

## A127 Clean Air Zone Frequently Asked Questions

### Clean Air Zones

#### What is a Clean Air Zone?

Clean Air Zones are designed to help tackle local roadside air pollution that exceeds national safe limits. There are two types of Clean Air Zone, those that charge, and those that don't charge.

In a charging zone, drivers will be charged a fee to enter the area if their vehicle fails to meet the required environmental standards - most likely based on a car's Euro emissions standard.

In a non-charging Clean Air Zone, the focus is on improving air quality, without charging money for vehicles entering the zone. Measures can include retrofitting certain vehicles or traffic flow management to reduce vehicle emissions.

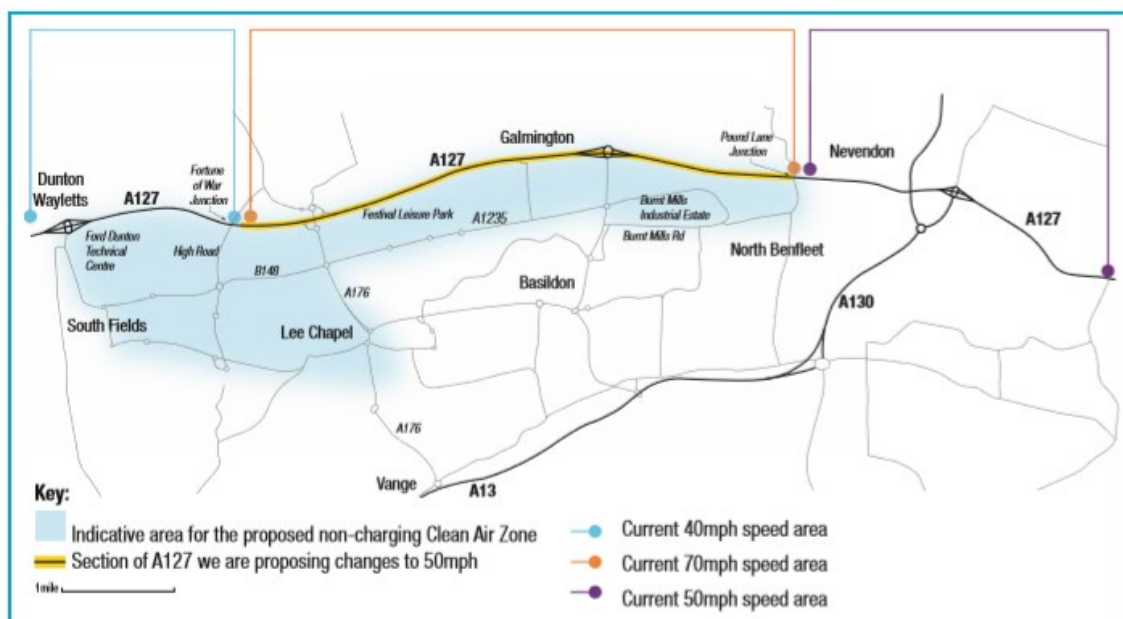
We are proposing a non-charging Clean Air Zone for the area to the north of Basildon.

The Government has provided guidance on the approach local authorities should take when implementing Clean Air Zones, called the [Clean Air Zone Framework](#).

#### Why are you proposing to introduce a non-charging Clean Air Zone?

A section of the A127 (between Fortune of War and Pound Lane junctions) currently has air quality that exceeds national safe limits, as does an area to the south of the A127, roughly between Dunton junction in the west, Pound Lane Junction to the east and South Fields / the A1235 to the south. As the air quality in these areas is currently exceeding national safe limits it is likely that the local community near these areas may be have a higher risk of having or developing health problems that are linked to poor air quality and pollution than those who are in areas with better air quality.

#### Where will the non-charging Clean Air Zone be?



We are still developing our proposals. However the blue area in the map above indicates the area it may cover, which includes Ford Dunton Technical Centre, Festival Leisure Park and Burnt Mills Industrial Estate.

### **Are Clean Air Zones happening anywhere else?**

Yes, local authorities across the country are looking at introducing them.

### **Health impacts of air pollution**

#### **Why do you need to tackle local roadside air pollution? What's the issue?**

As air quality in the proposed non-charging Clean Air Zone exceeds national safe limits, we have a legal obligation to make it compliant as soon as possible.

