

TACKLING AIR POLLUTION – EDINBURGH LOW EMISSION ZONES

GENERAL Q+A

What is a Low Emission Zone?

Low emission zones (LEZ) improve local air quality and reduce the impact of air pollution on human health.

LEZs set restrictions on road spaces, where vehicles that do not meet the emission standards are not permitted to enter the zone.

Allowing access to only the cleanest vehicles can help to transform towns and cities into healthier places to live, work and visit.

What are the benefits of cleaner air?

Clean air has never been more important, and the need for action never more urgent.

There is a growing body of scientific evidence that has established linking air pollution and ill health. There is also evidence of links to a wider range of health impacts, such as poor birth outcomes (pre-term birth, low birth weight), diabetes and neurological problems (dementia).

In addition, there are a number of social benefits that can be achieved through better placemaking in the capital's centre, through a focus on the reduction of traffic pollution and improving urban environments.

What are the health impacts of poor air quality?

The purpose of a LEZ is to improve health and well-being of people who live, work or visit the city, particularly those who are particularly vulnerable, the very young, older people and those with pre-existing health conditions. These conditions include lung-related illnesses e.g. asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or circulation problems (angina, strokes, heart attacks).

Modelling by Public Health England in 2010 made estimates of the mortality burden on the population in Scotland. This work showed around 2,000 premature deaths and a total of around 22,500 life years lost across the population can be attributed to anthropogenic (man-made) fine particle pollution. In Edinburgh, this can be related to 205 premature deaths and 2,300 life-years lost.

How do vehicles contribute to poor air quality?

Pollutants caused by vehicle emissions are largely invisible, but these gases and particulates can be hazardous to human health. Transport generates over one-third of the total emissions of nitrogen oxides, the majority of these emissions are caused by road transport.

Emissions are improving but not at the expected rate, considering the improving engine emission standards in recent years. The highest level air pollution is found in cities and towns. As most of Scotland's population lives and works in urban environments, transport emissions are the most important source of air pollution affecting human health.

What's happening across Scotland?

The Scottish Government has committed to working with local authorities to have LEZs in place in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen by 2020.

The Transport (Scotland) Bill was introduced to the Scottish Parliament in June 2018 and is currently progressing through the Parliamentary process. This will provide legislation that enables the creation and civil enforcement of low emission zones.

The Transport Bill will allow the Scottish Government to set nationally consistent standards to apply across Scotland. This is expected to cover issues such as the emissions standards for vehicles, penalty rates, exemptions for specific vehicles, and enforcement.

What decisions will Local Authorities make?

Local Authorities will design each low emission zone based on their specific, local requirements. The Bill will give local authorities the powers to create, enforce, operate or revoke a low emission zone in their area and to design the shape, size and vehicle scope of individual low emission zones.

Who will be affected?

Owners of vehicles which do not meet the minimum emission standards proposed in the Transport Bill.

The standards as proposed are Euro 4 for petrol engines and Euro 6/VI for diesel engines. The use of Euro standards in this manner is commonplace across European LEZs.

The current proxy for Euro standards is to use vehicle age as a guide to the corresponding Euro classification, as follows:

- Euro 4 standard for petrol engines was introduced in January 2005, with any new vehicles sold after January 2006 having to meet this standard,
- Euro 6 standard for diesel cars was introduced in September 2014, with any new vehicle sold after September 2015 having to meet this standard.
- Euro VI emission standards for heavy diesel vehicles - generally those registered with the DVLA after 2014.

How will people reliant on vehicles be affected?

LEZ's only restrict polluting vehicles that do not meet minimum emission standards. People and businesses that are reliant on driving vehicles in the zones will need to operate compliant vehicles.

The proposed grace periods allow time for vehicle owners to upgrade them. In the city centre, commercial vehicles have until the end of 2021 and cars until the end of 2024. For the citywide boundary, commercial vehicles will have until the end of 2023.

What time of day will LEZs operate?

