



British Lung Foundation response to Birmingham City Council Clean Air Strategy consultation

April 2019

1. Which of the following apply to you? Please tick all that apply.

None of these.

2. What is your full home postcode?

EC1V 7ER

3. Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement. The six priorities highlighted in the Clean Air Strategy provide a clear framework for improving air quality in the city.

Agree

4. If you disagree with this statement indicate why and explain how the priorities could be updated.

The Pledges

You will be asked about: Whether you agree or disagree that each pledge will have an impact on air quality in Birmingham.

In addition you will be asked for any: Comments or suggestions that help improve the positive impact of the pledges on air quality - in particular the potential contributions of different organisations, communities and institutions to the success of the pledges.

5. Pledge 1 - We will introduce a Clean Air Zone in Birmingham city centre.

This pledge will have a significant positive impact on air quality in Birmingham's city centre.

Agree

6. If you disagree with this statement, please explain why.

Responding on behalf of the British Lung Foundation.

The introduction of a Clean Air Zone (CAZ) is critically important as road transport is one of the biggest sources of air pollution in Birmingham.

The British Lung Foundation strongly welcomes the inclusion of private cars in the CAZ, as they represent a substantial share of the city's vehicle fleet. The most effective intervention to improve air quality is to focus on transport sources as they have the greatest share of emissions in Birmingham and this is what the CAZ will help deliver. In Birmingham, 50% of journeys are made by car and 250,000 car journeys made by residents are of less than one mile. And 61% of journeys to work are made by car or by van, exposing these commuters to 21% higher levels of pollution. Many of these journeys could be made using other cleaner, healthier and more sustainable modes of transport, such as public transport, walking or cycling.

However, we would like to see the CAZ extended to include the busy inner ring road (A4540) and to therefore directly reduce car emissions and improve air quality for the 10 schools located in close proximity to the road. Only 18% of all schools across Birmingham that are within 150m of a road where NO2 exceeds legal limits are currently in the proposed CAZ. Given the vast health impacts air pollution can have on children's lung development, it's essential that the zone is designed in the most ambitious way possible and plans are put in place to extend it to more areas where children live, learn and play.

7. Pledge 2 - We will continue to deliver a world class transport system, which prioritises public transport, cycling and walking.

The successful delivery of this pledge will make it easier for people to choose cleaner and environmentally friendly forms of transport.

Agree

8. If you disagree with this statement, please explain why.

We welcome the acknowledgement in the Clean Air Strategy that investment in public transport and in the walking and cycling environment is required to facilitate the modal shift away from use of polluting vehicles.

However, further clarity on when and where these changes are planned should be set out in the strategy. The updated Birmingham Transport Plan may be an opportunity to accelerate delivery of an improved transport system and to set out further details. It's essential that these transport plans are aligned with the delivery of the clean air zone, to ensure that safe, accessible and affordable travel alternatives are put in place.

9. Pledge 3 - We will identify schools which are exposed to air pollution problems and work with the school to identify intervention strategies to reduce the exposure of the children.

This pledge will help reduce the number of journeys in the most polluting vehicles.

Agree

10. If you disagree with this statement, please explain why.

The British Lung Foundation strongly welcomes the inclusion of this pledge on schools given the devastating health implications that exposure to pollution can pose for children. Evidence shows that children are more vulnerable to air pollution and could be put at risk of life-long health conditions such as asthma, and that children growing up in areas of higher pollution are up to four times more likely to have reduced lung function when they reach adulthood.

We welcome the proposal to use the principle of Clean Air Zones to restrict traffic in full or in part or to take other action at key times to protect children travelling to school. This is likely to reduce the number of journeys taken in the most polluting vehicles. However, the schools currently within the proposed CAZ only represent 18% of all schools across Birmingham that are within 150m of a road where NO₂ exceeds legal limits. We urge Birmingham City Council to work with all schools in polluted areas to ensure interventions are put in place to protect as many children as possible.

We look forward to hearing more about the programme that Birmingham City Council will lead to identify those schools which are most exposed to pollution. We also welcome plans to work in partnership with schools and parents to consult on the most suitable intervention(s) to reduce exposure at their particular school. We urge Birmingham City Council to also work closely with charities, academia, central government and local authorities to ensure interventions are put in place in line with the best available evidence and that clear plans for evaluation and delivery are put in place. The British Lung Foundation have been delighted to work with Birmingham City Council through the Clean Air Parents' Network, and we look forward to continuing this joint work in future.

11. Pledge 4 - We will expand our air quality monitoring network, incorporating new technologies and through partnership working with educational institutions and citizen science projects we will make the results readily available to all.

This pledge will help reduce the number of journeys in the most polluting vehicles.

Agree

12. If you disagree with this statement, please explain why.

We strongly agree that the provision of accurate, timely and localised data on air pollution is critical for enabling people to protect their own health. However, to also ensure this leads to a reduction in the number of journeys in the most polluting vehicles, a robust strategic approach to data provision and awareness raising will be needed across Birmingham. For instance, data provision must be accompanied by health promotion and awareness raising efforts in schools, hospitals and care homes, as well as training of health professionals. The provision of data on air quality will not solely be enough to change travel behaviour if people don't have the skills, knowledge and guidance to interpret this data and to make changes to the way they behave.

Additionally, this work should be targeted to areas where vulnerable people live, work and play. It should seek to engage these groups directly and establish robust guidelines for citizen science monitoring so that local campaign groups are able to accurately collect air pollution data and use this to meaningfully support and develop the council's work.

13. Pledge 5 - We will further develop our approaches to tackling emissions from both existing buildings and proposed developments.

This pledge will help ensure that reducing emissions and exposure to air pollution are key considerations for decision making when planning the development of buildings and public space.

Agree

14. If you disagree with this statement, please explain why.

Exposure to air pollution should be a key consideration when planning new developments. In particular, the British Lung Foundation would like to see restrictions on planning consent for public services buildings in known areas of high pollution which are used by people who are the most vulnerable to the health impacts of air pollution, such as new nurseries, schools and health settings.

15. Pledge 6 - We will work with key partners and stakeholders throughout the West Midlands region to help inform our own work and provide leadership where required.

This pledge will help build a broad base of support at a local, regional and national level to improve the air quality in the city.

Agree

16. If you disagree with this statement, please explain why.

We support the need for regional collaboration across the West Midlands given air pollution is at illegal and unsafe levels in many other areas of the region. A regional approach will also improve the sharing of intelligence, resource and knowledge, ensuring a more efficient use of local resources.

17. Are there any other suggestions or comments about the overall strategy, priorities or the pledges?

We welcome Birmingham City Council's recognition that breathing clean air is a basic right and that the poorest and most vulnerable, including children and people with lung conditions, are most affected. We also welcome the council's ambitious aim to reduce levels as much as possible, recognising that many air pollutants have no known safe limits.

In addition to the comments on individual pledges, the British Lung Foundation would like to see specific targets and a clear timeline established for when the proposed interventions will be implemented.

Qs 18-23 - age, ethnicity, disability questions