

Friends of the Earth claim Scottish Budget is bad news for good air quality

✘ Reacting to the launch in parliament of the 2015-2016 budget today, Emilia Hanna, air pollution campaigner for Friends of the Earth Scotland said:

“The Government’s failure to invest in clean air measures will ultimately cost lives. Traffic-related air pollution is creating a public health crisis and is responsible for 2000 premature deaths in Scotland every year.

“The Government is consulting on a new Low Emission Strategy right now and the Budget could have given that Strategy a kickstart. Instead, we will have to wait an extra year for the Government to back clean air measures.

“The lack of serious spending on tackling air pollution will end up costing us all. Air pollution costs the Scottish economy around £1.6 billion annually in healthcare spending and days lost at work.”

Friends of the Earth revealed Scotland’s most polluted streets last month. They analysed the streets for two toxic pollutants and found dangerous levels of pollution. In Edinburgh St John’s Road had become worse since 2013 and was number two on the list just behind Hope Street in Glasgow. Other streets in Edinburgh named and shamed included Queensferry Road and Salamander Street. Friends of the Earth quoted Helen Crowley, 38, a mum of two and campaigner against the new Waitrose planned for St John’s Road as saying that the council should prevent the development on grounds of air pollution alone.

The Scottish Government pledged just £3.15 million, the same as last year, to air quality measures compared with almost

£700 million towards building new roads.

“To tackle air pollution local councils need to roll out Low Emission Zones but these require around £1 million to start up and £500,000 in annual running costs. Cash-strapped councils should not be expected to bear the brunt of these costs without Government support. An extra £3 million in the budget for air quality could have gone a long way.”

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