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LETTER TO ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

Dear Geoff;

I am submitting the following letter under Council Procedure Rule 23.3 to be included on the agenda for the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee meeting of 25th June, 2019.

On 20th June, cities around the world marked 'Clean Air Day.' Recent reports show that air pollution is linked to up to 40,000 early deaths a year in the U.K – and that our own city is one of 40 in the U.K listed by the World Health Organisation as breaching safe air pollution limits. In Brighton and Hove exposure to pollutants in the air is linked to 175 deaths each year and is a factor in health conditions such as stroke, heart disease, lung cancer, and both chronic and acute respiratory diseases, including asthma. Reducing air pollution benefits everyone but particularly our children and older people who are disproportionately affected. Studies from the University of Aarhus, Denmark have shown that exposure to increased levels of air pollution can reduce life expectancy by almost a decade.

In February 2018 the council agreed to the following notice of motion put forward by the Green Group:

- 1. Request that a report be brought to Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee, exploring the potential to introduce an annual Cleaner Air Day from 2018, with the aim of raising awareness of the causes and effects of air pollution and thereby helping residents to understand how they can help clean up our air and protect themselves and their children.*
- 2. That such a report assess the implementation of a Cleaner Air Day with consideration of: - suitable roads to be closed, - the most practicable date, - any economic and environmental costs and effects, both short and long term.*

While we welcome the commitment to addressing the climate emergency expressed by the new Labour Council leadership – a shared priority that we have agreed to focus on together - we remain concerned that this committee has yet to receive the report requested above.

Car Free Day on 22nd September presents an important opportunity to enact the requests of our notice of motion. Residents and the council will be able to note that around the world, action is being taken on air pollution. This date will serve as a catalyst for a broader conversation with our communities about transport related air pollution, the need to shift to low emission vehicles and encourage active travel alternatives which are positive for our health.

The next meeting of Environment, Transport and Sustainability Committee will take place on 2nd October – too late for Car Free Day on 22nd September. However, given the declaration

of a climate emergency made by this council I hope that the Chair can agree that we cannot afford to wait this long for action.

Given the impact of air pollution on our residents it is incumbent upon us to take every opportunity to reduce poisonous air; and to recognise that this is an ongoing task. We recognise the work already undertaken by this committee and progress on measures such as an Ultra Low Emission Zone and other work outlined in the Air Quality Programme Board update. Greens are also keen to see that other measures, such as the expansion of the scope and geographical reach of our Low Emission Zones and incentives to encourage the uptake of electric vehicles - are prioritised by this committee.

I would therefore like to take this opportunity to formally request that the Chair works with us to develop actions to combat air pollution, including some specific actions that will ensure the council is ready for Car Free Day in September and can commit to future clean air days. It is vital that the declaration of climate emergency agreed by all parties last year shows it has teeth.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Amy Heley