

An 'Arc of confusion' from CEC

- A recent report from the Council triggered by health statistic anomalies has raised concerns about traffic created pollution and its effects - This new found concern has been expressed in recent media articles as being of sufficient scale to demand consideration of extensive traffic controls.
- This all stands in harsh contrast to the attempts by the Council to suppress similar concerns that have been expressed for a number of years by residents in the 'Northern Arc'. Concerns both as to the effects of council created traffic pollution increases in their own streets, but also across huge areas of the city---up to 139,500 households, or nearly 300,000 people –in a city with around 500,000 people.
- All cities, towns and countries in Europe are struggling with the explosion of scientific evidence pointing to the grave effects of this problem--- there are no easy answers or quick fixes.
- But only Edinburgh across the whole of the UK and even Europe is actively continuing to pursue a policy; the unchanged implementation of a Tram project that not only shifts huge exposures to pollution from short stay tourists and shoppers to permanently occupied homes –but serves to create more of this pollution as well.

The residents group recognise most journalists, councillors and MSPs do now know the basis of their concern. But of course nothing is being done, indeed only in the last few weeks have the true impacts of a development around Charlotte Square been casually revealed as meaning 400 extra vehicles *an hour* being displaced from the Square into the congested same streets.

This came to light almost casually and is apparently the result of the price demanded by developers to return an iconic square to global standards of appearance and utility. This outcome *is* desirable in many ways, but *surely not* at the price of the health of everyone living in streets unable to take this traffic, and further and further afield as the traffic seeks, as it will, ways around the congealing central routes..

Indeed the science on which these suddenly announced bold claims have been made and the implied link with traffic is actually extremely questionable, something even the report itself makes clear.

Section 2:11, page 70 on the pdf file version: "The differences in the admission rates for respiratory disease are less striking, and in the most recent time period the rate is similar to the Edinburgh average."

On the following page (section 2:13): "..... the reasons for this [...relatively low health...] are unclear."

If the CEC do really feel there is the problem as they have stated caused by vehicle flows, even if based on what may be inconclusive health effects,; why are they knowingly creating massive rises in the same pollution by forcing traffic from mainly uninhabited historical main, commercially occupied, thoroughfares and forcing it down densely populated residential streets?

It seems almost pathologically schizophrenic to reveal a possible problem while at the same time denying it exists?

The deep conflicts and difficulties this causes is clear in the conflicts between the statements and actions in respect of the two 'Arcs of confusion'.

The situation can be resolved and the tram built; just not '*this tram*' in '*this city*', without creating an enormous and potentially insoluble problem in the years ahead.

However, what is in in some ways a laughable state of confusion in the council but combined with potentially terrible consequences, illustrate clearly that nothing can really improve until there is a fundamental change in the underlying mindset of the Council to put the City as a whole before their tram project---and not the other way around.

End
