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Tackling air pollution in Bath and North East Somerset

Bath's Clean Air Plan 2021

Clean air matters. According to the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, air pollution is believed to be a contributory factor to some 40,000 premature deaths in the UK every year. There's also evidence that it can cause lung damage in babies and children, and contribute to lung and heart disease in older people.

The Government has told 28 Councils in England – including ourselves – that they have to achieve compliance with Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) limits 'in the shortest possible time', and by 2021 at the latest. This is part of its National Air Quality Action Plan, and is based on scientific evidence. Levels above 40µg/m³ are seen as needing urgent attention by the Government.

In Bath, NO₂ pollution caused by vehicle emissions exceeds the accepted limits at several hotspots in the city.

We've therefore assessed and drawn on more than 60 suggestions from the public to shortlist three packages of measures that can reduce vehicle emissions and bring about the required improvement by 2021. Each package includes



a different class of **Clean Air Charging Zone (CAZ)** to discourage high-polluting vehicles from driving in the centre, and a range of non-charging measures to encourage greener modes of travel.

No decisions have been made at this time, and the feasibility of each package is now being assessed with ongoing public engagement. A final package must be agreed by the end of December 2018.

**Bath & North East
Somerset Council**

www.bathnes.gov.uk/breathe



Summary of shortlisted options

The Council's specialist advisers have put forward three packages capable of meeting the Government's requirements. These will now be assessed further, including the potential impacts on residents, health and the economy.

This shortlist was drawn from an assessment of more than 60 ideas to improve air quality, put forward by the public during a consultation on the city's air quality last year.

Each package includes a different class of **Clean Air Zone for the centre of Bath** that will charge drivers of **higher-emission vehicles** entering the zone. Also included in each package will be a range of **non-charging measures** to encourage greener modes of travel.

No decisions have been made at this time, but a decision on the final package must be agreed by December 2018.

The Council's CAZ options:

- **Class B.** Charges for **higher-emission** buses, coaches, private hire, taxis and heavy goods vehicles (HGVs)
- **Class C.** Charges as per Class B, plus **higher-emission** light goods vehicles (LGVs)
- **Class D.** Charges as per Class C, plus **higher-emission** cars

The Council does not set the criteria. This is a national standard set by the Government, based on scientific evidence and published in its Clean Air Zone Framework.

What exemptions will apply?

In line with the Government's CAZ framework, the following vehicles are exempt from charges:

- Euro 4 + petrol vehicles (from approx. 2006)
- Euro 6 diesel vehicles (from approx. 2015)
- Fully electric and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles

- Vehicles within the disabled passenger vehicle tax class

Please note that these dates are approximate. Cut-off dates are based on the date that the vehicle model was registered, rather than the specific individual vehicle registration date.

We'll be engaging the public on issues such as including motorbikes in a Class D CAZ, and exempting emergency and community transport vehicles and blue badge holders. No decisions on these matters will be made until assessments are complete.

We aim to have a Clean Air Zone in place by 2020, to bring about the required improvements by 2021 at the latest.