The proposal is for low emission zones to operate 24/7, 365 days a year. The [national regulations](#) allow local authorities the flexibility to set operational hours based on the specific requirements of each zone. However, to ensure we're making the necessary reduction in pollution, Edinburgh's LEZs are proposed to operate 24/7.

Will there be any exemptions?

Exemptions are being considered at a national level. The Transport (Scotland) Bill which was introduced to the Scottish Parliament on the 8 June 2018 will allow Scottish Ministers to make regulations that lay out the details of how LEZs will operate, including on issues such as exemptions. Transport Scotland is considering what exemptions to incorporate into regulations and are currently engaging with stakeholders on a national basis.

It is anticipated that the Council may be able to make provision for time-limited exemptions for vehicles not covered by the blanket exemption but there are particular circumstances in which it ought to be exempt for a limited period.

How will LEZs be enforced?

Unless otherwise exempt, non-compliant vehicles that enter/travel within the LEZ are subject to a penalty.

Enforcement will utilise Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras, linked to a national vehicle licensing database, to detect vehicles entering a LEZ which do not comply with the minimum standards. A similar system already operates for enforcing bus lanes in Edinburgh.

Can I upgrade my vehicle to be compliant?

Some vehicles (such as buses or taxis) can be retrofitted to enable compliance with emissions standards. In general, the cost of retrofitting cars tends not to be justified.

Retrofitting refers to the use of technologies that can help bring older Euro class vehicles up to the new required levels of adherence when it comes to NOx and CO2 emissions. This effectively makes the vehicle Euro 6 / VI standard.

Further detail about the bus retrofit programme can be found [here](#).

What will the penalties be?

Penalty rates will be set nationally. It is anticipated there will be different levels of penalty charge depending on, for example, the class of vehicle or whether there are repeated infringements. The charges will be defined by regulations and they are expected to be set at such a level to support a high level of compliance.

How will drivers know when they are entering a LEZ area?

Roadside signage will be installed to let drivers know when they are entering a LEZ. Positioning of signs will take account of the need to indicate alternative routes to avoid the LEZ.

Will LEZs reduce congestion?

LEZs are designed to improve air quality through limiting the use of the most polluting vehicles within the zone. The introduction of LEZs will encourage people to consider how they travel in the affected cities with the potential for more people to choose public transport or active travel.

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EDINBURGH SPECIFIC Q+A

Why is The City of Edinburgh Council progressing LEZs?

Like other Local Authorities in Scotland, we are taking steps towards protecting citizens from the harms of poor air quality, based on [UK legislation](#)

The Scottish Government has committed to work with local authorities in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, and Aberdeen to implement LEZs by 2020.

The City of Edinburgh Council has committed to 'improve Edinburgh's air quality and reduce carbon emissions [and] explore the implementation of low emission zones' ([Commitment 18](#)).

In [May 2018](#), the Council agreed a comprehensive approach to LEZs as a step towards protecting Edinburgh's citizens from the harms of poor air quality

Why does Edinburgh need LEZs?

Edinburgh has declared six Air Quality Management Areas ([AQMA](#)s), five are for traffic related (NO₂), and are located around the city centre, West End, Corstorphine, Inverleith Row, Great Junction Street, and Newbridge. Road transport is primarily responsible for NO₂ concentrations at the roadside. The other AQMA is for fine particulates (PM10), which relate to industrial activities and other sources around Salamander Street in Leith.

The trend in these areas is positive and we are seeing reductions in pollution with time. However, some areas, particularly in the city centre, are not improving quickly enough and are expected to remain in exceedance of legal limits.

Edinburgh needs to introduce LEZs to restrict the pollution from vehicles to help improve air quality and achieve compliance with legal standards.

What evidence is there to support the introduction of LEZs?

Edinburgh's LEZs have been developed in association with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) to support detailed understanding of the air quality issues in Edinburgh.

