Has the time come to ban cars from the centre of towns and cities?

Global warming caused by pollution has begun to affect us directly, with climate change starting to affect British weather. Some people believe the time has come for drastic action to reduce pollution caused by heavy traffic. However others believe that if there is a ban on cars in towns and cities, the change could affect people’s lives negatively.

There is no doubt that traffic fumes are a major cause of pollution throughout the world and a particular problem in towns and cities. In a small country like the UK, cities are close enough together to cause high levels of traffic fume pollution in the air. Consequently, health problems are created such as asthma, which has rapidly increased as the number of cars on the road has risen. An additional problem in towns and cities is traffic congestion. Many hours of the day are wasted with people sitting in traffic jams, running their car engines, which add to pollution. The average speed in central London is only 12 miles an hour, which is the same as it was in Victorian time. A ban on cars in the centre of large towns and cities would therefore cut pollution, which in turn should improve people’s health. Also if cars were banned, then emergency vehicles, buses and delivery trucks would be more efficient, as this would reduce congestion.

On the other hand, it could be argued that such a ban would create more problems. Relying on public transport would have to be a necessity not a choice. This on its own will cause many problems. Public transport in the UK is very expensive and travelling by public transport regularly can cost more than filling up a tank of petrol, for the same amount of journeys. Another issue is that our public transport is renowned worldwide for being unreliable. Is it right that places of work should suffer, as their workers are unable to get to work on time because they have to take public transport and NOT use their cars? Would there be enough trains and buses to cope with the increase in demand? Furthermore there is the issue of personal freedom. Is it right to prevent people from choosing the mode of transport they prefer? Women travelling on their own at night would prefer to have the choice of using a car, as this may make them feel safer, than they would do on a bus or train.

While there are many positives on both sides of the argument, I believe that banning cars in towns and city centres is not the answer. Pollution could be cut through developing cleaner fuels and electrically powered cars. As well as this, people could be encouraged to use public transport, rather than forcing them to do so. After reading my balance argument, what do you think?