

Overview & Scrutiny Management Board 18 November 2021 Public Forum



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Public Forum Statements

Statement 1: Councillors John Goulandris and Henry Michallat

Whilst supportive of cleaner air in Bristol, we are very disappointed to note that the final CAZ proposals still include an element of the A4 Portway.

As has been admitted by the Mayor, keeping part of the Portway in the CAZ is more to do with raising money than producing cleaner air for Bristol.

Under these proposals, motorists will be charged simply for being on the Portway even if they are not travelling into the city centre. This will impact on many drivers, including those travelling from the M5 to Bristol Airport and South Bristol.

The risk is that motorists will try and avoid the CAZ by turning off the Portway at Sylvan Way or Roman Way, which will see polluting vehicles 'rat running' through densely populated residential streets in our ward. The net result is that we will see a major deterioration in air quality in Sea Mills, Stoke Bishop and adjoining wards. That's hardly in keeping with the spirit of the CAZ.

We call on the Mayor to think again and amend the CAZ plans very slightly so that motorists are only charged if they turn off the Portway and make their way into the city centre. This would help to promote cleaner air both in the city centre and our ward.

Statement 2: Councillor Mark Weston

First things first and to avoid any misunderstanding of my group's position on this issue, we welcome the progress that has been made here to tackle air pollution in Bristol and accept that the Administration is having to make some difficult choices given the tight timescales for compliance which have been set.

All Members of Council recognise the moral, social, and environmental arguments that have been made for improving air quality in our city. The Final Business Case submission which has been accepted by Ministers represents an important health measure which should make an immediate impact on NO2 levels once it begins operation next summer.

Secondly, it should be acknowledged that the various exemptions and mitigations which will apply to the small, class D, Clean Air Zone (CAZ) are necessary and well chosen. Furthermore, the support being given by Government in the form of a £42m support package to help those most in need is particularly helpful.

However, having made these positive points, I feel compelled to put on record my Group's continuing concern over the potential negative impact this CAZ will have due to the inclusion of parts of the A4 Portway within the zone's western boundary. As we have repeatedly argued in various representations, this is a major road connecting the North and South (incidentally specifically built to take traffic away from the centre of the city) whose capture will result in additional hardship, inconvenience, and pollution.

The Mayor has justified this move on the basis that the scheme needs to impact on enough people to encourage 'behaviour change'. Despite the claim that 71% of vehicles will not be charged, we believe this approach is going to generate avoidable problems. It is to be expected that an unquantified amount of non-compliant commercial traffic and commuters will seek to avoid payment by using other – less suitable – alternative routes. Such displacement of traffic will inevitably raise pollution levels and cause congestion in areas outside of the zone. This could then lead to an understandable clamour for the CAZ boundaries to be extended.

But probably a more immediate problem here is that this measure will have an accumulative or compound effect on the viability of centrally-based businesses. Taken in conjunction with other anti-private car policies pursued most recently by the Mayor (road closures, reduced network capacity, and expensive parking) together with household retailers increasingly closing their stores (Debenhams) or relocating (M & S), Bristol is becoming a much less attractive retail destination. Parts of Broadmead are beginning to resemble a tumbleweed town and one is left wondering whether this disastrous hollowing-out strategy is by accident, incompetence, or design, just to free up space for widespread retail conversions into desperately needed housing?

Consequently, serious doubts must remain over whether the proposed CAZ model will be sufficient to deal with the new challenges it will itself generate and on the Mayor's ability to understand the contribution his own transport policies are making towards undermining our future economic prosperity.

Statement 3: Andrew Gale

I am writing to complain about the proposals for the Clean Air Zone in Bristol.

The principal complaint I have is that including the Portway and Bridge Valley Road in the Clean Air Zone will force traffic coming from or travelling to the M5 onto smaller roads that are simply not capable of dealing with the volume and thereby increasing pollution in those areas.

It is also the case for local traffic wanting to travel from the North of Bristol to the South West of Bristol vice versa.

The primary affected areas are likely to be the A369, Sylvan Way and our beloved landmark the Clifton Suspension Bridge.

There has been delay after delay in opening adequate properly thought through plans for providing suitable public transport and effective ring road around Bristol.

This current proposal to force polluting traffic onto smaller roads, increasing risk of accidents and effectively severing the North from the South of Bristol is a terrible proposal.

Statement 4: Frances Chesneau

I write with regards to the western edge boundary of the proposed CAZ that extends onto the Cumberland Basin and Portway. For many people this is a key arterial route leading from the city and

M5 to the airport. It is not predominantly a residential area and it was designed as a ring road to keep traffic out of the central and residential areas.

Traffic avoiding this section of the CAZ will no doubt divert over the Clifton Suspension Bridge (surely Bristol's most treasured icon that should be protected) and into the residential areas of Clifton village, Leigh Woods and across the Downs, on roads that were not designed to ever support ring road levels of traffic. I also believe there will be a knock-on impact on the residential side roads further down the Portway in Stoke Bishop, Shirehampton and Sea Mills as drivers seek to avoid the CAZ.