Working with Council officers, SEPA has developed a baseline model to help identify the emissions levels that different types of vehicles contribute across Edinburgh. This was documented by SEPA in the November 2018: 'Air Quality Evidence Report - Edinburgh'

This work finds that the most extensive area of roadside traffic pollution is in and around the city centre, where concentrations of NO₂ are at their highest, when compared to other areas of the City.

On-going work will continue to inform the detail of low emission zone proposals including: air quality modelling, transport modelling, integrated impact assessment work, commercial fleet analysis and further engagement with key stakeholder groups. The results of this work will be made publicly available in the future.

What are Edinburgh's plans?

The proposals include a LEZ which applies both to **the city centre for all vehicles**, and **city wide for only commercial vehicles** (buses, coaches, heavy goods vehicles, light goods vehicles, vans, taxis, and private hire cars).

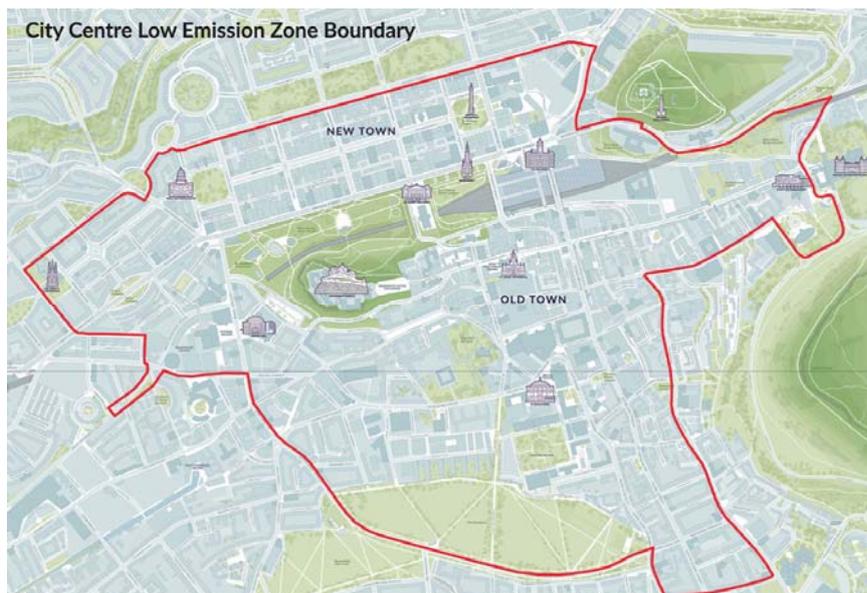
LEZ development is a key aspect linked to a number of strategies aiming to enhance placemaking and connectivity in Edinburgh, including [City Mobility Plan](#) (Edinburgh's strategic direction for transport) and [Edinburgh City Centre Transformation](#) (a strategy setting out interventions to radically reshape the city centre)

Where will the LEZ City boundary be?

We are proposing a city centre LEZ that applies to all vehicles. A city centre LEZ applying to all vehicles, introduced over a short period of time, would have the benefit of tackling the highest concentrations of air pollution in a densely populated area.

The proposed City Centre LEZ is bounded by

- North - St Colme Street and Queen Street;
- East - Leith Street, Regent Road, Abbeyhill, Horse Wynd, Holyrood Road, the Pleasance and St Leonards
- South - East and West Preston Street, Melville Drive, Earl Grey Street, Morrison Street, West Approach Road and Torphichen Street
- West Palmerston Place, Chester Street, Drumsheugh Gardens, Queensferry Street, Randolph Crescent, Great Stuart Street and Ainslie Place.



Where will the City-wide boundary be?

To address pollution in areas beyond the city centre (in particular [Air Quality Management Areas](#)) we are proposing a **city-wide LEZ** applying to **all commercial vehicles** (buses, coaches, HGVs, LGVs, vans, taxis, and private hire cars).

