

In 2001 Bristol declared an Air Quality Management Area covering the whole central area of the city and all the major arterial routes. Approximately 100,000 people live within the AQMA and it includes the whole central business and shopping districts, major hospitals and dozens of schools. The legal limit for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) continues to be exceeded by a significant margin at locations all over the city closest to busy roads. In addition, there are significant health effects from particulate pollution and there are exceedances of World Health Organisation pollution guidelines for PM_{2.5}.

Bristol has been identified by Government as an area where significant action on air pollution is needed by 2020. The National Air Quality action plan mandates Bristol to conduct a Clean Air Zone (CAZ) feasibility study. A CAZ would be based on a national framework which may be used to charge the most polluting vehicles if they are used in locations of poor air quality. Diesel vehicles that do not meet the Euro 6/VI emission standard or petrol vehicles that do not meet Euro 4/IV standards could be subject to this charge.

There are 4 levels of CAZ being proposed. A class A CAZ would include buses, coaches, taxis and PHVs. The widest ranging CAZ would go as far as include those vehicles included in a Class A zone plus HGV's, LGV's and cars. Currently the majority of BCC fleet vehicles would not meet the CAZ emissions standards if a Class D CAZ were to be implemented. Whilst the feasibility study for the CAZ for Bristol is at the very early stages, the recent National Air Quality Action Plan issued by Government in July 2017 emphasises a need for local authorities to take the lead to improve local air pollution. Within the National Air Quality Action Plan it states that *"The UK government expects local authorities to set a lead in cleaning up their own fleets and meeting local air quality objectives."*

Implementation of a Clean Air Zone would be required before 2020. Bristol City Council needs to ensure that its fleet is compliant with the CAZ emissions requirements, not only to ensure that the health impacts from the fleet are minimised but to demonstrate that we are leading by example. Implementation of a charging CAZ in Bristol would potentially be more difficult if Bristol City Council were to continue to operate vehicles within that zone that were not compliant with the emission standards.

The proposed fleet renewal proposal will ensure that the BCC fleet is compliant with future CAZ emissions standards, as set out in the current National Air Quality Action Plan.