I would like to ask the Board to recommend the removal of the Portway and Cumberland Basin routes from within the CAZ. I also request the Board and public are fully appraised by Bristol city council of the predicted modelling and impacts on alternative routes if these roads are left within the CAZ.

Statement 5: Ian Witherden

I would like to comment on the proposed CAZ.

There are 3 routes to cross the Avon on the western edge of the Bristol - M5, Clifton Suspension Bridge and the Cumberland Basin.

The proposed CAZ has included the Cumberland Basin and Portway in its designated area. This is a major route that currently keeps non-motorway traffic out of the central and residential areas.

By including Bridge Valley road, the Cumberland Basin and Portway traffic in the CAZ, non-compliant traffic will divert off the Portway, through residential BS9, the Downs, Clifton and over the Clifton Suspension Bridge and down Rownham hill. This unintended result will cause more residential and city pollution as these routes are already busy and stop-start. This would include all traffic from north Bristol heading to large events at Ashton Gate Stadium.

The CAZ is designed to protect central Bristol from high pollution levels. By the inclusion of Bridge Valley road, the Cumberland Basin and Portway traffic, pollution will be increased. This needs to be re-thought.

Statement 6: Laura Miller

I am writing to ask that the air zone identified be reconsidered due to the likelihood that cars will be pushed into the nearby residential area. Many thanks

Statement 7: Kristen Grayewski

I am a Sea mills resident who will be impacted by the proposed CAZ, namely with the inclusion of the Portway. On previous detailed plans, Sylvan Way was proposed as the 'decision point' for HGVs wanting to avoid the new toll, potentially creating increased traffic at what is already a very busy residential junction at Sylvan Way and Shirehampton Rd.

I understand you have targets to meet and are looking to cut pollution levels in the centre but the knock-on effects I see with the inclusion of the Portway and the diversion of traffic up Sylvan Way include:

-more pollution for my neighbourhood, including many families with small children and childminders located on Sylvan Way

- an increase in 'rat running' along narrow Woodleaze and adjacent residential streets when traffic builds up at the lights on Sylvan Way
- a disproportionately punitive impact on diesel-driving tradesmen operating in Portway-adjacent communities (Sea Mills, Shirehampton, Avonmouth).

The Portway was designed to be a ring road, preventing traffic from having to literally go 'round the houses' and by including it in the CAZ, you will just be diverting more pollution into residential areas that weren't designed to accommodate heavier traffic.

Please reconsider redrawing the boundaries to exclude the Portway and Cumberland Basin which function so well to help traffic skirt the centre rather than get snarled up in it.

Public Forum Questions

Questions 1 - 2: Geoff Gallan, Chair, TRESA

In relation to the Clean Air Zone, we are aware that a number of issues have been identified, and mitigation measures agreed, for businesses with non-compliant vehicles and people on low incomes. However, we are not aware of any issues identified, or mitigation proposed, for communities living on the edge of the clean air zone. As a group representing Totterdown residents, we are particularly concerned about the impact of vehicles travelling along the A4 Bath Road and A37 Wells Road into Bristol (both key routes), who may look for ways to avoid driving into the clean air zone e.g. rat running in side streets, adding to congestion and poor air quality on other routes e.g. St Johns Lane, and/or parking in side streets and walking/cycling the rest of the journey.

Q 1.

Please can you give details of the issues considered, modelling undertaken, and mitigation measures proposed in relation to motor vehicles travelling along the A4 Bath Road and A37 Wells Road into Bristol who may look for ways to avoid driving into the clean air zone?

Officer response

The number of vehicles diverting their trips to roads outside the zone is expected to be relatively small. The council will look to address any issues and work with communities to mitigate unintended negative impacts.

71% of vehicles travelling in the zone are already clean enough and won't be charged – this percentage will increase as more people take advantage of our financial support to upgrade their vehicles or switch to a cleaner way of travelling. The zone will improve air quality on most roads in the city due to the knock-on benefits of people switching to cleaner vehicles across the whole network. With the options to upgrade, pay the charge or use alternative transport the number of vehicles travelling on roads outside the zone to avoid the charge is expected to be relatively small and this will be mitigated by compliant vehicles diverting away from roads on the outside edge of the zone to go through the zone.

The A4 and A37 have been included within the modelling, however this is a regional model and does not include each individual side road. Designing or developing mitigations for any impacts that the zone may have has not been undertaken at this stage as the modelling suggests that these impacts will be

relatively small. We will however be monitoring the impacts and seek to develop mitigations as impacts become apparent.

Q 2.

What mechanisms are proposed to enable people in communities at the edge of the Clean Air Zone to report issues of concern and seek remedial action? (For example, could there be a dedicated interactive map, similar to those used for some consultations, where people can pinpoint specific issues and ask for action to be taken?)

Officer response

Residents could use existing channels to report any concerns: raise with their Councillors or contact the Council directly by emailing us at CAZsupport@bristol.gov.uk

We will be keeping the impacts of the implementation of the CAZ under review in terms of routine traffic and air quality monitoring.

Questions 3 - 4: Suzanne Audrey

The Clean Air Zone Update report indicates that the Revised Full Business Case (FBC), dated June 2021 and submitted to the government in July 2021, will not be published until after the December 2021 cabinet meeting.

