

Transport Emissions: Urban Areas

Sarah Wollaston Chair, Health and Social Care Committee, Chair, Liaison Committee (Commons)

The clean air strategy rightly sets out the compelling case for action to reduce public exposure to air pollution in order to save lives and improve the quality of life for many. We also know that there is a compelling case to get Britain moving and get us out of our cars, and that cycling and walking, even where there is a lot of traffic, exposes people to less air pollution than driving. Does the Secretary of State share my disappointment that there is only a single paragraph in the strategy on active travel? I urge him to go further by strengthening measures to get people out of their cars and, where possible, on to their bikes and walking for their benefit.

Michael Gove The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

My hon. Friend makes a vital point. Today's strategy deals with a number of sources of air pollution, and I commend my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport for showing leadership on precisely the area that she draws attention to. We have spent Â£1.2 billion on a cycling and walking investment strategy. When my colleague Boris Johnson was Mayor of London, he introduced a cycle lane network across the capital, which has contributed hugely to an increase in the number of people cycling across the capital. I absolutely believe that we need to have a switch away from an over-reliance on traditional internal combustion engines, towards new modes of transport, and part of that is making sure that we can cycle and walk wherever possible.

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