

# Summary of community consultation on improving air quality in the Elvet triangle (Church Street, Hallgarth Street & Stockton Road).

Report of a meeting held at St. Oswald's Institute on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

Version 1, 31 January 2023. By: Elvet Clean Air (Z Worth, SW Lindsay, M Phillips, P Armstrong, P Carey, R Friederichsen)

## Meeting aims

1. Introduce members of Elvet Clean Air to the local community
2. Raise awareness of the high levels of air pollution in the area
3. Generate conversation to explore solutions to the air pollution

## Event Summary

Twenty-five residents joined the meeting plus 5 members of Elvet Clean Air. Seven people responded online. Most attendees were elder residents, and no students were present. Community members were divided into five groups and asked to discuss four topics: air quality, street safety, greening of our streets and parking policy. Residents added post-it notes on maps of the Elvet triangle suggesting solutions to each of the four topics. These post-it notes were then reviewed by all and sticky dots added to those that people strongly supported. At the end of the meeting 10 topics were discussed and residents invited to stand along a line to indicate their support for different topics. Attendees moved up or down the line according to whether or not they fully supported or were against the proposition. The below descriptions of 'majority in support' etc are based on the number of people indicating their views through their position in the room in response to the question asked.

## Major conclusions

### *Improving Air quality*

1. Improving air quality is a useful approach to improving a range of problems in the Elvet triangle.  
*Majority in support*
2. Reduction of vehicle numbers in the city centre to improve air quality and safety.  
*Majority in support*
3. Electric charging points on the streets (perhaps subsidised by congestion charges?).  
*Majority in support*
4. All buses and taxis to be electric.  
*Many in support*
5. More regular & subsidised bus services.  
*Many in support*
6. Congestion charge for vehicles transiting through Durham (permits required for visitors). Charges based upon vehicle emissions.  
*Many in support*
7. Enforcement of banning heavy goods vehicles (7.5t weight limit) entering Durham.  
*Many in support*

### *Improving street safety*

1. Introduction of a one-way system provided that traffic speed was kept low.  
*Majority in support (approximately 70%) – note: this was a contentious issue with fears of increased motor speed a significant concern.*
2. A 20 mph speed limit.  
*Majority in support*

3. Widening pavements for pedestrians.

*Many in support*

4. Dedicated cycle lanes. Suggestion for widening the cutting on the A177 road so a dedicated cycle lane could be used for those cycling to Maiden Castle sports hall (to reduce car use by students).

*Some in support*

### *Greening*

1. Planting of more trees

*Some in support – note: concerns raised about potential damage to houses caused by roots and the question of who would be responsible for the maintenance of the trees.*

### *Parking policy*

1. Reducing or eliminating student cars from the city centre

*Majority in support – note: almost unanimous.*

2. More park and rides (e.g. Shincliffe & the old 'Cock of the North' site) open for longer hours (very popular, only one dissenter).

*Majority in support*

3. End free parking after 2pm

*Majority in support*

4. Increase parking tariffs

*Majority in support*

5. Providing a dedicated drop-off point for school children attending St Oswald's primary school on Stockton Road – access to school via alleyway.

6. *Some in support*

### Next steps

#### Elvet Clean Air will

1. Seek to find ways to measure nitrogen dioxide levels in key locations experiencing potentially high pollution levels on Church Street (e.g. St Oswald's school), Stockton Road, Hallgarth Street and Whinney Hill.
2. Seek to deepen our understanding of the root causes of traffic; e.g. where drivers are travelling to and from and their reason for driving through the city centre e.g. work, school run.
3. Research examples of best-practice for improving air quality in residential areas in the UK and internationally.
4. Engage with key stakeholders and stakeholder groups (e.g. students, local business owners, school representatives) who did not attend the meeting. Their views are not reflected in this summary but require consideration; though Elvet Clean Air representatives have discussed and the considered St Oswald School leadership's views.

Complete the review of all suggestions made by attendees on post-it notes and the indications of support expressed through sticky dots; the list of proposals to pursue further will be based on careful consideration of all views expressed.

### Conclusion

Residents gave the Elvet Clean Air group permission to proceed with this initiative and to hold another meeting in the future. Elvet Clean Air recognised the need to widen participation to include residents from adjoining streets e.g. Whinney Hill, Old and New Elvet. Residents felt overall that implementing eventual changes should be led by Durham County Council with the collaboration of Durham University.

#### Major implications of the report

1. Reduce the number of vehicles using Durham Streets.
2. Primacy should be given to pedestrians and cyclists, not vehicle drivers.