

Do you have time to spare?

THIS week (February 23) the Royal Colleges of Paediatrics and Child Health and Physicians published detailed findings on air pollution.

As well as 40,000 annual UK deaths, they linked air pollution to cancer, heart disease, stroke, obesity, diabetes, and dementia and, in the youngest, as a cause of premature and still births, with term babies having lower birth weight and smaller heads (brains).

Damage and effects are also pointed out to the hormone and immune systems, brain development, intelligence and coordination. The associated costs to the UK exceed £20billion each year. Vehicle exhausts are recognised as the most significant cause, damaging health from our very youngest through to old age.

The Royal Colleges indicate it is their duty to speak out when faced with such a clear and avoidable cause of death, illness and disability.

Their call is for urgent, community-wide action to protect the health, well-being and economic sustainability of present and future generations, where everyone accepts personal responsibility and makes concerted efforts to change behaviours.

Central to this is a request to move away from petrol and diesel cars towards public transport, walking and cycling.

We can each help by carefully considering each and every car journey for its need and possible alternative. An ambition of half of our car journey switching mode would be stretching, yet surely achievable for many.

The borough of Enfield has been awarded £30million to assist in the early years of such a transformation.

For the voices and politicians who have the stated intent to reject this seed-corn funding, this undoubted moral and financial case is now as clear as the original bid's strategic justification.

The health and well-being of all of Enfield's residents should now be reflected in unambiguous, reconsidered positions.

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