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Monday, February 28, 2011

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EXCLUSIVE: We reveal worst pollution blackspots



WE'RE BEING CHOKED

TODAY The Star reveals Sheffield's worst blackspots for traffic fumes and air pollution.

And they're not where you might think.

An affluent suburb, home to university professors and hospital medics, tops the list of locations where pollution is at its worst.

But fumes break legal limits, too, on many of

RICHARD MARSDEN
News Reporter

the main routes into and around the city centre.

Now council bosses are drafting a plan of action - as it emerged Sheffield could find itself among UK cities forced to pay £300 million of EU fines for failing to meet air quality targets.

Fumes 50 per cent higher than safe limit: PAGE 2

INSIDE TODAY

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Weather

TONIGHT

YORKSHIRE: Overnight, it will be dry with a good deal of cloud at first, but clear spells forming during the early hours. Light, variable winds. A widespread frost. Min temp -2 to 1C (28-34F).

BRITAIN: A generally dry and chilly night across much of Britain, with a ground frost developing in parts. There will be plenty of cloud across eastern areas of England, with just the small risk of the odd spot of drizzle for south-east England and East Anglia. Fairly cloudy too across north-western Scotland, but it is expected to be largely dry. Elsewhere, predominantly dry with partly clear skies.

SUN & MOON: Sun: Rises 06.56 Sets 17.41
Moon: Rises 04.53 Sets 13.09

LIGHTING UP: Sheffield 17.41 - 06.54
London 17.39 - 06.46 Glasgow 17.49 - 07.08



TOMORROW

YORKSHIRE: Following a clear start it will be mostly dry with some sunshine, but cloudy at times too. Light variable winds. Max temp 5-8C (41-46F). Evening: Generally dry with partly clear skies. Frosty in parts.

THE WEEK AHEAD

WEDNESDAY A dry day with good sunny intervals.
THURSDAY Dry, with sunny spells and patchy cloud.
FRIDAY A rather cloudy, but dry day.



THE WORLD

Country	City	Weather	F	C	£ Abroad
Britain	Sheffield	rain	39	4	-
Australia	Sydney	sunny	88	31	1.51 Dirs
Canada	Toronto	snow	27	-3	1.51 Dirs
Canary Islands		sunny	72	22	1.11 Euro
Cyprus	Larnaca	fair	64	18	1.11 Euro
Denmark	Copenhagen	cloudy	30	-1	8.28 Kr
France	Paris	cloudy	48	8	1.11 Euro
Germany	Berlin	sunny	34	1	1.11 Euro
Greece	Athens	cloudy	45	7	1.11 Euro
Holland	Amsterdam	rain	41	5	1.11 Euro
Ibiza	San Antonio	sunny	57	14	1.11 Euro
Italy	Rome	cloudy	50	10	1.11 Euro
Malorca	Palma	rain	46	9	1.11 Euro
Malta	Valletta	sunny	57	14	1.11 Euro
Portugal	Faro	sunny	68	20	1.11 Euro
Spain	Barcelona	sunny	59	15	1.11 Euro
Sth Africa	Cape Town	sunny	84	29	10.86 Rand
Switzerland	Geneva	cloudy	45	7	1.42 Fr
Turkey	Istanbul	fair	37	3	2.45 Turkey
USA	Miami	cloudy	79	26	1.54 Dirs
USA	New York	cloudy	37	3	1.54 Dirs

DATA PROTECTION

By supplying your contact details, including email address and



Fumes concerns: The busy junction of Whitham Road, Crookes, Nile Street and the A57 Broomhill where the highest reading was recorded.

Leafy suburb has worst air pollution

RICHARD MARSDEN
News Reporter

POLLUTION levels in a leafy Sheffield suburb are the highest in the city - dwarfing even those in areas beside the M1, The Star can reveal.

Statistics compiled from air quality surveys around Sheffield show the amount of nitrogen dioxide - a toxic gas produced by vehicle exhausts - is almost 50 per cent higher in Broomhill than the level considered safe.