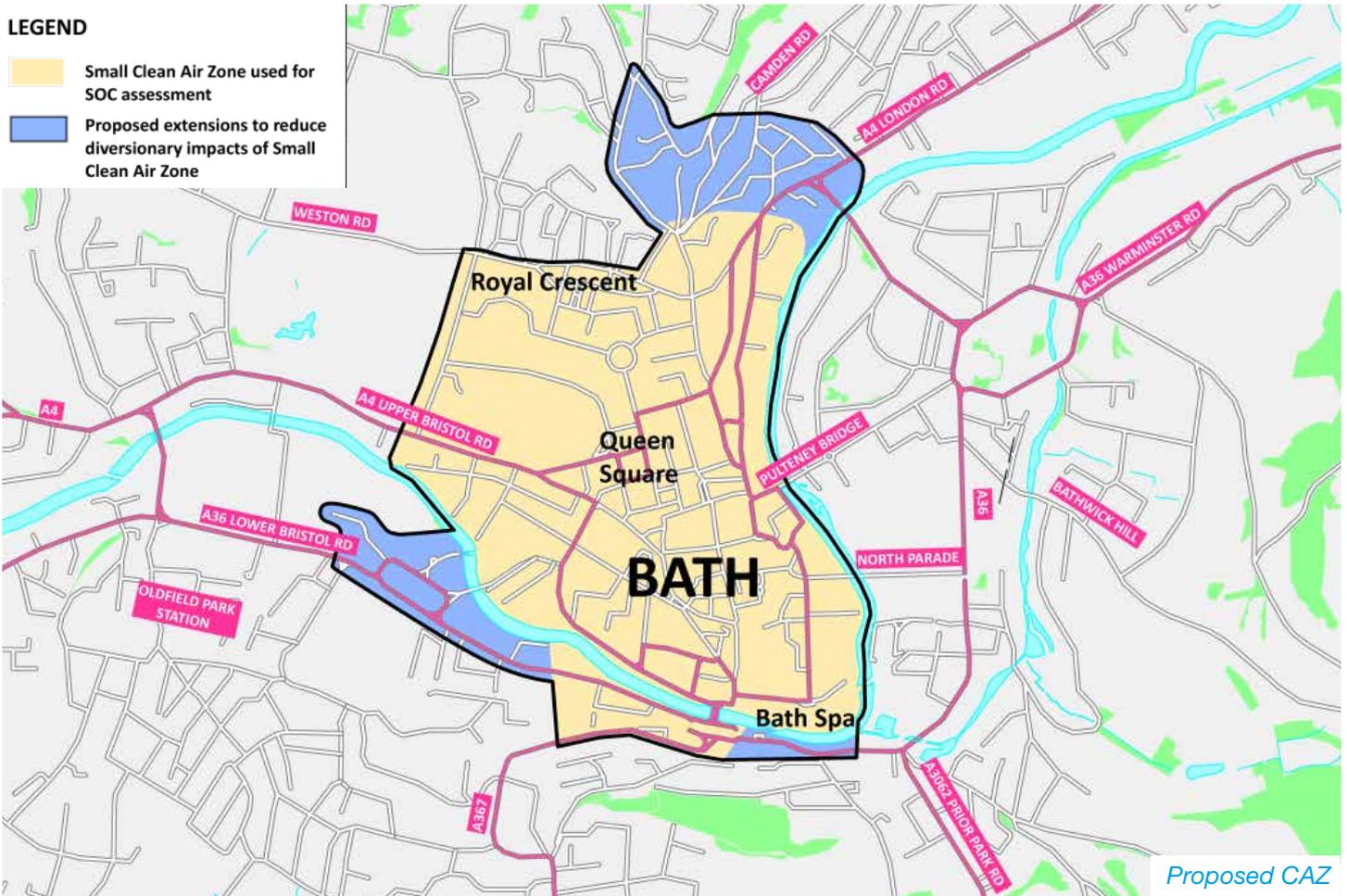
How to check vehicle compliance

You can check your engine standard (i.e. Euro 4, 5, 6) using an online vehicle checker such as HPI, but we recommend that you contact your vehicle retailer or manufacturer to confirm.

Priorities	Why this is important
Improving air quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air pollution has an adverse effect on health, particularly respiratory health • We need to reduce levels of NO₂ at hotspots in Bath, by 2021 at the latest
Introducing a CAZ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Clean Air Charging Zone (CAZ) for central Bath is our only way of cutting emissions and improving air quality by 2021
Engaging business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We'll help organisations lessen the impact of a CAZ • And support organisations to promote and encourage greener travel
Engaging residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We'll work with communities to encourage a shift to greener travel
Keeping you informed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A CAZ will affect everyone • We'll engage everyone during the decision-making process • We'll help you get ready for a CAZ with information and advice

LEGEND

- Small Clean Air Zone used for SOC assessment
- Proposed extensions to reduce diversivernary impacts of Small Clean Air Zone



What areas will be included in the Zone?

At this stage our specialist advisers are proposing a small zone in central Bath. It offers the greatest benefit in terms of reducing air pollution across the city by 2021, with the least impact on residents and the economy (when compared with a medium or large zone).

Assessments show that a small zone will reduce the number of higher-emission vehicles coming into the city centre which, in turn, will benefit air quality on nearby arterial roads. This includes London Road, which has some of the highest concentrations of N02 in the city.

Other measures

Alongside the charging element, each package will include non-

charging measures designed to encourage greener modes of travel and lessen the impact of a CAZ on residents and drivers. All of these ideas will be thoroughly assessed and discussed with local people. They might include:

