

Majority of newly-elected metro mayors will back CAZ proposals

But no plans are announced for any outright ban on diesel vehicles

By Tom Seymour

New mayors for the West Midlands, Liverpool City Region, Greater Manchester and the West of England (so-called metro mayors) all back the introduction of clean air zones (CAZs) in their respective regions.

A CAZ framework set out by the previous Government suggests Euro 4 petrol, Euro 6 diesel or Euro VI for large commercial vehicles as minimum standards.

While the framework does encourage cities and towns to go further than the minimum standards and says that they will be updated "periodically", the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) says it won't change its minimum standards before 2025 in order to give businesses a level of certainty.

The new mayors were appointed in May and have devolved powers and a budget of millions to introduce their own strategies for tackling air quality and the rise in urban transport.

CLEAN AIR ZONES

Looking at the cities under the mayors' control, Birmingham, like London, has already been ordered to implement a CAZ before the end of 2020, while both Manchester and Bristol are actively pursuing zones of their own.

Liverpool has not ruled out introducing a CAZ and is currently researching hot spot areas for air pollution and how it is going to address them.

Liverpool City Region mayor Steve Rotheram wants the area to be "zero-carbon by 2040".

Of the six combined authority areas who voted in May, only Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is not considering introducing a CAZ.

Tees Valley failed to comment and the combined authority's transport plan makes no mention of CAZs, diesel or truck bans, congestion charges or electric vehicles (EVs).

Defra has set out its "best available" emissions

forecast for UK local authorities, which have one or more roads with concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) above statutory limits (40 micrograms per cubic metre), and for how long they would be above the threshold if no additional measures were taken (see panel).

The Government's figures for the largest urban areas in each region show Manchester, Birmingham, Middlesbrough, Liverpool and Bristol all have illegal levels of NO₂ until at least 2020.

Peterborough has the lowest level of pollution and will be below the 40mg limit as quickly as next year.

Cambridge was not included in the figures. While the finer details are still to be determined, Andy Burnham, Greater Manchester mayor, says he will focus on high-polluting vehicles, like older HGVs, if he can introduce a CAZ.

Burnham told *Fleet News*: "We need to have the ability to introduce a CAZ so we can protect those most vulnerable from the high-polluting vehicles.

But we also need a broader plan to reduce congestion, increase cycling and make public transport a clean, reliable and affordable alternative to the car."

West Midlands mayor Andy Street is planning to implement a CAZ for commercial vehicles, but is also considering including cars in the scheme.

Street supports a taxation scheme on the most polluting vehicles, but also wants a "carrot" in the form of a scrappage scheme to encourage people to change.

A spokesman for Street said: "There are areas still to be discussed but it will form part of the work of the portfolio holder." Street is expected to agree an action plan on issues with regards to transport within his first 100 days of office.

Meanwhile, a CAZ is being developed for Bristol, with West of England Mayor, Tim Bowles, supporting the scheme and wanting to provide new strategic roads to take goods vehicles away from towns and cities.

NO₂ EMISSIONS FORECAST FOR METRO MAYOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Local authorities with roads with concentrations of NO ₂ forecast above legal limits based on initial modelling (subject to change) and assuming no additional measures. All figures are provided in micrograms per cubic metre and 40 µg/m ³ (micrograms per cubic metre) is the statutory annual mean limit value for NO ₂ .	2017	2018	2019	2020
Manchester City Council	51	49	47	46
Birmingham City Council	60	59	58	57
Liverpool City Council	47	45	44	42
Bristol City Council	50	47	45	42
Peterborough Council	42	40	38	36
Middlesbrough Borough Council	60	56	51	47

Government figures for the largest urban areas in each metro mayor region show Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Bristol and Middlesbrough all have illegal levels of more than 40mg NO₂ until at least 2020.

Note – excludes any roads managed directly by Highways England, Transport Scotland, Welsh Government and Transport Northern Ireland

Source: Defra



Considering a clean air zone and says he wants to focus on high-polluting vehicles, like older HGVs

Andy Burnham, Greater Manchester



Planning to implement a clean air zone for commercial vehicles, but also considering including cars in the scheme

Andy Street, West Midlands



Has not ruled out the introduction of a clean air zone and wants the area to be zero-carbon by 2040

Steve Rotheram, Liverpool City Region