

Friends of the Earth speak out for clean air

Friends of the Earth (FoE) would like you to ask the Government to fund their Clean Air Plan.

Earlier in the week FoE revealed that levels of air pollution on streets in Scotland are still breaking legal limits and some in Edinburgh are among the worst. They produced this heat map showing in red the worst offenders. They reported that St John's Road and Queensferry Road are getting worse rather than better.



In Corstorphine, plans to build a new Waitrose supermarket on St John's Road within a declared Pollution Zone are being opposed by local residents who are worried that the associated 140 parking spaces as part of the plans will invite more traffic and air pollution into the area.

Helen Crowley, 38, is a mum of two and leads the Corstorphine Waitrose Campaign. She said:

"There are hundreds of children walking to and from school via St John's Road every day. I was shocked to learn how bad the pollution is and what damage it can do to our health. You see a lot of children at school with asthma inhalers, more than when I was at school, and you wonder if it's due to the pollution. I worry what harm the congestion and pollution is doing to my kids.

"St John's Road is one of Scotland's most polluted streets. Edinburgh City Council should not approve developments that will attract more cars and lorries to the area until pollution levels are brought under control."

The Scottish Government has launched a clean air action plan, called the “Low Emission Strategy,” for consultation.

It sets out action already being taken by the Scottish Government and its agencies, health boards and local authorities to tackle air pollution. It also contains proposals for improving air quality across the country by, for example, better co-ordinating policies at national and local level.

Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, Aileen McLeod, said:

“Clean air is essential for our health, wellbeing and to protect our environment and we know that it is the most vulnerable members of our society – the very young, the elderly and those with existing cardiovascular and respiratory conditions – who suffer the most from the effects of air pollution.

“Although we’ve made excellent progress reducing emissions across Scotland in recent years, it is clear that more needs to be done particularly in our towns and cities where pockets of poor air quality remain.

“Improving Scotland’s air quality is not something that can be tackled by Government alone – it needs action from local authorities, businesses, the third sector and the general public. This draft strategy provides a framework within which we can all work together to achieve our vision of Scotland’s air being amongst the cleanest in Europe and I urge as many people as possible to respond to our consultation.”

Minister for Transport and Islands, Derek Mackay, said:

“This year will see record investment in active travel – nearly £40 million – to promote the uptake of cycling and walking, with £17 million being invested over the last two years in low emission vehicles and infrastructure and our

Green Bus Fund scheme, which is supporting bus operators moving to cleaner, greener technologies. This investment is helping us achieve our vision of freeing Scotland's towns, cities and communities from the damaging effects of petrol and diesel fuelled vehicles by 2050.

"Greater use of public transport, green infrastructure, cycling and walking will help make our urban areas more pleasant spaces to move around and spend time in, with additional benefits realised like reducing congestion, improving traffic flow, and delivering practical and financial benefits for businesses."

A spokesman for FoE said: "The Strategy is the best thing that the Government has put on the table to date to tackle air pollution, but it has no funding attached to it so could end up being toothless.

"The Government's budget plan for the coming year is to spend a meagre £3.15 million to tackle air quality, compared with a whopping £700 million on building new motorways and roads. Meanwhile, air pollution costs the Scottish economy £1.6 billion in health costs and days of work lost. A little more to help air quality could go a long way.


"We need to send a strong message to the Scottish Government that they need to put their money where their mouth is to make our air safe to breathe!"


FoE ask you to take a moment to email John Swinney, Deputy First Minister & Finance Secretary to ask that he doubles the funding available in the budget to tackling air pollution.


You can take action [here](#) and you can read the consultation document below.



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