

Headlines from SEPA (Scottish Environmental Protection Agency) hosted conference of Air Quality Council Officers, Consultants and Transport Planning experts held in Edinburgh.

- More people die each year in the UK because of causes attributable to poor air quality than died in the whole of the Blitz---50,000.
- The gain in life expectancy through reducing traffic pollution is around 4 times in life expectancy terms than the gain in reducing passive smoking.
- Remember all the fuss about passive smoking and the smoking bans? Of course you do it has been one of the biggest and longest running health stories of the last two decades
- Remember the fuss about poor air quality caused by the tram being up to 4 times bigger a problem than passive smoking? er---No!

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PRESS RELEASE –Residents worried about pollution levels resulting from Edinburgh’s tram scheme were happy to be given the chance ask questions of experts gathered for the prestigious Urban Air Quality Conference hosted by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and held at the Scottish Government Offices at Victoria Quay, Leith.

- **Edinburgh Tram scheme planners, and City councillors are blind to the magnitude of real health risks from poor air quality**
- **The current financial troubles of the project should be seen as an opportunity to reassess the dangers while there IS still time.**

- **The tram scheme is not a Green solution—it will MAKE air pollution worse in Edinburgh.**

The **Urban Air Quality conference** examined the same issues residents have been battling to bring to the attention of the council without any success.

The council should turn their cash problems into an opportunity to take a new look at the deaths and children's illnesses that the present scheme will have on people across the City

Ordinary residents attended the conference and took the chance to talk with experts---- the facts speak for themselves.

Which is just as well because TIE and CEC refuse to talk to the people – perhaps because they know the facts, but are frightened to let ordinary people know.

One of the residents who attended, Allan Alstead, said: “The introduction by one of the UK’s leading experts Dr Enda (corr) Hayes of the University of West of England opened the conference with two statements that are almost beyond belief in a way.”

“The first was that more people will die this year in Great Britain earlier than they otherwise should; through poor air quality, than died in the Blitz through the whole of the Second World War.”

“That is shocking!”

“The second fact that Dr Hayes highlighted is that if we can reduce air pollution caused by traffic the gain in life expectancy for everyone will be around three times more than reducing passive smoking!”

“The experts accepted this as an everyday fact but, speaking as someone who is not an expert, I was amazed.”

“But not as amazed as when I heard the frustrations of a number of the experts that, in effect, they are left to twiddle their thumbs on the sidelines until the politicians decide it’s safe to call them in.”

“I went to the meeting simply to try and get more information about how exactly the Tram scheme can create pollution when officials and councillors have spent many years telling us all that it is a great Green success story.”

“But I came away stunned.... The situation is far worse than I thought.”

Alistair Laing, another concerned resident said:

“It’s clear things are far worse than I thought, and far—far worse than the ordinary Edinburgh man, or woman, in the street thinks.”

“The worst thing is that the air pollution experts know they are only brought into a scheme when it is far too late--- which is something we have been saying for months.”

“At the present time most people are looking at the sheer cost of this scheme and the money that has been wasted through incompetence and hubris”

“Of course that is bad...but as ordinary Edinburgh people who love our city have been more worried about the health of ourselves and people like us.”

“The council are not telling the whole truth; as the conference clearly showed that their own professional experts are incredibly frustrated because planners are producing ideas but without air quality experts having any real involvement”

“Only after a plan... such as the Edinburgh Tram scheme... has been sorted out are Air quality experts brought in.”

By then it's far too late for their opinions to change anything and they are left justifying schemes that they know in their hearts are going to have extremely serious health effects on ordinary people whose health should come before anything else.”

“Instead of being one of the main things---Health is one of the last things that gets considered.

“ The people at the conference are some of the most knowledgeable in the world when it comes to air pollution and health effects of bad quality air and frankly they are frustrated and depressed that politicians see them as the people to provide the alibi after something like the tram scheme has been agreed.”

“Air quality, preserving life and making sure children don’t have to become asthmatic should be there at the top of list along with creating jobs and making the city better, but they aren’t.”

“The experts know that, and the politicians who are ultimately responsible know that, the only people who don’t know it are the ordinary people.”

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