

Council Leader  
London Borough of Bexley  
2 Watling Street  
Bexleyheath, DA6 7AT

July 29, 2023

Dear Teresa,

Commenting on the ULEZ verdict on Friday, you talked about a "moral judgement", presumably unfavourable to the mayor's policy. If the moral-judgement season is open, I would like to say a few words.

Less than two years ago, you and your fellow Bexley Conservatives mourned the death of your peer - and, as some of you called him, friend - James Brokenshire, who died in his early fifties of lung cancer. One could have hoped that this brush with deadly respiratory disease would influence your position on ULEZ and soften your anti-ULEZ rhetoric. (I understand that the order from the Tory HQ had to be obeyed). Yet I am not aware of a single case where you acknowledged the health hazards of air pollution, and the people behind respiratory-disease statistics. Affected motorists - 10-15% of Bexley's households - were front-and-centre. People with lungs - 100% of Bexley's residents - were not in the picture at all, "non-people".

In 2021, researchers from ICL estimated excess deaths due to air pollution for hundreds of Greater London wards - and placed Bexley's Sidcup, Blackfen and Lamorbey, Crook Log and Bexleyheath wards at the very top of a grim league table.

Last week, I asked you who was responsible for Bexley's failure to develop a Bexley Air Quality Action Plan in the 16 years since the Bexley Air Quality Management Area was created. I was being polite. You are responsible, as the council leader during this time. Your Tory peers in Bromley, Harrow and Hillingdon cannot be accused of obsessing over clean air, yet each one has an AQAP. Bexley does not. I am sorry, but you look like a schoolboy who has failed to do his homework, sixteen times.

You see, I am not comparing you with some Lycra-clad Labour council leader eagerly checking their borough's standing in the Healthy Streets Scorecard. (Bexley is second from last there overall, with the bottom place in the "Safe School Streets" category). I am "benchmarking" your administration against other London Tory councils, and you appear to be singularly neglectful to, or even opposed to, clean air. Why is that?

Do you think it's time to let someone with more progressive views take up the reins?

Best regards,

@tonyofsidcup