



PRESS RELEASE

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IS TRANSPORT “AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH” FOR WEST MIDLANDS COUNCILS?

CAMPAIGNERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT in the West Midlands have called on local authorities in the region to reduce carbon emissions from transport. There is currently no model to measure and predict the carbon emissions from transport in the West Midlands metropolitan area, and no strategy to reduce them. Instead, the 2006 - 2011 Local Transport Plan for the West Midlands conurbation is continuing to predict growth of car trips by 14% and a 7% increase in vehicle kilometres, contributing to a predicted national rise in CO2 emissions.

The call for action comes on the same day as the release at cinemas of the film “An Inconvenient Truth”, which looks at the potential impacts from climate change and which documents the campaign by former US vice-president Al Gore to raise awareness of the issue.

Chair of Transport 2000 West Midlands, Kevin Chapman, said that action to tackle the global impacts of climate change needed to start at home. “Ultimately, we all have a part to play by looking at alternative means of transport and minimising travel wherever we can. For example, a pound of CO2 emissions is saved per mile not driven. However, our local councils also have a role in tackling climate change. Building more roads and taking planning decisions that encourage more car use won’t just mean the West Midlands snarls up into grid-lock - it will also help accelerate the process of climate change which will have repercussions for the whole planet and our way of life.”

Chris Williams of Birmingham Friends of the Earth says “given that Birmingham contributes to climate change twice as much as the country of Paraguay, it is only fair that the City Council takes action. Preventing climate change is to the benefit of all of Birmingham’s people”.

Transport 2000 West Midlands has also sent an open letter to the council leaders of the West Midlands, calling on them to commit to a strategy to reduce carbon emissions from transport and to put more investment into sustainable methods of transport. The organisation is arguing that money invested in walking and cycling costs very little but can have big social and environmental benefits - and can help make a big impact to reduce climate change.

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The West Midlands Local Transport Plan is one of the mechanisms used to determine Government funding for transport improvements. It is currently being considered by the Department for Transport.
2. More information about the film "An Inconvenient Truth" can be found on the website www.aninconvenienttruth.co.uk The film goes on general release on Friday.
3. Transport 2000 West Midlands is affiliated to Transport 2000, an organisation promoting the development of sustainable transport, including improved public transport services.
4. Friends of the Earth campaigns on many environmental issues, including the promotion of sustainable transport.
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