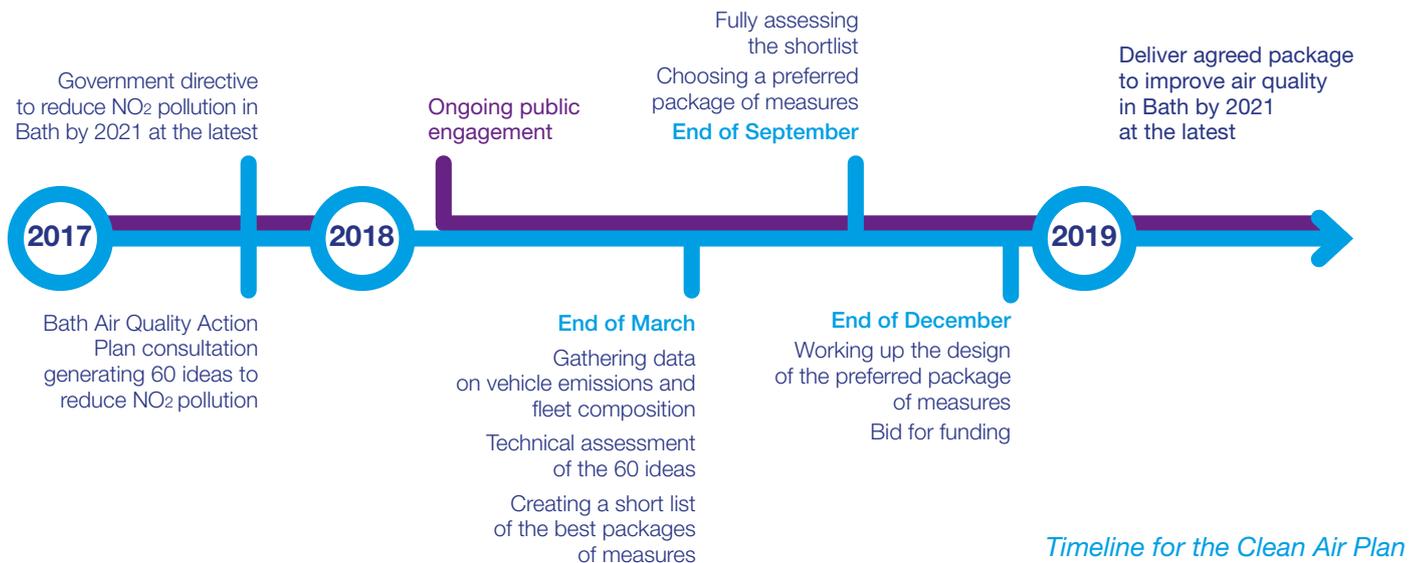
- Reduced cost of residents' parking permits for low-emission vehicles
- Improved public transport facilities, such as bus priority, better bus stops and more real-time information for passengers to increase reliability and use
- Improvements to walking and cycling routes and better provision for cycle parking
- A review of taxi licensing policy, considering how low-emission vehicles can be encouraged
- Improved use of variable message signs with information

on parking options, travel times and air quality

- Targeted traffic management improvements or improved bus priority on the A367 Wells Road
- Making permanent the temporary bus lane on London Road.

If a Class D CAZ is chosen as the preferred option (which includes cars), then we'll also look at introducing electric cycle hire, priority parking areas for car sharing, and the expansion of the car club network, in addition to the measures above.

We'll continue to look at other longer-term measures to improve air quality in Bath, such as the A46/A36 link road.



What is a Clean Air Charging Zone?

A Clean Air Charging Zone means drivers of high-emission vehicles are charged when entering a specific geographic zone. It is not a congestion charge. Rather, the aim is to reduce air pollution and improve health. Revenue from the zone

is used to run the scheme, and any extra may be used to support greener modes of travel, depending on government decisions.

improvements in the shortest possible time and by 2021 at the latest (in line with Government requirements).

To achieve this, the Council is committed to talking with and listening to the views of the public, key stakeholders and partners throughout the process, ensuring the best outcome in any scenario.

We'll be holding regular drop-ins, workshops and events throughout the year.

The Government's role

The Government has already provided Councils with the funds to assess a range of solutions, and more funds will be available to implement necessary measures. The cost of this project will not fall to local taxpayers.

The Government has also set a clear framework for the work. Our assessments, reports and decisions must comply with guidance issued by the Government's Joint Air Quality Unit (JAQU).

What happens next?

We'll be examining the feasibility of each package in more detail. This includes ongoing public engagement; identifying exemptions, the level of charges and hours of operation; and assessing the economic, social, commercial and financial impacts of each option.

We are required to reach a decision on our preferred package i.e. Clean Air Zone B, C or D, along with a set of non-charging measures, by December 2018 at the latest.

Public engagement

We have to strike a balance with a package that can deliver the most benefit to people with the least impact on residents and the economy. But it must also be capable of delivering air quality

Find out more

- Go to www.bathnes.gov.uk/breathe
- Look out for our regular drop-ins and pop-up events
- Subscribe to our newsletter
- Join the conversation on social media **#BathBreathes2021**
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