

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

18 November 2021



Report of: Director of Economy of Place

Title: Clean Air Zone Update

Ward: City Centre

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Recommendation

- This report provides a written update for Overview and Scrutiny Management Board following the approval of the full business case (FBC) by the Joint Air Quality Unit. It also sets out background information regarding the development of Bristol's clean air zone (CAZ).
- A short presentation will also be given at the scrutiny meeting.



1. Background

A Clean Air Zone (CAZ) will help improve air quality by reducing harmful levels of air pollution caused by traffic. It will also ensure that residents benefit from a healthy and natural environment. We have sought to deliver clean air in a way that protects the most deprived households in the city.

The council's Full Business Case (FBC) has recommended a small CAZ D Option. A small CAZ D Option involves a charging element; the scheme would charge non-compliant buses, coaches, taxis, HGVs, LGVs and private cars across the small zone. The small CAZ D Option includes the following measures:

- Small Area Class D (charging non-compliant private cars, buses, coaches, taxis, HGVs and LGVs) – map attached at Appendix A.
- Fast Track Measures: Closure of Cumberland Road inbound to general traffic; implementing a detailed VMS strategy (Variable Message Signs) which includes the use of existing transport infrastructure such as traffic signals and modelling.

2. A brief history (for the benefit of new Members)

Following submission of the council's Outline Business Case (OBC) in November 2019, the situation changed dramatically due to the global pandemic caused by Covid-19. The council reviewed the impact of the pandemic and the inevitable change to the project. Consideration needed to be given as to how we could move forward in a way that improved air quality and improved health benefits to Bristol, recognising the unprecedented times we were in while also seeking to support economic recovery.

In a short space of time and with the help of enabling legislation from Government, we made some radical changes to some of the most polluting areas in Bristol. These 'Street Space' schemes and Fast Track measures have been / are being implemented to open up road space usually reserved for parking and movement of general traffic to cyclists and pedestrians to:

- Enable better social distancing, especially in local shopping areas
- Encourage people to travel by bike or walk
- Reduce air pollution.

These measures are expected to be permanent, as the Mayor is committed to the Street Space schemes, some of which have been part of the council's Transport Strategy for a number of years and would likely have been implemented in the fullness of time without the pandemic having happened.

In August 2020, the council received a new ministerial Direction, setting out the following:

- That we continue work on a small CAZ D and outer medium CAZ C until evidence shows that there is no requirement for one or both
- That we provide evidence of our new proposed measures by 4 December 2020
- That we provide a Full Business Case by 26 February 2021
- That we prepare to implement the scheme as soon as possible and to deliver compliance by 2023 at the latest. We are required to start implementing a CAZ C with a small CAZ D by 29 October 2021, unless our further evidence demonstrates that this is not necessary in order to deliver compliance by 2023.

A further consultation took place from 8 October 2020 which consulted on two options:

- a dual zone consisting of a Medium CAZ C (charging all commercial non-compliant vehicles) with a small CAZ D (charging all non-compliant vehicles including private cars)
- a standalone option of a small CAZ D

We developed modelling to show the impact of the Street Space and Fast Track Measures on the CAZ plans. Evidence was provided to JAQU, showing that a Medium CAZ C was no longer needed to reach compliance in the shortest possible time and that, therefore; only a small CAZ D was needed.

The CAZ options that the council has explored to date are:

- A CAZ C, over a medium area, which charges polluting (non-compliant) commercial vehicles such as buses, coaches, taxis, private hires, heavy and light goods vehicles, but not private cars
- A 'hybrid' CAZ scheme featuring the medium area CAZ C, as above, and a smaller zone where private diesel vehicles are banned from entering between 7am and 3pm daily. The government no longer requires the council to proceed with the option of a diesel ban
- A CAZ over a small area (CAZ D) for all older, more polluting (non-compliant) vehicles

3. Approval of Full Business Case

Following the submission of a revised Full Business Case in July 2021 the submission was approved on the 1st November following review by the Joint Air Quality Board (JAQU). JAQU have approved the small CAZ D approach with the compliance date of 2023.

The funding included in the table below are approved,

Measure	Costs
Financial support	
A loan / grant scheme to assist businesses to upgrade or replace their vehicles	£32.3m
Bus retro-fit / support for the purchase of new vehicles	£2.1m
Sustainable Travel Team	
Mobility credits and / or subsidised bus travel for certain demographic or income groups Business support including personalised travel planning CAF scheme promotion. Leaflets / publicity, language translations, alternative formats etc	£5.9m
Freight	
Micro-consolidation with cargo freight bikes and Only Mile Delivery Centre.	£2m

There are three areas within the CAZ FBC submission that have not been approved. These are the Legible Signs (£500k), Bus Refurbishment (£1.17m) and Cycle Scheme (£720k). The reasoning given by JAQU for their decision is that there are other more appropriate routes to funding for these aspects.

The Clean Air Funds (loans/grants scheme) are being awarded under a two-stage approach from JAQU. Within the initial funding approval of £11.9m has been awarded with a further £17.5m available in stretch funding. To access the 'stretch funding' Bristol City Council will need to claim detailing how BCC are meeting the criteria set out by JAQU in terms of applying the grants and loans.

The ministerial letter received approving the FBC is attached. A funding letter detailing the award is yet to be received.

4. Timeline:

- Officers are continuing to work with the Joint Air Quality Unit (JAQU) and will formally announce the go live date once programme alignment is met between JAQU and BCC. This is currently expected to be late summer 2022.
- The full loan and grant schemes are expected to launch in winter 2021.

Updates about the Clean Air Zone have been presented and discussed at Scrutiny on the following occasions:

- Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission – 26th July 2018
- Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission - 21st February 2019
- OSMB – 17th July 2019
- OSMB - 30th October 2019
- OSMB – 30th January 2020
- OSMB – 24th April 2020
- OSMB – 26th August 2020
- OSMB – 5th October 2020
- OSMB – 30th November 2020
- OSMB – 2nd February 2021
- OSMB – 24th February 2021
- OSMB – 12th July 2021

Previous Cabinet reports can be found here:

Revised Full Business Case – June 2021 to be published following the December cabinet meeting.

Full Business Case – 25 February 2021 - <https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk/mgChooseDocPack.aspx?ID=8404>

Clean Air Zone Project Update – 1 September 2020:

<https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk/documents/s51780/CAZ%20Programme%20Update%20-%20Cabinet%201.9.2020%20FINAL.1.pdf>

Clean Air Zone Project Update – 28 April 2020 -

<https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk/documents/s48452/CAZ%20Cabinet%20Draft%20-%20FINAL%204%20MO.pdf>

Outline Business Case – 5 November 2019: <https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=17389>

