



AIR QUALITY

YOUR GUIDE TO RESPONDING TO A LOCAL CONSULTATION



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Walking is great for your health, but air pollution is putting the public at risk. Join people across the UK who are calling on local and national government to clean up our air.

Your local authority may soon – or already – be asking for feedback on its plans to tackle air pollution. This is your chance to have your say on how your local authority should clean up the air, and to make sure walking is prioritised as the natural choice for short journeys. This guide will give you Living Streets' top recommendations for responding to air quality consultations in your area.

Our longer, [fully-referenced Air Quality Consultation Briefing Paper](#) will give you even more details on what to include in your response.

HOW DOES AIR POLLUTION AFFECT US?

Air pollution in the UK seriously damages our health. The Royal College of Physicians estimates that 40,000 deaths a year in the UK are attributable to air pollution. It affects the rates not just of respiratory diseases but also cardiovascular diseases like heart failure. It is the fourth greatest threat to public health after cancer, heart disease and obesity. Air pollution has an estimated total cost to the UK of £22.6 billion per year. The main pollutants are nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) gas from vehicle exhaust, and tiny particles from tyre and brake wear.

WHAT'S BEING DONE ABOUT AIR POLLUTION?

The level of air pollution in the UK is illegal under European air quality law. The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has asked 61 local authorities to take action. You can check [FleetNews' list of clean air plans and consultations](#) to see if your local authority is one of them. Your council will have a Consultations page on its website where you can check for Clean Air consultations. You may be able to sign up for council email alerts.

Consultation responses from local people, which provide detail and evidence, can really push a council to go further in its response to air pollution.

THE MOST IMPORTANT POINTS TO MAKE IN YOUR CONSULTATION RESPONSE ARE:

You are very concerned about the effects of air pollution on your health and the health of others in the area.

You support a large, charging Clean Air Zone for all vehicle types as the most effective way to tackle air pollution.

You support other measures to reduce traffic volume in the area, such as walk to school programmes, school street closures and workplace parking levies.





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CLEAN AIR ZONES

Your local authorities will need to create a Clean Air Zone (CAZ). CAZs can include a range of local authority measures to tackle air pollution, such as programmes to encourage walking and cycling, and upgrading council vehicles to be less polluting.

YOU MAY WANT TO INCLUDE SOME OF THESE KEY POINTS IN YOUR RESPONSE:





WHAT ELSE CAN LOCAL AUTHORITIES DO TO TACKLE AIR POLLUTION?

Here are some wider measures that you could ask your local authority to consider:

Local authorities should support walking and cycling programmes and engine upgrades for buses, taxis and other businesses. They can use the revenue generated from CAZ charges for these purposes, and apply to the government's Clean Air Fund.

Local authorities can introduce a Workplace Parking Levy like Nottingham City Council did in 2012. Employers are charged for car parking spaces, in return for a package of travel planning and parking management. As well as reducing air pollution, surpluses can be used for investments in public transport.

The walk to school is a key opportunity to encourage mode shift and improve public health. Local authorities can support schools to incentivise walking and cycling to school through initiatives such as Living Streets' WOW year-round walk to school challenge. They can also consider school street closures at the beginning and end of the school day.

Living Streets supports the move to greener vehicles but charging points and other infrastructure must not be placed on footways or in other places where it would compromise pedestrian comfort and safety.



JOIN OUR CALL FOR CLEANER AIR

There is no safe level of particulate matter in our air, and the UK Government is breaking the law with current levels of air pollution. People who walk or cycle do not contribute to air pollution, but are unfairly exposed to it.

We want the Government to take action on diesel exhausts in our towns and cities and to invest more in walking and cycling. We are also calling for a new Clean Air Act. The first act was introduced to deal with coal fire smog in 1956. We now need new legislation. **Please join us and find out more about what you can do in your area - livingstreets.org.uk**



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