

Plans for low emission zone in Edinburgh welcomed

The independent charity Environmental Protection Scotland (EPS) said Edinburgh's Low Emission Zone (LEZ) plans 'raise the bar' in citywide efforts to improve air quality and reduce congestion across Scotland.

Edinburgh has adopted a two-tier approach with a boundary that will see fines for owners or operators of older, more polluting vehicles who bring them in the city centre once it is fully in force within by the end of 2024.

A wider city-wide boundary affecting new buses and vans – but not cars – will help improve air quality around some of the most congested areas such as around the Gogar roundabout and Glasgow Road/Maybury Road areas. The Gyle shopping centre also lies within the city-wide boundary, bringing air quality benefits for consumers.

John Bynorth, Policy and Communications Officer at EPS said: "Edinburgh has raised the bar for Low Emission Zones in Scotland backed by a big mandate from people living and working in the city who wanted to see change to improve the city's health and encourage people out of their cars.

"Around 75% of the 5,000 respondents to the city's consultation document last year said they agreed with restrictions on vehicles to control and improve air quality.

"Edinburgh has cemented its reputation as a world leader for getting people out of their motor cars and into cycling,

walking and using public transport more often.

“Edinburgh’s LEZ plans have been announced five months after the start of Glasgow’s LEZ in December last year. A road-map for a future for Scotland’s cities without worst polluting petrol and diesel vehicles is taking shape with Aberdeen and Dundee due to announce their LEZ schemes later this year.

“Edinburgh’s decision to introduce a city-centre LEZ boundary that will affect diesel cars below a certain standard, and backed up by fines for offenders, will drive changes in attitudes among motorists and fleet operators.

“The outer city-wide boundary, which will adopt a longer lead in time for the LEZ, will give business owners and residents who live or own businesses further out of the city a chance to decide what they need to do to comply.

“The ‘grace periods’ for Edinburgh residents and businesses gives them extra time to decide whether to give up their older cars, trade them in for less polluting or electric models or consider other options such as car-sharing, cycling, walking or using public transport.”

EPS praised the local authority for raising the prospect of regional transport hubs, where deliveries from across the country could be taken to a centralised depot and then transferred onto smaller, possibly electric vans to taken to their final destination.

“Transport hubs are part of a joined up approach to improving air quality and reducing congestion and there is clearly merit in this idea,” added the spokesman.



© Martin McAdam

City Chambers Edinburgh