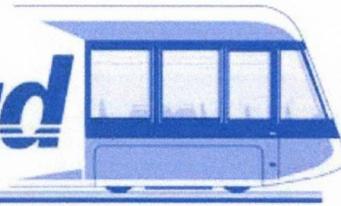




TramForward



A PRESS RELEASE FROM THE LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT ASSOCIATION

Trams would cut premature death rate from air pollution.

22 March 2019

TramForward notes the publication of research which has used new data to estimate that nearly 800,000 people die prematurely each year in Europe because of air pollution, and that life expectancy is reduced by an average of more than two years. The figure for the UK is 64,000p.a, a substantial increase on the previously accepted figure of 40,000.

The new research, published in the European Heart Journal (<https://academic.oup.com/eurheartj/advance-article/doi/10.1093/eurheartj/ehz135/5372326>), indicates that whilst air pollution reaches the lungs initially, its effect via the bloodstream on heart disease and strokes is responsible for twice as many deaths as respiratory diseases. This is caused by minute particulate matter known as PM_{2.5}.

Road traffic is a significant contributor to air pollution and a major source of PM_{2.5}. While much is being done to reduce tail-pipe emissions from combustion engines by a switch to electric or hybrid vehicles this leaves another source of PM_{2.5}, which comes from the wear of tyres, brake linings and road surfaces. Rubber-tired vehicles all contribute to this even when electric-powered.

TramForward advocates the wider use of trams running with steel wheels on steel rails as a means of cutting this pollution in our cities and towns. Trams have also proved to be very effective at persuading motorists to abandon their cars for public transport thus further reducing pollution on the streets.

LRTA Chair Paul Rowen said: "Current UK government plans to reduce air pollution in our towns and cities are woefully inadequate. This report shows how serious the problem is and demands immediate government action."

NOTES

1. The LRTA (<http://www.lrt.org/>) is the world's leading organisation campaigning for better public transport in urban areas through light rail, tramway and metro systems and has been in existence for more than 80 years. It also supports the revitalisation of suburban and rural transport through the application of light rail and TramTrain technology.

2. Press enquiries - please contact:

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