

Ecostars Edinburgh looking to clear the air!

✘ City companies who want to improve the fuel efficiency of their vehicles are being urged to take advantage of a free advice and assessment service. This might prove useful if the council adopt plans to implement a low emission zone (LEZ) in the city at [tomorrow's Transport committee meeting](#).

An LEZ is an area where certain vehicles with high levels of emissions could be restricted or banned. The cost of the research into the possibility of implementing an LEZ in Edinburgh would largely to be borne by The Scottish Government, so a feasibility study at the very least, looks likely to happen.

The council admits that the air quality in certain areas including St John's Road, Newbridge and Ferry Road must be improved, and has also recognised the need for improvement in the recent new Local Transport Strategy for which consultation has just finished. In addition The Scottish Government are just about to set up a National Framework for LEZs in May 2013, so it is possible that the movements of certain vehicles will be restricted not just in Edinburgh, but right across the country.

The City of Edinburgh Council was the first Scottish Local Authority to set up an [ECOSTARS](#) scheme, and this looks like one way of helping to achieve better air quality across the city.

[ECOSTARS Edinburgh](#) rates individual vehicles and the overall operation of a vehicle fleet using a star rating system, to recognise levels of operational and environmental performance. It aims to reduce the energy used by commercial and passenger transport fleets by encouraging increased adoption of fuel

efficiency measures. Benefits for members include more efficient operations, reduced fuel costs and emissions.

Since 2011, 30 businesses and organisations have joined the [ECOSTARS Edinburgh](#) scheme and the Council is aiming to almost double membership of the scheme to 58 vehicle fleet operators by May 2014.

The existing membership comprises a range of national, multinational and local organisations, including Greggs plc, DHL Supply Chain, Menzies Distribution, Lothian Buses, HAGGIS Adventures and Highland Explorer Tours.



Convener of
Transport &
Environment –
Lesley Hinds

Councillor Lesley Hinds, Transport and Environment Convener, said she was particularly keen to see more local Edinburgh companies sign up to the scheme.

She said: “ECOSTARS is a great project offering businesses a wealth of free advice and recognition to help them keep their fuel costs down while doing their bit for the environment. We’ve been delighted with the response we’ve had since becoming the first Scottish Council to launch the scheme and now we’re keen to see more local companies come on board.

“The more members and vehicles we have registered with the ECOSTARS scheme, the more we can protect Edinburgh’s air quality through a reduction in emissions.”

Pete Duncan, General Manager of the jointly five ECOSTAR-rated HAGGIS Adventures and Highland Explorer Tours, said: “HAGGIS Adventures and Highland Explorer Tours are delighted to be 5 star members of Edinburgh ECOSTARS. The assessment process was

easy and the scheme is a fantastic way for us as a local company to bench mark the environmental impact of our fleet operations on a European-wide basis. For anyone interested in the 'green' credentials of their operation, the ECOSTARS scheme can help identify best practice and highlight possible areas of improvement."

Dr Steve Johnson, Environmental & CSR Manager for Lothian Buses, which has attained four ECOSTARS, said:- "Membership of ECOSTARS has been a great help in our attempts to reduce emissions in Edinburgh. Applying best practice from across the bus and lorry sectors, we continue to look for and develop new solutions to tackle pollution, as part of our commitment to improving Edinburgh's air quality."

Menzies Distribution's Transport and Logistics Manager Allan Hughes said: "We have worked with a number of different groups to achieve our targets on carbon reduction. We are delighted to have received Three stars from the ECO Stars scheme of South Yorkshire and Four stars from the Edinburgh Scheme. We will continue to work closely with both teams to ensure our operations are as efficient as possible."

An ECOSTARS Edinburgh workshop on fuel efficiency is to be held on 18 April 2013, led by Transport and Travel Research Ltd.

ECOSTARS is a free, voluntary scheme providing recognition and tailor-made support on environmental best practice to operators of goods vehicles, buses and coaches whose fleets serve Edinburgh. The scheme rates vehicles and the operation of a fleet using a star award system to recognise and improve levels of environmental performance.

For more information on the ECOSTARS Edinburgh scheme, visit <http://www.ecostars-edinburgh.org/en/>

Edinburgh is the first local authority in Scotland to participate in the ECOSTARS scheme which has now been rolled

out in Europe. The Capital has taken the lead on trying to reduce the pollution impact of vehicles, particularly freight traffic.

