public transport. PCC should recognise Defra’s finding that “charging [Clean Air Zones (CAZ)] offer the fastest and most effective route to air quality improvements”. Every day that passes is one too many for those vulnerable to dirty air, we need urgent delivery of an Action Plan supported by local residents to ensure air quality is within legal limits and safe for pedestrians, cyclists and children walking to school.

Yours Sincerely,

Tim Sheerman-Chase
Lead Petitioner
#LetPompeyBreathe
letpompeybreathe@greenpompey.org.uk

Keith Taylor
MEP for South East England
keithtaylor@greenmeps.org.uk

CC’

- Councillor Donna Jones, Leader of the Council
- Dr Jason Horsley, Director of Public Health
- Richard Lee, Regulatory Service Manager



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