

AIR QUALITY – BRINGING A LOW EMISSION ZONE TO GLASGOW

Over the past few years, air pollution, particularly from traffic, has become an increasingly important issue. It has been linked with respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses, stunted foetal development as well as dementia and diabetes. It has been estimated that annually this is the cause of 2,500 premature deaths in Scotland and around 300 in Glasgow.

Glasgow City Council is committed to introducing a Low Emission Zone into the city centre, in line with the Scottish Government's promise to have Scotland's first LEZ in operation by 2018. Initial proposals were tabled at the beginning of September and this has been backed up by the Scottish Government in line with a current Consultation on 'Building Scotland's Low Emission Zones' which proposes the introduction of four such Zones.

A Public Meeting, organised by Friends of the Earth Scotland, was held in Glasgow on 2 November attended by nearly 60 people.

Councillor Anna Richardson, City Convener for Sustainability and Carbon Reduction

Explained the background to the proposals and that although it was proposed that this would begin with buses, the Low Emission Zone would be extended progressively to lorries, vans, taxis and cars. It was important that the proposals were implemented through the partnership approach, including the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, the bus operators and all other stakeholders.

Details of the proposals and map of the city area can be here (*insert link to pdfs*)

She acknowledged that in the longer term, the whole way people moved around the City had to change. Promoting active travel was an important part of the Council's policy. A particular example was enabling children to be able to walk safely to school on their own and eliminating the 'school run' which was causing congestion and air pollution, especially around primary schools in many parts of the City.

A couple of points raised in the discussion was that in getting people to move away from diesel cars want to avoid moving back to petrol which was a cause of Co2 emissions. Concern was also raised about the EU (Withdrawal) Bill, currently before the Westminster Parliament, could lead to a erosion in environmental standards.

Councillor Richardson concluded by saying that a lot more detailed discussions and technical work with partners would be done in coming months and the intention was to produce detailed implementation plans in March 2018.

David McColgan, Policy and Public Affairs Manager, British Heart Foundation Scotland

Described how particulate matter from traffic pollution, can not only cause respiratory diseases but pass across into the blood stream, causing cardiovascular problems including heart attacks and strokes.

Details of British Heart Foundation Scotland's work can be found here
<https://www.bhf.org.uk/get-involved/in-your-area/scotland>

Jill Murie, Public Health Programme Manager, Glasgow Centre for Population Health

Glasgow Centre for Population Health is a independent Think Tank working on health inequalities particularly in the Glasgow Area. She spoke of the work the Centre has done promoting 'Active Travel' getting people to increase levels of cycling and walking. More details can be found here:

<http://www.gcph.co.uk/publications/filter/active%20sustainable%20travel>

Emilia Hanna, Air Pollution Campaigner, Friends of the Earth Scotland

Friends of the Earth Scotland have been campaigning on Air Quality for a number of years. Emilia Hanna spoke of her contact with a number of people who had been personally affected by air pollution in their areas.

She outlined what Friends of the Earth Scotland was seeking to achieve:-

- LEZs in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Dundee, and Perth as soon as possible. These are all cities which have ongoing illegal levels of pollution and with large populations who are exposed to unsafe toxic air every day. buses, vans, and lorries to be included initially in the zones, with taxis and cars included later.
- the emissions standard to be set at Euro 6.
- enforcement to be via automatic number plate recognition technology, so that in the future, a possible congestion charge could be applied using the same equipment.
- the area of the zones to encompass all areas with regular breaches of air quality safety standards.
- the Scottish Government to support buses to upgrade their fleets with help from the Green Bus Fund so that buses are not forced to increase fares or reduce services in order to comply with the zones.
- The Scottish Government to make funding available to councils to introduce the zone.

More details can be found here:- <https://foe.scot/campaign/air-pollution/>

She added that Transport Scotland was currently undertaking a Consultation on 'Building Scotland's Low Emission Zones' which was open until the end of November

<https://www.transport.gov.scot/consultation/building-scotland-s-low-emission-zones/>

She concluded by asking everyone to engage with their local Councillor's to move the Glasgow LEZ forward and also, if possible to respond to the Transport Scotland Consultation.

Scottish Parliament Inquiry – Air Quality in Scotland

The Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee is currently undertaking an Inquiry into the issue. Further details:-

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/105527.aspx>

It is often said that Air Pollution is invisible. Not necessarily – in certain early morning weather conditions and low sun angle, it can become visible from a distance. Barry Watson from Castlemilk Parish, an Eco Congregation on the South Side of Glasgow has managed to capture this on camera and this is now part of the written submissions to the

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