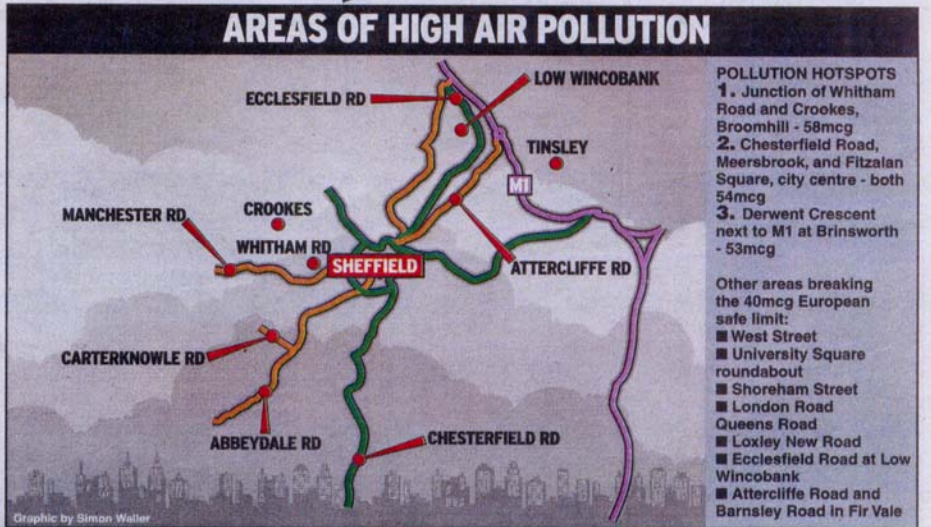
Under European law, presence of the gas is not supposed to exceed 40 microgrammes per cubic metre a year.

Figures obtained by The Star show Sheffield's highest reading of 58mcg was recorded at the junction of Whitham Road and Crookes in Broomhill.

The highest reading in an area close to the traditional air pollution hotspot of the M1 was 10 per cent lower, on Derwent Crescent at Brinsworth.

The joint-second worst areas were Chesterfield Road, Meersbrook - a hotspot for jams - and Fitzalan Square, city centre, a spot often clogged with queuing buses. Sheffield Council is currently putting together an action plan to decide how poor air quality should be tackled.

The news comes as it emerged Sheffield could be among city councils around the UK forced to pay £300m of fines to the European Union



for failing to meet air quality targets.

European law had dictated air quality needed to be brought down to what it deems "safe levels" by last December. The target was missed and a new date of 2015 is likely to be imposed - after which fines will be levied on failing areas.

Community groups in parts of Sheffield where pollution is high have held a meeting with Coun Andrew Sangar, cabinet member for climate change, urging him

to take "tough action".

They said the problem is causing up to 500 premature deaths a year, around 30,000 work days lost to sickness, and costing the NHS around £95m a year in Sheffield.

Neil Parry, of residents' group Sheffield East End Quality of Life Initiative, said: "It is not just areas like Tinsley which suffer."

"Although some action could be taken at a national level, such as reducing the speed limit on motorways in urban areas, and sending

freight by rail, the council can take steps.

"The council could discourage car use, encourage bus companies to bring in cleaner vehicles, and set up zones where access by polluting vehicles is controlled."

The groups urged Coun Sangar to ask all council departments to make action plans to help reduce pollution, and to ensure any new developments minimise car use.

Future industrial schemes could be sited close to rail-

ways to reduce the need for lorries, and new shops could be located at existing district centres rather than out-of-town developments which are hard to reach without a car, they said.

A spokesman for Sheffield Council said: "In the main, breaches of air quality standards occur on the corridors of arterial routes into the city."

"As far as current regulations stand, local authorities are not in line to be fined, it will be the Government."

OPINION

Air pollution figures a worry

IT has long been assumed that air pollution and the motorway go hand in hand.

So it was no surprise that successive surveys highlighted the M1 corridor as a Sheffield blackspot.

But today's revelation that the worst levels in the city are now in Broomhill will give much cause for concern.

It will worry the residents of that area, who have every right to be alarmed at levels of nitrogen dioxide which are 50 per cent higher in Broomhill than what is considered safe.

And it will trouble city politicians who are already under pressure to act on reducing traffic pollution.

That's because city campaigners claim the problem is causing up to 500 premature deaths a year, leading to around 30,000 days lost from work due to sickness, and costing the NHS around £95m a year.

They say measures at a local level include discouraging car use, encouraging bus companies to bring in cleaner vehicles and setting up zones where access by polluting vehicles is controlled.

Sheffield Council is currently putting together an action plan to decide how poor air quality should be tackled.

Let's hope it addresses the concerns of all parties, which means listening to residents, traders, drivers and non-drivers who all want the same thing - a good quality of life.

No doubt some compromise will be needed on all sides, but if a solution is to be reached on such a contentious matter, then better to concede some ground for the greater good.

Let's hope the council's report is completed speedily so we can debate its findings and reach a conclusion which tackles a situation that clearly affects many different areas of Sheffield.