

TramForward

Campaigning for Light Rail

PRESS RELEASE FROM *TramForward*

4 July 2012

***TramForward* calls for trams to combat health risks from pollution**

The recent news that the UK continues to fail to meet European targets for limiting the air pollutant nitrogen dioxide and that substantial fines are imminent, coming soon after the announcement by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) (part of the World Health Organization) that they had officially classified diesel engine exhaust as carcinogenic to humans, highlights the problem of air quality in our cities and its relation to public health.

Air pollution from nitrogen dioxide and particulates is recognised by the government and medical experts as the second-biggest public health threat after smoking, costing the UK an estimated £20bn a year. While some progress has been made on particulates, London remains the most heavily polluted city in Europe for nitrogen dioxide.

The internal combustion engine is a major source of this pollution, which is most marked in city streets with their high density of slow moving traffic closed in by high buildings. The replacement of large numbers of diesel-powered buses on the busiest urban routes by trams (pollution-free at the point of use) would, therefore, be a significant factor in improving local air quality and thereby public health.

TramForward calls upon the government and local transport authorities to plan for the increased use of electric-powered trams for trunk routes in our major cities and towns and to emphasise the public health benefits accruing from such a policy.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. TramForward is the campaigning arm of the Light Rail Transit Association.
2. The Light Rail Transit Association is the world's leading organisation campaigning for better public transport through light rail, tramway and metro systems in our towns and cities for 75 years. It also supports the revitalisation of suburban and rural transport through the application of light rail.
3. The LRTA acts through its network of local branches, which campaign for better transport in their localities.
4. Membership of the LRTA costs about 12p a day. To join, visit www.lrta.org or write to the Membership Secretary, LRTA, 38 Wolseley Road, Sale, Greater Manchester, M33 7AU. Members of the LRTA receive the monthly magazine *Tramways & Urban Transit* - written and read by experts in the field - and gain other benefits including discounts on videos and books, tours of transport systems and cut-price admission to selected transport sites.
5. Press enquiries - please contact:
Jim Harkins, Chairman External Relations Group, LRTA,
Auchenshuggle Junction, 8 Beechmoore, Moore, Warrington WA4 6EU
Telephone: 01925 740675; 07721 378223
Email: lightrailuk@aol.com