



# News

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## **LOCAL AUTHORITY SET TO TEST LEVELS OF AIR POLLUTION FROM TRAFFIC**

HIGH tech vehicle emission tests will look to shed light on the effect traffic has on the quality of the air we breathe in Sheffield.

Beginning next week, Sheffield City Council will place equipment at five locations across the city where specialist recording devices will monitor harmful traffic emission levels.

Each day more than 500,000 vehicle trips are made in Sheffield – more than 400,000 of these being made by car or taxi.

Cllr Jack Scott, Sheffield City Council's Cabinet Member for Environment, Waste and Streetscene, said: "We know that air pollution impacts badly on Sheffield people's health and the economy and contributes to climate change. "Each year, the impact of air quality on health costs the Sheffield economy £160m and results in up to 500 early deaths.

"We know one of the reasons for this is traffic. We know in theory the amount of harmful gases vehicles produce as told to us by manufacturers but we have never tested the levels throughout the city. The latest phase of our Low Emission Zone Feasibility Study will look to do this.

"Our overall aim is to make the air we breathe healthier, so we can continue to be an environmentally responsible city – and keep Sheffield a great place to live."

The project is a critical part of Phase Two of the Council's Low Emission Zone Feasibility Study which has been largely Central Government funded by DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) Air Quality Grant. The Feasibility Study is a key Action within the Council's Air Quality Action Plan for Sheffield 2015, which aims to reduce air pollution in the city and make it greener.

The specialist recording devices, which belong to the Institute for Transport Studies at the University of Leeds, use an ultra violet and infra-red beam to measure tail-pipe emissions from vehicles as they drive through the monitoring site. The devices pick up the levels of Nitrogen Dioxide gas and PM10 fine dust particles emitted, both of which are damaging to human health and the environment. The devices also pick up information about the type of vehicle.

The test locations around the city will be Western Bank, Eyre Street, Prince of Wales Road, Attercliffe Centre, and Broad Lane. The surveys start next week (weather permitting) and will continue until the end of May. Each location will be surveyed for two days. There should be no disruption to travellers as a result of the surveys and drivers are asked to drive as they would normally.

Sheffield City Council's Air Quality Action Plan sets out the causes and impacts of pollution and proposes seven commitments to reduce air pollution in Sheffield in order to achieve national air quality standards and EU limit values.

The plan includes investigating the feasibility of a Low Emission Zone; developing infrastructure for refuelling low emission vehicles; promoting smarter travel choices; improving the engine performance of commercial diesel vehicles; mitigating the impact of the M1 motorway (particularly in the Tinsley area); developing policies to support better air quality and controlling industrial emissions.

A Steering Group and Working Group were set up to 'champion' each of the actions, supported by members of the local community.

Phase One of the Low Emission Zone Feasibility Study, which was completed in November last year provided an initial assessment of transport emissions. The emission tests are part of Phase Two.

The Phase Two study is expected to be completed in October 2013.

**Ends**

**Notes to Editors:**

**For further information please contact Andy Bond, Communications Service, on 07977 631 904 or (0114) 2053547. Email [andy.bond@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:andy.bond@sheffield.gov.uk) For out of hours media enquiries please ring 07711 153995.**

- All four South Yorkshire districts have declared Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) due to the exceedance of NO<sub>2</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub> according to national guidelines
- Sheffield has been highlighted by the European Union (EU) as an area requiring urgent attention because it is unlikely to meet these health based Air Quality EU Limit Values by 2015
- Transport emissions are the biggest single contributor
- A feasibility study into a Low Emission Zone (LEZ) is a key action within the recently approved Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) for Sheffield 2015
- "A Low Emission Zone" (LEZ) is a geographically defined area, subject to enforcement powers, where operators of vehicles must comply with a specified low emissions policy"
- The AQAP aims to reduce pollution in Sheffield in order to achieve health-based national Air Quality Objectives and EU Limit Values by 2015
- The LEZ Feasibility Study will clearly quantify the potential costs, benefits, air quality impacts, targeted emissions reductions and timescales associated with the implementation of an LEZ in Sheffield (and once complete the AQAP 2015 will be further reviewed and updated)