

Please find below a media release from Bath & North East Somerset Council.

Bath & North East Somerset Council

Improving People's Lives

Vehicle charging scheme to cut air pollution launches in Bath

Embargoed until midnight (00.01hrs) on Monday 15 March

Today (Monday 15 March), the UK's first charging clean air zone (CAZ) outside of London launches in Bath to drive down harmful pollution and protect public health.

From midnight, polluting vehicles will be charged [£9 or £100 a day](#) to drive in the centre of Bath. Private cars and motorbikes will not be charged.

The scheme is designed to tackle Bath's air pollution problem which is chiefly caused by vehicle emissions. Several areas in the city regularly exceed the legal limits for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) pollution – even during lockdown.

Daily charges will apply seven days a week, midnight to midnight, all year round for [chargeable vehicles](#) with a pre euro 6 diesel or pre euro 4 petrol engine.

Bath is the first of several charging clean air zones to be introduced across England over the next few years. Funding for the clean air zone has come from central government. A similar scheme already operates in London, known as the Low Emission Zone or LEZ.

The council secured £9.4 million of funding from government to help residents and businesses, including coach companies and taxi drivers, to replace polluting vehicles with cleaner, compliant ones. The council has set up a [scheme to help owners](#)

[upgrade their vehicles](#) and already more than 500 businesses have applied. A further £1.58 million has helped local bus operators to retrofit fleet not already compliant in the zone.

Automatic number plate recognition cameras are installed on all roads leading into the zone. Vehicle number plates will be checked against a DVLA database. Motorists with non-compliant, chargeable vehicles – including those from outside the UK – must declare and pay for their journey at [GOV.UK](#) or they will receive a penalty charge notice.

Residents, businesses and visitors are being asked to check if charges apply to their vehicle in Bath's CAZ using the GOV.UK vehicle registration checker at www.gov.uk/check-clean-air-zone-charge.

Motorists are also advised to check Bath & North East Somerset Council's website for a list of [local exemptions](#), and to find out about the [grants and interest-free finance available](#) to help those regularly affected by charges to replace or retrofit their vehicles.

Councillor Dine Romero, Leader of Bath and North East Somerset Council, said: "This a landmark day for the city. We've put up with unacceptable levels of nitrogen dioxide for too long. This is unfair on residents, particularly vulnerable older people and children. We want to reduce NO₂ pollution in Bath to within legal limits by the end of 2021 at the latest, and a charging clean air zone is the only way we can achieve this.

"We know this is difficult time for businesses, but we've gone ahead with the zone during the pandemic because this is a pressing public health issue. However, we are working with residents and businesses to help them replace polluting vehicles with cleaner ones and there is significant financial and practical help available."

Dr Bruce Laurence, Director of Public Health in Bath and North East Somerset said: "You can't see it and you can't smell it, but nitrogen dioxide is a hidden killer, contributing to as many as 36,000 early deaths in the UK each year. The high levels

that we have in Bath can irritate and inflame our airways and this is particularly dangerous for people with asthma and lung conditions such as bronchitis and emphysema.

“Research has also shown that exposure to high levels of NO₂ over a longer term can affect children’s lung development. And there is evidence that children who grow up in highly polluted areas are more likely to develop asthma.”

Asthma UK and the British Lung Foundation welcome action to clean up the air in Bath.

Sarah MacFadyen, Head of Policy and Public Affairs at Asthma UK and the British Lung Foundation, said:

“Air pollution is bad for everyone, but it disproportionately impacts the most vulnerable in our society including children, older people and those with a lung condition such as asthma and COPD. Road transport is the biggest cause of harmful emissions in our cities, which can cause breathing difficulties for people with lung conditions and put them at risk of life-threatening asthma attacks or COPD flare-ups.

“It’s vital that urgent and immediate action is taken to protect people most at risk from the effects of toxic air in Bath, and this must include reducing the number of polluting vehicles, which are a major part of the problem. We know that clean air zones are an effective way of doing this.”

Mike Crane has run his own heating and plumbing service in Bath for 25 years and is due to get a new van next month using the scheme’s financial support. He said: “I’ve lived and worked in Bath all my life. I’m driving an eight-year-old diesel van for work, but I’m determined to get a better, cleaner vehicle. I’m doing it for my 11 grandchildren, who also live here, because I hate to think of them breathing in all this polluted air.”

Salam Hussein is a taxi driver and one of the first businesses in Bath to replace his vehicle using the financial support. He has recently traded in his seven-year-old car for a second-hand vehicle which is compliant in Bath’s CAZ as well as London’s

ULEZ. He said: “I am pretty happy about this despite the year we’ve had. Because of lockdown I’ve only done school runs, but things will soon get back to normal and I hate the idea of us all sitting at the taxi rank polluting our lungs.”

