

TramForward

Campaigning for Light Rail

PRESS RELEASE FROM TramForward

15 March 2016

Trams would cut premature death rate from air pollution.

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. This number is double previous estimates.

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-tyred 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.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. *TramForward* is the campaigning arm of the Light Rail Transit Association.
2. The LRTA is a not-for-profit UK based organisation and has members throughout the world. Free of any trade or political affiliation; it is the world's leading organisation concerned with the achievement of better public transport through light rail, tramway and metro systems in towns and cities world-wide. <http://www.lrta.org/>
3. Press enquiries - please contact:
Jim Harkins, Chairman External Relations Group, LRTA,
Auchenshuggle Junction, 8 Beechmore Moore, Moore, Warrington WA4 6EU
Telephone: 01925 740675; 07721 378223
Email: lightrailuk@aol.com

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Registered Office: 138 Radnor Avenue, Welling, Kent, DA16 2BY
Registered in England and Wales
Company number 5072319