

OPEN LETTER TO BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

Dear Councillors,

Like many of your residents, we are strongly opposed to your proposals to charge commercial operators up to £100 per day, per vehicle, simply for driving in Bath.

Your plans would be an extremely unwelcome development for businesses in and around the area. As research from the TaxPayers' Alliance has shown, imposing this tax on taxi firms, coach and haulage companies could see fares rise, tourism decline and, worse still, jobs may be lost and businesses go bust.

Compliance with the clean air zone requirements will be impossible for many businesses due to the cost of change, the shortage of second-hand Euro VI lorries, the absence of a lorry retrofit option, and the limited opportunity for redeployment of Euro IV and V vehicles. Taxis, lorries, minibuses and coaches are all needed to bring food, goods, building materials, shoppers and tourists into Bath. For example, every home or shop built in the city requires tonnes of furniture, bricks, concrete and wood. This has to be done by road vehicles. There is no other suitable mode of transport available.

We fully accept that air pollution must be reduced, but clean air zones have been shown to be ineffective, economically damaging and regressive. There are better ways to improve air quality, without imposing yet another tax. For example, one solution would be a tram system in order to reduce the use of cars and buses. The TaxPayers' Alliance have outlined some possible options, which we encourage you to read at: www.taxpayersalliance.com/Bath.

Please join us in opposing these new charges. In effect, for many operators it will become a tax on the sector that will destroy some businesses yet make no material difference to overall air quality. By working with business and residents, you can avoid imposing a pernicious tax and instead create viable, better alternatives.

We urge the council to reject these new charges and commit to considering alternative proposals at the Special Cabinet meeting on Tuesday 5th March.

Signed