Public Health England has identified poor air quality is the largest environmental risk to public health.

Around 40,000 deaths a year in the UK are attributable to outdoor air pollution - which has been linked to cancer, asthma, stroke and heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and changes linked to dementia. The health problems resulting from exposure to air pollution cost the UK more than £20 billion every year (source: 'Every breath we take – the lifelong impact of air pollution' Royal College of Physicians, and of Paediatrics and Child Health, 2016)

The Air Quality Management Source Centre note that the health impacts of air quality in the UK are almost twice those of physical inactivity.

### **Why the A127?**

#### **Is this section of the A127 the only area where air quality is an issue?**

Air Quality is a problem across many areas of the UK and is not unique to the A127 in Essex. However, the A127 is a key through road for many businesses and vehicles, and the congestion issues, particularly at junctions around the Basildon area of the A127, exacerbate the air quality problems.

#### **How was this section of the A127 identified as having poor air quality?**

Three locations along the A127 route in Basildon Borough and Rochford District were identified by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Pollution Climate Mapping (PCM) model in 2017 as likely to be exceeding national air quality thresholds which is why it is being tackled as a priority area.

We did further testing in April 2018, which found that no exceedances were identified in Rochford District. However, a section of the A127 north of Basildon was identified as exceeding national air quality thresholds and additional exceedances were identified to the south of the A127.

#### **Why are you introducing a speed limit change? What difference will it make?**

Studies show that reducing speeds from 70mph to 50mph can cut harmful nitrogen dioxide emissions by 20 per cent, as well as improving road safety and journey time reliability.

## **When will the speed limits be introduced?**

Our proposals are still being developed, and will be consulted on. However, as we are legally required to meet air quality standards as soon as possible, we are working to introduce a speed limit in 2020.

## **How will the speed limit be enforced?**

By average speed cameras, operated by the Safer Essex Roads Partnership.

## **Businesses in the Clean Air Zone**

### **Why do you need businesses to make changes? Won't the proposed speed limit reduction on the A127 be enough?**

The proposed speed limit reduction would bring the A127 within legal safe limits. However, it won't address the problem with the air quality issues that have been identified at locations to the south of the A127 – which is why we need businesses in the proposed non-charging Clean Air Zone to make changes too.

### **What will you be doing to support businesses in the proposed non-charging Clean Air Zone?**

We are developing our proposals for this. However, we are proposing that businesses within the zone will be offered advice and support on upgrading to cleaner vehicles and installing electric charging points and cycle parking. We also want to help them encourage staff to cycle, walk or use public transport more in their daily commutes.

These measures would run alongside improvements to cycle routes, the installation of electronic charging points in Basildon and Rochford, and the planned introduction of a cleaner local bus fleet.

### **When will you have more information for me?**

We are developing our proposals and will be talking to local businesses – and seeking your feedback - about them in the coming months.

## **Costs**

### **How much will these measures cost to implement, and who will pay?**

Our plans are still being developed and need to be approved by Government. However, if approved, the costs associated with the project would be funded by a grant from Government, so would not come from existing budgets within Essex County Council or Basildon Borough Council.

## **Changing travel behaviour**

Essex County Council, as the Local Highway Authority, has a number of projects to help reduce pollution and encourage people to consider swapping some of their car journeys to cycling, walking or public transport, especially for short trips.

## **What can I do to help reduce roadside air quality in Essex?**

- Consider swapping some of your car journeys to cycling, walking or public transport, especially for short journeys.
- Switch your engine off when stationary
- Consider a hybrid or electric vehicle when replacing your car.

## **I can't swap some of my journeys. How can I drive in a more environmentally friendly way?**

By reducing the amount of fuel you burn, as this contributes to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and other harmful pollutants such as NO<sub>2</sub>. The best thing to do is to reduce the amount of work your engine does. You can cut your CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by up to 15 per cent with some simple steps such as:

Before you set off:

- Check your tyres are at the correct pressure
- Clear out any extra weight from your car, including unused roof racks or roof boxes
- Have your vehicle serviced regularly

While driving:

- Drive at an appropriate speed
- Speed up and slow down smoothly
- Change gears at lower revs
- Avoid leaving your engine running
- Don't use air conditioning unless you really need it