

## COUNCIL'S VIEW ON AIR POLLUTION – We don't think it matters much it's only 'aspirational'.

### PRESS RELEASE –

- At the first of three 'meet the people' exercises in Edinburgh; Council officers admit the problem with air pollution from traffic exceeding Scottish, EU and UK levels --- but dismiss it by saying the levels are only 'aspirational'.
- Not only are TIE and the City Council saying pollution doesn't matter at existing levels ----- they are not concerned that their own actions are creating even higher levels.
- Their own figures show 134,500 households in Edinburgh WILL have WORSE Air Quality in Terms of dangerous particulate PM10 by 2026
- This isn't 'going to happen anyway'—it is going to happen BECAUSE of the tram being forced through—The tram causes the problem.
- At the meeting the Council approach seems to be that it's all a question of mind over matter.... Air pollution doesn't matter, and they don't mind it at all.

A group of Edinburgh residents walked out of the first of three 'open doors' meetings shocked and saddened at the way council officers reacted to their concerns.

The meetings, attended by a team of officials, environmental health people and planners, were supposed to shed light on the project.

Instead the Council/Tie team spent the evening evading questions saying 'wider Issues', such as the dangers to health posed by the displaced traffic, would be handled at a later stage in TRO's 2 and 3. When pressed on THIS point Alan Bowen for the council, agreed there was no guarantee they would ever be addressed at all.

This method of postponing debate about issues of concern, and then later blocking debate because 'they should have been raised earlier' is precisely the tactic relied on by the Council throughout this project.

Unable to get straight answers to straight questions the residents decided there was no point in hearing the official's views on non-issues and left the meeting.

Outside **Alistair Laing**, one of the residents, said:” In a way we were almost expecting it but an American friend of mine Professor James Fraser, a retired Criminologist came along just to see Scottish local democracy in action, and he was extremely shocked at what he described as the off hand way people were treated by the officials.”

“The final straw was Allan Bowen’s assertion that the main issue that concerns us all of the displaced traffic and the various effects, on health, life, and the world heritage buildings; couldn’t be talked about in any way because it might come under ‘wider issues’ .”

“When he then couldn’t give a guarantee, or even an assurance, it would ever be openly debated it was clear the whole evening was a waste of time---ours and theirs.”

Another resident **Allan Alstead** said: “The way the meeting was set up and conducted, and the debate carefully controlled, is absolutely typical of the way the whole tram project has been run.

They want to seem to be doing something and give the appearance of democratic accountability but in reality they feel they own the City and the residents are just an inconvenience.”

“We have all seen the enormous efforts made to change the whole of society to bring in the ban on smoking indoors in any public place --- air quality pollution is three times worse in terms of its effects yet a council official can blithely sit there and tell us that for traffic created air pollution the target levels are ‘aspirational!’”

“There are another 134,000 households in Edinburgh who will find out soon enough what the effects on their lives will be of this way of thinking if nothing is done---there is still time to solve this, but the council need a sea change in attitude to start admitting the problem before they can hope to find a solution.”

Ends.....