



Stop Climate Chaos Scotland Response to Scottish Government Consultation on Building Scotland's Low Emission Zones December 2017

Summary

Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS) is a civil society coalition campaigning for action on climate change. Members include environment and international development organisations, student unions and trade unions, community groups and faith groups. We believe that the Scottish Government should take bold action to tackle climate change, with Scotland delivering our fair share of the Paris Agreement and supporting climate justice around the world.

We strongly welcome the First Minister's bold commitment to phase out petrol and diesel vehicles by 2032 in the recent Programme for Government, and we welcome the commitments to new LEZs in urban air pollution zones, a doubling of the active travel funding and the £60m innovation fund to support low carbon innovation, which will enable sustainable transport to step up a gear.

However, it is now crucial that those LEZs are delivered as quickly and ambitiously as possible to ensure that they accelerate the pace of change to low carbon vehicles rather than simply leaving it to market forces.

Consultation questions

1 Do you support the principle of LEZs to help improve Scottish air quality? Please be as specific as possible in your reasoning.

Yes, but only if LEZs are delivered ambitiously to ensure a step change towards lower emissions, lower carbon transport as quickly as possible.

We welcomed the recent announcement in the Programme for Government regarding the adoption of 4 LEZs by 2020, with the first on the ground by 2018 and more possibly to follow by 2023.

Our urban streets continue to be choked with traffic congestion and the polluted air we breathe contributes to around 2500 early deaths each year in Scotland. Meanwhile, transport became the single biggest source of emissions in Scotland for the first time in 2017, accounting for well over a quarter of emissions, and that transport is the sector that had made least progress in cutting emissions over the last three decades, with emissions static at 1990 levels. Around the world, many countries are already setting ambitious but feasible targets to phase out the sale of new fossil fuel vehicles, from our close neighbours like Norway who want all new cars and vans to be zero carbon by 2025 to emerging economies like India who are aiming for a similar outcome for 2030.

We are however mindful that the issue now is not about when or where Scotland's LEZs will be introduced, but how. For LEZs to be a success, they need to be bold enough to deliver a step change on the current make-up of our transport sector rather than just follow a slow market progression towards lower carbon vehicles. LEZs need to deliver strong improvements in air quality as soon as possible in tandem with an acceleration of low carbon vehicles in urban centres. They must also be rolled out in such a way that bus services, walking, and cycling are supported, so as to support modal shift away from the car and towards more sustainable modes.

There has to be sufficient investment in ensuring that all affected have a genuine choice/option of low cost public transport that is available in a realistic timetable for those on 24/7 shift work and that recognises for a range of workers that cars are the only option – for example, social workers transporting children and similar essential car users

In practice therefore, this means that the Scottish Government needs to provide additional funds for bus retrofits and upgrades as well as heeding long standing calls for greater investment in public transport and for bus re-regulation.

The Scottish Government must also provide a clearer vision over what Low Emission Zones will look like. LEZs should place emissions restrictions on cars, lorries, vans, and taxis and buses, in a phased out and clear manner, with restrictions initially placed on buses, vans, and lorries.

The Government must make it possible for local authorities to enforce LEZ offences by decriminalising LEZ offences as soon as possible.

Automatic number plate recognition technology should be used to lead to high compliance levels.

2 Do you agree that the primary objective of LEZs should be to support the achievement of Scottish Air Quality Objectives? If not, why not?

Low Emission Zones should support the achievement of World Health Organisation guidelines on air quality as well as Scottish and European statutory limits, which required compliance with set thresholds for controlled pollutants to have been met in 2005 and 2010. Compliance with WHO guidelines should be achieved in all settings, i.e. in urban retail and business centres as well as industrial areas and residential areas.

3a Do you agree with the proposed minimum mandatory Euro emission criteria for Scottish LEZs?

Whilst we agree with the proposed minimum Euro standards, they are meaningless without timeframes attached. Timeframes should be ambitious to ensure that air quality legal obligations are delivered as quickly as possible. Restrictions should start in 2018 in Glasgow for buses, vans, and lorries, and in 2020 for taxis, private hire vehicles, and cars. In the three other cities, restrictions should start in 2020 for buses, vans, lorries, taxis, and private hire

vehicles, and 2022 for cars. This should be subject to alternative public transport provision in place, and the exemptions referred to in section 7.

The Government should also follow examples from Norway and Oxford and set out plans for Low Emission Zones to require that all vehicles within them be zero carbon. This will help it deliver on its ambition to phase out the need for petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2032.

3b Do you agree with the proposal to use the NMF modelling in tandem with the NLEF appraisal to identify the vehicle types for inclusion within a LEZ?

No comment

3c Should emission sources from construction machinery and/or large or small van refrigerated units be included in the LEZ scope, and if so should their inclusion be immediate or after a period of time?

Yes.

4 What are your views on adopting a national road access restriction scheme for LEZs across different classes of vehicles?

We support the Government's view that LEZs be set up as a scheme which deters non-compliant vehicles from entering rather than simply paying a fine to enter with a dirty vehicle. The fine should therefore be set at a level which is high enough to deliver this outcome. A higher level of fine should apply to higher value non-compliant vehicles.

5 What are your views on the proposed LEZ hours of operation, in particular whether local authorities should be able to decide on LEZ hours of operation for their own LEZs?

LEZs should be operational 24/7, every day of the year.

6 What are your views on Automatic Number Plate Recognition enforcement of LEZs?

We support ANPR enforcement of LEZs. This infrastructure could be used to apply a congestion charge at a future time if councils choose to go down that route. ANPR enforcement would also ensure higher compliance levels.

7a What exemptions should be applied to allow LEZs to operate robustly? Please be as specific as possible in your reasoning.

