



Early morning traffic building up in the centre of Broomhill

Suburb fumes over air pollution

By PETER KAY

COMMUNITY representatives in Broomhill are to keep up the pressure for traffic improvements and action to tackle air pollution in the suburb and shopping centre.

They meet next week when they will consider the results of a symposium that heard council evidence that levels of nitrogen dioxide in parts of Sheffield, including on the A57 through the middle of Broomhill, are exceeding European limits and pose a serious risk to health.

"While local steps are being taken to reduce harmful emissions, such as the introduction of hybrid buses on the 120 and 52 bus routes, further measures will be necessary," says a report by Broomhill Forum.

"Despite these efforts, there is increasing evidence that pollution levels are rising in some locations, as modern diesel engines emit finer particles and more NO₂."

In the short-term, the community organisation is pursuing a range of initiatives such as maintaining pressure on the council to make it safer for pedestrians to cross to the Crookes junction, asking local schools to encourage parents not to leave engines running while they wait to pick up their children, researching the type of traffic travelling through the shopping

centre, pressing the benefits of car sharing and cycle training and urging the council not to licence old, inefficient black taxis.

In the longer term, it would like to see a 'park and ride' on the west side of Sheffield and even an extension of Supertram through Broomhill – and also on Ecclesall Road and Chesterfield Road.

In general, the forum is campaigning for cultural changes that would see more people using public transport, cycling or walking and fashioning a heart for Broomhill that reverses what is seen as the current situation in which traffic takes priority over pedestrians.

"The greatest challenge is to persuade the public that the threat to their own and their children's health is real," says the forum.

"Air pollution has a bigger impact on their life expectancy than road traffic accidents or passive smoking.

"Significant improvements to our air quality will ultimately depend on a shared responsibility by public transport and commercial vehicle operators and by private individuals making lifestyle choices to reduce car usage in urban areas, which will in

turn contribute to a reduction in harmful traffic emissions."

A symposium at the University of Sheffield's School of Medicine last April, attended by transport and planning experts, bus operators and members of the community, was told that air pollution is an "unseen killer", responsible for up to 500 premature deaths in Sheffield every year.

The council is producing an Air Quality Action Plan and Broomhill Forum wants to see it carried out.

In her annual report, its chair, Prof Leni Oglesby, says: "We appear to be no further forward in addressing the issues of traffic and road safety in the centre of Broomhill.

"There was a consultation conducted by city officers on proposals to change the flow of traffic in the Broomhill centre, but despite clear signals from the community as to their preferred choice of action, nothing further appears to be happening. Air pollution levels remain unacceptably high."

The forum's AGM is at St Mark's Church, Fulwood Road next Wednesday at 4pm.

Also on the agenda are updates on the future of local shops and Broomhill library and the proposed extension to the Children's Hospital.