Q 3.

Why is FBC not being published until after the December 2021 cabinet meeting?

Officer Response

The FBC was considered by scrutiny prior to Cabinet and submitted to Government in February 2021 and has been published and can be seen here:

[Microsoft Word - FBC 08 Management Case 17 Feb 2021.docx \(bristol.gov.uk\)](#)

[Full Business Case documents - Clean Air for Bristol](#)

Subsequently, Government asked for more information that resulted in a number of revisions that were re-submitted in July 2021. These changes are all within the decision and delegations agreed by Cabinet.

These will be included in the December Cabinet report as we have some final details to clarify first.

Q 4.

Have members of OSMB been able to see the FBC in order to familiarise themselves with its contents and undertake adequate scrutiny?

Officer Response

The following links were published in the July 2021 CAZ update Scrutiny Report

This is the Full Business Case that was submitted and presented to Scrutiny and approved by Cabinet in February 2021. The changes agreed with JAQU are all within the previous decision and delegations made by Cabinet.

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

Questions 5 - 6: Gavin Spittlehouse, Bristol Clean Air Alliance

Q 5.

BCC has yet to announce a planned go-live date for the CAZ. The Mayor has said that earlier delays would not affect the compliance year (2023) so we'd like to ask what is the latest date that the current model says the CAZ must go live in order to achieve 2023 compliance. Also to ask whether BCC are confident that they can deliver it by that date.

Officer Response

We estimate the zone and our increased significant package of support means we are still on track to meet our clean air targets in 2023.

Introducing the zone in summer 2022 gives residents and businesses time to take advantage of the support to upgrade to cleaner vehicles or change the way they travel.

The modelling indicates that if the zone is launched in the summer of 2022 we will be compliant in 2023 and as things stand we are confident that we can deliver compliance in 2023.

We will be launching our support programme shortly and inviting people apply and take advantage of our financial support offers so that people can prepare early.

Birmingham went live in June with a CAZ D and 5 months later are already showing that 90% of vehicles entering the zone are compliant.

Q 6.

The report says "The ministerial letter received approving the FBC is attached. A funding letter detailing the award is yet to be received" - can we ask whether the funding letter has been received (by the time of the meeting) and if not whether there's an indication of when it's expected and why it's delayed. Also to ask for both letters to be published.

Officer response

The funding letter has now been received, there are still a couple of issues being resolved regarding the funding and will publish the funding letter once these have been resolved.

Questions 7 – 9: Councillors Lisa Stone and Ed Plowden

Q 7.

The Cabinet report says that excess revenue “may” be used to deliver liveable neighbourhoods across the City. There may also be other calls on the excess revenue, especially to mitigate the effects of the CAZ on areas on the boundary of the CAZ which are modelled to experience additional traffic and/or adverse effect on Air Quality. It is good to hear that the unwanted side effects will be monitored and that mitigation “may” or “could” then be considered. It would also be good for residents to be able to input to the monitoring.

Is there a proposed process for deciding what this mitigation may be, including residents input, the range of interventions that may be acceptable and how to prioritise potentially competing claims for the mitigation?

Officer response

Any excess income secured from the charges received by operating the zone has to be used for improving air quality in the city. We will need to monitor the impact of the zone before determining where to implement mitigation measures to manage those impacts.

This will include funding public transport, walking and cycling schemes.

Q 8.

Residents living on the hill alongside the Three Lamps are understandably nervous about the Clean Air Zone as the A4 and A37 surround them. It is good to see that there will be an improvement in Air Quality, but they already suffer from rat running (420 vehicles in 100 minutes on one count) and commuter parking on their streets. Despite action little has been done in the area. They fear that this may become worse as the immediate area will allow people wanting to avoid the CAZ to join up and make journeys that might have previously gone through along the Bath Road and other Roads such as Coronation Rd. The motorists amongst them are also concerned that in order to be able to go to the East along the Bath Road (potentially to connect to the M32) their only option is to travel into and immediately out of the CAZ incurring the full daily fee.

Will long awaiting plans for traffic calming be expedited and any special provision be allowed for these local residents to make the “U turn” onto the Bath Rd?

Officer response

There are no proposals to enable a u-turn to the Bath Rd as part of the clean air plan. This has been looked at a number of times and found to be unviable due to the lack of space and impact on other flows. When the impacts of the CAZ become clear we will seek to implement mitigations to any impacts and work with local Cllrs and communities to design any mitigation schemes.

Q 9.

The graphic modelling traffic flows shows no significant difference on the Wells Rd, but the Environmental Assessment lists the Wells Road as one of the 7 areas likely to decline in AQ.

How is this reconciled in the modelling?

Officer response

Air quality impacts are a mixture of many different factors. The mix of vehicles is as important as the volume of vehicles, the local topography and vehicle speeds/congestion levels. The modelling shows very little difference to traffic flows however there is a small increase whereas most roads experience a small decrease overall. There may also be changes to the mix of vehicles on the A37 due to its location. Overall, the modelling shows that nowhere outside the zone experiences significant increases in pollution as a result of the zone which cleans up the fleet across the region and therefore benefits all parts of the city.