

CLEAN AIR ZONE PUBLIC CONSULTATION

ANALYSIS OF CITIZENS RESPONSES



FINAL EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SYSTRA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This report provides a detailed account of responses from members of the public, to Sheffield City Council's 2021 consultation on their proposed Category C CAZ, including their plans for financial support to help those whose vehicles would be subject to charges. This follows a previous consultation in 2019 on earlier Category C+ plans.

The consultation attracted large interest, with 2,262 citizens responding to the consultation via an online questionnaire; 80 providing a freeform email/telephone response, and 37 citizens attending an online public webinar.

Those responding to the consultation were self-selecting rather than a representative sample of organisations and this must be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings. Survey respondents profile was as follows:

- Eighty percent of respondents lived in Sheffield, whilst around half worked in city or visited for leisure or shopping purposes.
- The majority of respondents were between the ages of 25-64, male, and of white ethnicity; while around one in five reported a disability or had caring responsibilities.
- A third of respondents indicated that they use a vehicle which is non-compliant and subject to the CAZ charges; twice the 17% reported in the 2019 consultation. When considering the absolute number of citizens suggesting they had a non-compliant vehicle, the number who perceive they have a non-compliant vehicle was greater in 2019 (819) compared to this 2021 consultation (748). This indicates that the respondent base to this 2021 consultation is more weighted towards those who are likely to be affected by the charge than in 2019.

Views on air pollution and the CAZ

Two thirds of the general public agreed that tackling air pollution should be a priority for Sheffield City Council, and seven in ten considered air quality to be important to them.

Working to improve clean public transport, encouraging walking and cycling, and taking action to reduce congestion were the most commonly selected other actions that the public consider Sheffield City Council should take to improve air quality in the city (as was the case in the 2019 consultation). Lots of detailed suggestions were made by individuals relating to improving public transport, active travel, road traffic management, road layouts and electric vehicles.

When given the opportunity to provide feedback on the CAZ, respondents often:

- Provided reasons for supporting or opposing the CAZ. Those supporting the CAZ tended to do so on the basis of the scheme tackling air quality; with the most common reasons for opposition being that it was perceived as a money making scheme, and that it will create social inequality and restrict freedom of movement;
- Expressed concerns around the potential lack of effectiveness of the CAZ; the negative impacts on the roads, in particular relating to traffic displacement; the negative

- impacts on businesses, individuals, and the city in general, in particular its' economy; and about the scheme expanding to include private cars at some point;
- Requested more information regarding delivery and evidence to support the CAZ; and
- Made suggestions relating to the implementation of the CAZ, in particular changing the boundaries to exclude the inner ring road, and delaying implementation.

Views on vehicle exemptions

The vast majority of respondents (over 80%) agreed with exemptions for emergency services vehicles, whilst over half agreed with exemptions for not-for-profit and community interest group vehicles, and vehicles that are hard to replace.

Whilst many respondents felt that private vehicles should not be exempt from the CAZ charges, many further exemptions were also suggested, as was the case in 2019. These requests predominantly related to specific types of vehicles and groups which representatives felt should be exempt. The most commonly cited vehicle types and groups in these instances are summarised below.

SUGGESTIONS FOR EXEMPT VEHICLES	SUGGESTIONS FOR EXEMPT GROUPS
Camper vans/motorhomes	Residents within the CAZ
Any vehicle used to carry passengers	Blue badge holders
Vans	Low-mileage drivers
Buses	Emergency services
Vehicles used for business purposes	Key workers/trades

After being presented with information on the vehicle exemption criteria, around one in eight respondents perceived they owned a vehicle that may be eligible for an exemption. The exemption most likely to be applied for is the 'hard to replace vehicle' exemption, which around one third of respondents with a potentially eligible vehicle (mostly LGVs) anticipated applying for.

Views on support packages

Many respondents provided comments on the financial elements of support packages, particularly with regards to the size of the loans/grants available, and affordability of upgrading. They also highlighted the need for further clarity on a number of related issues. The sentiments uncovered within each of these overarching themes were as follows:

- Comments relating to the size of loans/grants available were generally expressing the view that grants need to be increased to make vehicle upgrade a viable option;
- Similarly, many comments stated that individuals could not afford to upgrade, with the cost of vehicle upgrade seen as prohibitive; whilst charities, smaller businesses and those on lower incomes were referenced specifically by some as affected groups;

- Requests for clarity on support packages included questions as to how individuals could identify their vehicles' euro category; queries on the size of grants available; questions on whether specific types of vehicle (such as campervans/motorhomes) were eligible for financial support; further clarity around applications procedures; and further clarity on eligibility criteria, and the exact means through which support will be provided .

For citizen's survey respondents who were owner/operators of minibuses and LGVs, and owner/operators of HGVs, the most likely response to the offer of support measures was not to take any of the proposed measures, alongside a large share who were currently undecided. The share of LGV and minibus owner/operators who do not anticipate taking support measures or are currently undecided was significantly greater than the share who anticipate taking-up support. The most likely measure to be taken up was a lump sum grant for Euro upgrade, which one in five LGV owners/operators said they were likely to use. Overall, the level of uptake for support measures was lower than reported by business representatives.

Likely response to the CAZ

In response to the introduction of the CAZ, actions relating to change in behaviour to reduce use of the CAZ were more commonly anticipated than making changes to vehicles to make them compliant, or paying the CAZ charge.

Of those citizens who believe they own a non-compliant vehicle, less than one in 20 thought they would upgrade their minibuses or LGVs or upgrade their HGVs, and around one in seven thought they would upgrade their SPVs.

Based on the open-ended comments provided by citizens, the low share of respondents intending to upgrade their vehicle appears to be linked to sentiments that the value of the loans/grants available need to be increased, or that the individuals cannot currently afford to upgrade their vehicles.

In summary

- Whilst the majority of respondents to the consultation overall acknowledged the importance of tackling air quality, many expressed concerns about the potential impacts of the CAZ. Likewise, many suggestions were made about how these impacts can be mitigated, and alternative suggestions on CAZ delivery or additional measures put forward.
- Proposed exemptions were generally supported and many others were suggested; however, there is seemingly still a high level of uncertainty amongst citizens around which types of vehicles would be subject to the CAZ charge.
- Support packages were often perceived as inadequate in value, with low levels of take-up anticipated by consultation respondents. This may be in part linked to the fact that many respondents had further queries regarding support package delivery and eligibility.
- In response to the introduction of the CAZ, actions relating to change in behaviour to reduce use of the CAZ were more commonly anticipated than making changes to vehicles to make them compliant, or paying the CAZ charge.

Next steps

This report provides a comprehensive account of all of the views and opinions provided by members of the public who responded to Sheffield County Council's consultation on the Category C plans for the CAZ. An accompanying report provides the views of businesses.

The findings of the two reports will be used by SCC to inform the development of the Final Business Case for the Clean Air Zone, and allow SCC to proceed with implementing the necessary measures by the end of 2022.

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