

# **Friends of the Earth claim Low Emission Zone plans will not work in Edinburgh**

**Environmental campaigners have criticised the Low Emission Zone plans from City of Edinburgh Council, as a public consultation draws to a close this Sunday (21st July). Friends of the Earth Scotland has criticised the Council for proposals that they say will do very little to tackle the air pollution that is damaging public health and inhibiting the development of children.**

City of Edinburgh Council's draft Low Emission Zone proposes a two-tier Low Emission Zone to address the capital's illegal and unsafe pollution levels.

\*A small Low Emission Zone covering the Old Town will restrict buses and HGVs from the end of 2021, with the oldest, most-polluting cars restricted from the end of 2024. Thereafter, petrol cars older than 20 years, and diesel cars older than 10 years will be restricted from the Old Town.

\*A larger zone, covering the whole city, will be in place from

the end of 2023 and does not apply to cars. It will only apply to buses, coaches, and HGVs.

\*Under current plans, there will be no restrictions on cars in Edinburgh in the next 5 years, despite their huge role in causing air pollution.

The consultation has been running through June and July, and has so far received 2,000 responses. Friends of the Earth Scotland are urging the public to have their say in a bid to strengthen their plans.

Friends of the Earth Scotland's Air Pollution Campaigner, Gavin Thomson commented: "This draft pollution plan from Edinburgh Council risks becoming a wasted opportunity that does next to nothing to bring down toxic traffic fumes in the city. Air pollution disproportionately harms the health of the most vulnerable people and causes 200 early deaths each year in Edinburgh.

"The two-tier plans could mean tourists and shoppers will be breathing cleaner air in the city centre while people in residential areas could experience more traffic and air pollution as vehicles avoid the tiny city centre zone. Everyone in Edinburgh has a right to breathe safe air now, yet these plans will only begin to clear the air in one part of the city. Seemingly, the Council decided that some people in Edinburgh are more worthy of protection from air pollution than others.

"This lacklustre zone has been designed to achieve the bare legal minimum on diesel pollution, an objective which should have been met back in 2010. The Council has opted for the slowest possible lead-in times, meaning that it will be 6 years before any restrictions are applied to cars. It looks like they have prioritised not upsetting car owners above improving tackling dirty air to the benefit of all Edinburgh's people.

“Edinburgh Council has brought forward really good transport plans in recent months and is investing in walking and cycling. But their Low Emission Zone must be revised to cover the whole city and restrict the most polluting vehicles, including cars. The Council must seize this opportunity to make sure all our children breathe clean air, and bring down climate emissions from our transport system.

“We would encourage everyone to have their voice heard in this consultation and demand that the Council strengthen these plans.”

According to FOE, Edinburgh currently has 6 Council designated air pollution zones, where air quality standards are not met. In addition, they revealed four locations across the city with illegal pollution levels in 2018.

You can respond to the consultation via Friends of the Earth Scotland website at <https://foe-scotland.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=b5ad0d61b2a67d22c68bf7d8d&id=8d2d391c5b&e=f7d39c282d>