Councillor Sarah Warren, Joint Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency and Neighbourhood Services, said: “The Clean Air Zone is just the start of a concerted effort to promote more sustainable travel. We’re also looking at developing liveable neighbourhoods, supporting businesses to use e-cargo bike deliveries, improving our public transport and encouraging more active travel, such as walking and cycling. Any revenue from the zone, over and above the operating costs, must and will be reinvested in sustainable transport for the area.”

END

INTERVIEWS

You are invited to interview Councillor Sarah Warren, Joint Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency and Neighbourhood Services, who will be available from 10am on Friday 12th March at the clean air zone boundary signs on London Road, Bath (opposite Snow Hill). To arrange socially-distanced interviews please email communications_marketing@bathnes.gov.uk

MAP

- Download a high-resolution map in various formats for print and online from WeTransfer. <https://we.tl/t-eBNekX5Giw>
The link will expire on **Tuesday 16 March**.

VIDEO

- Download a 30 sec or 50 second video summarising the scheme
<https://vimeo.com/517127364> 30 sec
<https://vimeo.com/517162074> 50 sec

Password: **CAZ**

- For information on Bath's Clean Air Zone go to www.bathnes.gov.uk/BathCAZ (the site will be updated for launch by Sunday 14 March)
- Motorists can check if they need to pay to drive in a clean air zone and pay a clean air zone charge at www.gov.uk/check-clean-air-zone-charge (the site will be updated to allow payment from midnight on Monday 15 March)
- The Council has been mandated by the Government to reduce nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) pollution in Bath to below an annual average of 40 µg/m³ (micrograms per cubic meter of air) as soon as possible and by the end of 2021 at the latest.
- Even with reduced traffic levels seen during 2020, four NO₂ hotspots in the city still exceed this limit.
- According to the World Health Organisation, ambient (outdoor) air pollution accounts for an estimated 4.2 million deaths per year due to stroke, heart disease, lung cancer and chronic respiratory diseases.
- In Bath & North East Somerset around 12,000 people suffer from asthma, and high concentrations of NO₂ can trigger attacks.
- The Council secured a package of £23.4 million from the government for the scheme. This includes £7.09m for implementing the scheme, £11.3m for supporting measures, such as the financial support, and a contingency fund.
- The government's Joint Air Quality Unit is independently verifying all the work done.
- Bath & North East Somerset Council predicts that 215,000 daily charges will be levied on vehicles in the first year.
- Any revenue from the scheme, over and above the operating cost, must be invested in sustainable transport for the city.
- From launch, motorists can pay six days in advance, on the day the vehicle is driven in the zone, and in the following six days (a 13-day payment window).
- Auto Pay is not available. Journeys must be declared and paid for online within seven days of driving in the zone at GOV.UK. Businesses accounts are available to help manage journeys by multiple vehicles.
- Euro 6/VI diesel vehicles, euro 4, 5 and 6 petrol vehicles, fully electric and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles and hybrids will not be charged.
- Pre euro 6/VI diesel buses, coaches and HGVs will be charged £100 a day

- Pre euro 6 and pre euro 4 petrol taxis, private hire vehicles, minibuses, light goods vehicles, vans, including campervans/pick-ups, will be charged £9 a day.
- Non-compliant larger motorhomes and horse transporters which are classed PHGV on a V5C can apply to Bath and North East Somerset Council for a reduced rate to pay £9 rather than £100.
- Local exemptions are available from Bath and North East Somerset Council to support hard to replace vehicles, vulnerable groups and vital services.
- Eligible van drivers driving regularly in the zone could receive up to £4,500 in grants in addition to interest free finance to help them replace a non-compliant vehicle with a similar compliant one. Larger grants are available for buses/coaches (£35,000) and lorries (£20,000). More information is available at www.bathnes.gov.uk/CAZsupport
- As of 9 March, the Council is speaking to more than 500 business about financial support to replace vehicles. Over 900 vehicles are in the process of being checked (for eligibility), replaced or upgraded. The council aims to upgrade around 1,500 polluting vehicles with the scheme.
- 88 buses operating scheduled services in Bath are being retrofitted with certified emissions abatement technology to be compliant in the zone by end of May. Out of a fleet of 195 vehicles, 107 were already compliant.
- The Council has engaged extensively with the public about the scheme since Spring 2018. It has since contacted 9,000 local businesses directly about the zone and the accompanying financial assistance scheme and it is running a region-wide awareness campaign.
- Air quality is monitored at 120 stations across the city. Additional monitors have been installed to ensure that the Council has good baseline data against which to measure the effectiveness of the CAZ. Data gathered from monitoring stations is reviewed at the end of each year to allow annual average nitrogen dioxide concentrations to be calculated. These reports are available at <https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/environment/pollution/air-quality/reports>