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Reading Council seeks meeting with residents, releases report on train depot noise

- Report says 'like being backstage at Reading Festival'
- Timing, nature of noise could constitute statutory nuisance

Reading Borough Council is seeking a meeting on 17th February 2016 with local residents on how to respond to Great Western's letter to Cardiff Road residents telling them to expect up to three more years of nuisance from the Reading Train Care Depot.

"I'm very pleased the reporting of the depot issue in the local media has pressured the council into re-engaging with residents. However, this must lead to concrete action on the council's part not further stalling and obstruction. To this end I have suggested in my acceptance of the invitation that the council take the golden opportunity the period between now and the meeting offers to start meaningful noise and pollution measurements. This might help dispel some of the deep distrust of the council among local residents. The council has replied that this is not possible because although it is keen to see more monitoring it would need access to residents' properties and the monitoring would need to be done over an appropriate period of time," Bell Tower Community Association Chairman Jonathan Dart said.

Report finally released after nine months

The press campaign has also led to the council writing to a Cardiff Road resident giving him the conclusions of a visit to his house by officers to measure noise in the early hours of March 31, 2015. The council says noise data was corrupted by the strong winds but that the officers made subjective observations. These include: "At 3:29 officers attended Cardiff Mews communal space and rear garden...Upon opening the door to the garden the low frequency hit you like walking into a wall. There was a strong throb. I would describe this as similar to the feeling you would get back stage to (sic) Reading Festival."

The report also notes that "the nature of the noise and time it is occurring could mean that there is a statutory nuisance".

Mr. Dart said: "The release of this information is welcome but also raises several questions and issues including: Why has it taken nine months to release this information and why, even under the caveat of it having been corrupted, has the council not released the data? Why has the council not taken any further measurements given its legal duty to take action on statutory nuisance and that the data on the night concerned was corrupted and its latest expression of 'keenness' to do so? As far as pollution goes the council has only measured nitrogen dioxide as a monthly/annual average. There is an hourly limit for NO₂ and given the nature of the siding usage (mostly only at night) these short-term concentrations should be assessed. The council has also not measured particulates or other compounds and gases emitted by diesel engines, some of which are carcinogenic. Why has the council not done any of this? The report also mentions the strong smell of diesel despite the gale-force wind which should have dispersed it. Odour can also be considered a nuisance. Again, why has the council not pursued this?"

Follow the campaign on #rdgtrainnoise

For previous press releases on the depot issue go to:

<http://bell-tower.org.uk/press/release18.pdf>

<http://bell-tower.org.uk/press/release17.pdf>

To see full press coverage, including audio and video files go to:

<http://bell-tower.org.uk/press.htm>

About the Bell Tower Community Association

- The Association was founded in October 2005.
- It represents 600 homes and businesses in the area bounded by Caversham Road, Northfield Road, Barry Place, the residential end of Cardiff Road, Addison Road, Denbeigh Place and Randolph Road.
- It represents the local community, organises events, publishes a quarterly newsletter and operates a members' discount scheme with local businesses.
- It won a Pride of Reading Award in 2007 in the Environmental Projects category for its graffiti clean-up campaign and won third place in the 2010 Reading area of the South East Community Empowerment Awards.
- The neighbourhood has no historic name so the association took on the name of a local landmark, the bell tower on E P Collier Primary School in Swansea Road. The tower can be seen from all over the area.

Further information on the Bell Tower Community Association can be found at www.bell-tower.org.uk

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