Vehicles driven by, or which are regularly used to transport people with disabilities should be given a longer period of time before they would be required to comply, as has been the case in London.

Residents should also be given more time to comply.

Essential car users, designated as such as part of green travel to work plans, should be given more time to comply and/or incentivised support to employers to cover costs for employees accessing vehicles that would comply.

7b Should exemptions be consistent across all Scottish local authorities?

Yes.

8 What are your views on LEZ lead-in times and sunset periods for vehicle types shown in Table 2?

We do not believe that there is a compelling case to have both a “lead in time” as well as a “sunset period” as both essentially could mean the same thing and run the risk of delaying LEZ implantation.

LEZs should be declared to be operational only if they are being properly enforced, and the dates set out in the Programme for Government (2018 for the first city, which we now know to be Glasgow, 2020 for Scotland’s three other largest cities) should be respected.

9 What are your views about retrofitting technology and an Engine Retrofitting Centre to upgrade commercial vehicles to cleaner engines, in order to meet the minimum mandatory Euro emission criteria for Scottish LEZs?

SCCS supports retrofitting technology where possible.

10 How can the Scottish Government best target any funding to support implementation?

Green Bus Funding should be targeted to companies operating in areas which will have LEZs.

Funding should also be made available to assist with retrofits.

New funding should be made available by the Scottish Government to local councils to support communications campaigns around LEZs and installation of LEZ infrastructure.

11 What criteria should the Scottish Government use to measure and assess LEZ effectiveness?

- air pollution monitoring data (held by the Scottish Government and local councils)
- Statistics held in Transport and Travel in Scotland about how people travel to work (percentages of commuters travelling by car/public transport/on foot/by bike, with modal shift away from the car and towards more sustainable modes indicating progress)
- Statistics around contributions of the transport sector to key air pollutants in Scotland and CO₂ (Chapter 13 of Scotland’s Transport Statistics)

12 What information should the Scottish Government provide to vehicle owners before a LEZ is put in place, during a lead-in time and once LEZ enforcement starts?

High profile communications campaigns about how air pollution damages health and causes premature death are needed and are long overdue in order to enable more people to

accept and support the difficult but necessary but changes that are required to people's personal travel habits into urban centres.

As soon as possible, local councils which will have LEZs, supported by the Scottish Government should launch communications strategies about which vehicles will be affected by when to maximise public support and cooperation with LEZs.

13 What actions should local or central government consider in tandem with LEZs to address air pollution?

Low Emission Zones are one of many measures required to tackle the transport sector's carbon and air pollutant emissions.

In tandem with LEZs the Government should also phase out the sale of new fossil fuel cars to reduce emissions, clean up air pollution and improve the nation's health. We strongly welcomed the First Minister's commitment to phase out new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2032. To give greater force and cross-Parliament buy in to the target, we believe the commitment to phase out new petrol and diesel vehicles by 2032 should be put on a statutory basis in the forthcoming Climate Change Bill, together with a requirement to produce and implement a strategy to deliver it.

Further measures to support this could include requiring public vehicle fleets to lead the way, financial incentives like workplace parking levies, non-financial incentives like preferential bus lane access for EVs, and changes to building regulations to require EV charging points in new build homes. Enhanced investment in walking and cycling and in public transport and greater emphasis on safe streets with more urban 20mph speed limits would also support this aim and manage demand, alongside fair green travel to work plans, negotiated with recognised trade unions, taking account of access to public transport, cost, shift work and essential car user posts.

14 How can LEZs help to tackle climate change, by reducing CO₂ emissions in tandem with air pollution emissions?

LEZs should lead to a reduction of carbon emission from the transport sector.

This will especially be the case if LEZs are used to prevent all fossil fuelled vehicles from entering urban centres at some point. They could become increasingly key to the delivery of the Scottish Government's commitment to phasing out the need for diesel and petrol vehicles by 2032.

15 What measures (including LEZs) would make a difference in addressing both road congestion and air pollution emissions at the same time?

See q 13

16 Do you have any other comments that you would like to add on the Scottish Government's proposals for LEZs

No

17 What impacts do you think LEZs may have on particular groups of people, with particular reference to the 'protected characteristics' listed in paragraph 5.2? Please be as specific as possible in your reasoning.

LEZs should lead to groups with protected characteristics - particularly people with disabilities, pregnant mothers, young children and the elderly - benefiting. These groups of people are more susceptible to the impacts of pollution so have more to gain from the introduction of LEZs.

18 Do you think the LEZ proposals contained in this consultation are likely to increase or reduce the costs and burdens placed on any sector? Please be as specific as possible in your reasoning.

LEZs should ultimately lead to financial savings for Scotland, since air pollution currently costs the Scottish economy around £1.1bn in days lost at work and costs to the NHS.

The set up costs of LEZs may seem significant, but are a fraction of the Scottish Government's annual spend on road building, and of the revenue currently generated by ADT.

Finally, case law surrounding compliance with air quality laws has left us in no doubt that costs should not be raised as a barrier to introduce the strongest possible LEZs.

19 What impacts do you think LEZs may have on the privacy of individuals? Please be as specific as possible in your reasoning.

Automatic Number Plate Technology, if adopted, should be used carefully. Data should be erased as soon as fines are paid and personal details should not be passed on to any parties other than those necessary to administer fines.

20 Are there any likely impacts the proposals contained in this consultation may have upon the environment? Please be as specific as possible in your reasoning.

If delivered ambitiously and to time, and if they lead to a modal shift and to the accelerated adoption of low carbon vehicles, LEZs have the potential to help mitigate climate change by delivering carbon reductions in the transport sector.

They have the potential to improve public health through improved air quality.