A City-wide LEZ would be defined by the City Bypass, Maybury Road, Cramond Brig, Old Dalkeith Road, The Wisp, the A1 and Milton Road East. It would exclude the City's rural western settlements and Edinburgh International Airport. Cars will not be affected by the City-wide boundary.



When will enforcement start?

Grace periods have been factored in to allow the owners of vehicles time to prepare, with an extended grace period for residents living in LEZ areas. For some people, moving away from vehicle ownership may be a good option meaning they walk, cycle, use public transport more, or make greater use of car clubs or taxis.

Within the city centre boundary, the grace period for buses, coaches and commercial vehicles would be until the end of 2021 and to the end of 2024 for cars. Buses, coaches and commercial vehicles will have until 2023 to comply with the city-wide boundary. Cars will not be affected by the city-wide boundary.

The table below outlines the grace periods.

Edinburgh LEZ Scheme		
City centre boundary		
Vehicle type	Grace Period	Extended Grace Period
Bus / coaches	1 year (End of 2021)	
Commercial vehicles	1 year (End of 2021)	
Cars	4 years (End of 2024)	1 year (End 2025)
City wide boundary		
Vehicle type	Grace Period	Extended Grace Period
Bus / coaches	3 years (End of 2023)	
Commercial vehicles	3 years (End of 2023)	

Why aren't the grace periods shorter?

Improving air quality and ensuring we are moving towards legal compliance in our Air Quality Management areas, is our utmost priority. In order to implement the LEZ scheme, it is important that we consult with the public and those affected to get their views and help further shape decisions including grace periods.

We welcome feedback on the proposed grace periods, and depending on the outcomes of the consultation, grace periods may be revised.

What about the impact on commercial vehicles?

Edinburgh's LEZ proposals may be a challenge for some businesses to meet. Compliance with emission standards of commercial fleet in operation in Edinburgh is relatively low and is having a significant impact on our air quality issues. However, there is a critical need to take action to address poor air quality.

Everyone has a role in helping improve air quality and the Council has its own fleet management plans in place to ensure our vehicles comply with LEZs.

We welcome feedback on the proposed grace periods, and depending on the outcomes of the consultation, grace periods may be revised.

What support is being given to different commercial vehicle sectors?

As part of the LEZ proposals, as well as through the [City Mobility Plan](#) and [Edinburgh City Centre Transformation](#), The City of Edinburgh Council is engaging with the commercial vehicle community to address their needs and gather feedback to help further shape the LEZ proposals.

The Council has a number of actions with businesses to improve air quality in place already. These include working with bus companies to improve fleets, supporting sustainable [travel planning](#), and utilising the [Edinburgh ECO Stars](#) programme to improve commercial fleets.

Work is also underway to improve the taxi fleet in Edinburgh to introduce a surcharge on parking permits for of diesel cars, and investment in [electric vehicle infrastructure](#).

The 2018/19 Programme for Government has indicated programmes of work including hardship grants. Details of these programmes will be available later in 2019.

Why aren't cars included in the City-wide boundary?

This is an aspect of the LEZ proposals that we are seeking feedback on. The most extensive area of roadside traffic pollution is in and around the city centre, where concentrations of NO₂ are at their highest, when compared to other areas of the City.

Commercial vehicles contribute more to overall emissions per vehicle, as they have large engines and repeat more trips across an area. Across the city, commercial vehicles make up one quarter of trips but are responsible for two thirds of the pollution.

Diesel cars are a significant contribution to pollution across the city. However, through the LEZ proposals, we expect that we will be able to effectively reduce emissions without affecting all cars.

Complementary measures being progressed through the [City Mobility Plan](#) and [Edinburgh City Centre Transformation](#) will focus on reducing the need for people to rely on their cars for travel into and around Edinburgh.

What are the next steps for the LEZ plans?

A public consultation and series of stakeholder engagement workshops will be held. The findings will inform a further report which will go to the Transport and Environment Committee in October, 2019.

In line with the National commitments, Edinburgh is on track to have a LEZ in place by the end of 2020.