

## **Leicester's 'Healthier Air for Leicester: Leicester's Air Quality Action Plan (2015-2026) – Consultation Responses and Considerations.**

### **Introduction**

As Leicester has been designated an Air Quality Management Area, it is a legal requirement to have an Air Quality Action Plan and the requirements for the contents and format of such plans are outlined in policy guidance documents<sup>1</sup>. Local authorities are also required to consult on the preparation of such plans with key stakeholders, including local interest groups and local residents.

In keeping with this requirement, Leicester City Council undertook a twelve week public statutory consultation which ran from the 17<sup>th</sup> March – 9<sup>th</sup> June 2015. The following is a summary of the consultation undertaken:

4<sup>th</sup> March 2015 – Economic Development, Transport, Tourism and Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Commission  
11<sup>th</sup> March 2015 – Leicester Cycle Forum  
14<sup>th</sup> April 2015 – Improving Bus Services Group  
14<sup>th</sup> April 2015 – Bus User Panel  
13<sup>th</sup> May 2015 – Freight Quality Partnership  
18<sup>th</sup> May 2015 – Local Access Forum  
12<sup>th</sup> June 2015 - Environmental Reference Group  
10<sup>th</sup> September 2015 – Leicester City Council Executive  
17<sup>th</sup> September 2015 – Economic Development, Transport, Tourism and Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Commission

- 170 formal responses made through consultations.leicester.gov.uk, 23 of these were from organisations
- Social Media (the Council's Facebook and Twitter webpages)
- Local press releases
- Emails and letters to businesses

To strengthen our responses from businesses, the following additional consultations exercises were carried out:

25<sup>th</sup> August 2015 – 'Shaping Future Transport Initiatives' event  
14<sup>th</sup> October 2015 – 'Travel Leicester – Finding Solutions Forum'

Responses from all consultations were reviewed and used further to develop the final action plan.

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<sup>1</sup> Local Air Quality Management Policy Guidance (PG09) - Defra, February 2009

## Consultation Questions:

Six consultation questions were asked. These were:

### Theme 1: Reducing Transport Emissions

1. Do you agree that we should lobby Central Government to introduce measures to reduce polluting emissions from diesel vehicles?
2. Do you agree that we should introduce a Low Emission Zone, first for buses, and then for all vehicles?
3. What else could we be doing with our partners to reduce transport emissions?

### Theme 2: Increasing Active Travel

4. Other than those actions currently in the Action Plan, are there any other actions we could be doing to encourage active travel through walking, cycling and bus journeys?

### Theme 3: Improving Traffic Management

5. Other than those actions currently in the Action Plan, are there any other actions we could be doing to improve traffic management?

### Theme 4: Improving Land Use Planning

6. Other than those actions currently in the Action Plan, are there any other actions we could be doing to improve air quality through land use planning?

## Consultation Answers

Q1 - Do you agree that Leicester City Council should lobby government to introduce measures to reduce polluting emissions from diesel vehicles?

- Yes – 85% (144)
- No – 8% (14)
- Don't Know – 5% (9)
- Not answered – 2% (3)

Q2 - Do you agree that we should introduce a Low Emission Zone, first for buses, then for all vehicles?

- Yes – 76% (129)
- No – 18% (30)
- DK – 6% (10)
- Not answered – 0.5% (1)

## Examples of responses received include:

- Cheaper bus fares / better bus services
- To adopt an no idling policy for buses and taxis
- Reduce traffic entering into the city centre
- No further reduction in road capacity

- Encourage car sharing
- Continue to improve the cycle lane network and infrastructure, and encourage more cycling and walking.
- Promote the use of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (for private vehicles, taxis and buses)
- The number of premature deaths (162 p.a.) attributable to air quality, when compared to fatalities in road traffic accidents, should cause the council to reconsider how it funds highway improvements.
- Improvements to traffic light sequencing
- Plant more trees / more green spaces

Following this, a number of actions have been strengthened.

### **Summary of Suggestions Considered for Inclusion**

A summary of the suggestions for the consultation questions 3, 4, 5 and 6 are:

- To improve the public transport network and operation (noted and included)
- To improve our cycling infrastructure (noted and included)
- To improve the management of the highway network (noted and included)
- To ensure land use planning decisions encourage active travel / restricts the use of cars (noted and included)
- Active encouragement for businesses and residents to replace their vehicles with ultra-low emission vehicles (noted and included)
- Use of trees and plants to actively reduce air pollution levels (noted and included)
- To implement an Air Quality Awareness campaign (noted and included)
- Taxis to be included in the proposed Bus Low Emission Zone (noted and included)
- To implement a Work Place Parking Levy (noted and referenced in the document)
- To expand on the parking concession for low emission vehicles (noted and included to the action, deliver a parking improvement programme)
- To introduce vehicle idling measures (noted and included – investigate the possibility of idling free zones).