

AIR QUALITY PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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INTRODUCTION

Councils in Newcastle, Gateshead and North Tyneside have been working together to develop proposals for improving air quality.

The three councils were given a legal order by the government to identify measures for improving air quality in the shortest possible time.

Government issued the order after their modelling showed that levels of pollution on parts of the A167 Central Motorway and Tyne Bridge and a section of the A1058 Coast Road will remain above legal limits unless further action is taken.

This document sets out details of proposals that have been developed by the three local authorities. In considering different measures we have sought to take into account the impact they might have on people and places, while also recognising that the worst pollution is in the urban centres and on commuter routes.

We would like your views on these proposals and on financial support or exemptions that could be put in place to help people affected.

Please read this document before completing our questionnaire.





SECTION 1 – AIR QUALITY

This information is relevant to the questions in Section 1 of the questionnaire.

This section provides information about air pollution, the effect it has on people's health and some of the measures that councils are already taking to try to tackle it.

It also includes some information on what individuals and employers can do themselves.

Poor air quality is a national public health crisis

It is linked to around 40,000 early deaths every year in the UK, including an estimated 360 deaths each year in our areas.

It is caused by many factors but by far the largest contributor is road transport in many towns and cities across the UK.

Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and tiny invisible particles from exhaust fumes, tyres and brakes are present in the air we breathe.

All vehicles cause some pollution, including those with low emissions, but those that run on diesel fuel and older vehicles are the biggest source of NO₂.

It is NO₂ emissions that the government has told us we must address.

In terms of health problems however, it is just as important to reduce particle emissions. It is important to note that many of the measures that might be taken to reduce NO₂ will also reduce particle emissions.

The effect of poor air quality on people's health

Air pollution is linked with cancer, heart disease and respiratory disease.

New research also suggests that people who live in areas with high levels of pollution may be more at risk of developing dementia.

Evidence from the World Health Organisation shows that poor air quality is particularly dangerous for children, older people and those already living with long-term health conditions like asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).

There's no safe level of exposure to air pollution. The effects on our health build up over time.

Air quality in our area

We regularly monitor air quality across our areas and we know there are some places where we have particularly high pollution levels.

We know where the worst affected areas are and we're already taking action to address this, including:

- creating more efficient bus routes and upgrading vehicles with cleaner engine technology;
- improving cycle networks;
- improving our own fleet by introducing cleaner vehicles;
- upgrading traffic signals to keep traffic flowing and prevent congestion by co-ordinating movements through junctions;
- promoting initiatives such as car sharing and car clubs;
- providing more charging points for ultra-low emissions vehicles.

There are other things councils can do, such as investing in public transport systems and making further improvements to the roads network, but these are often dependent on government funding being made available.

We can all help

There are lots of things we can all do to help improve our air quality.

One of the biggest ways we can make a difference is to reduce the number of car journeys we make by switching to public transport, walking or cycling. This has the important added benefit of improving your health.

Even if you walk or cycle on a busy road, you are less at risk from health-threatening pollutants than when you're inside a vehicle – you may not see or smell it inside the car, but you are still breathing pollution.

Car sharing, turning your engine off when you're not moving anywhere and choosing a low or zero emission vehicle are other things we can also do to help.

If you're a business or employer, you could set up schemes to support car sharing or incentives for staff to use public transport or cycle to work. Or you could introduce flexible working so that people can choose to travel outside of peak travel times or work from home.



SECTION 2 – LONGER TERM INVESTMENT

This information relates to Section 2 of the questionnaire.

This section provides more information about some of the longer term measures we’ve looked at.

In order to comply with the legal order we’ve been given, it is likely that some form of charging on certain roads will be needed to reduce pollution in the short term. The purpose of charging is to encourage cleaner vehicles on our roads, and more use of public transport, walking and cycling.

However, it’s not enough to put in place short term measures, such as charging, on their own. We also need to encourage longer term changes in how we travel to ensure we continue to see improved air quality.

A key part of this will be about ensuring people have viable alternatives to using the car – particularly for shorter journeys.

Any surplus money we receive through charging, after the costs of running the charging scheme have been met, must be invested in transport improvements.

We could use it to fund some of these longer term measures that would be aimed at improving opportunities for people to use public transport, to walk and to cycle for more of their everyday journeys.

SECTION 2 – LONGER TERM INVESTMENT

These longer term measures could include:

- Improved routes for clean buses;
- Road maintenance (including potholes);
- Working with schools and parents to help people get to school / college without using the car;
- Work to make it easier and safer for people to walk, including changes to town/city centres to pedestrianise areas;
- Investment in intelligent traffic signals to improve traffic flows and public transport on key routes;
- New park and ride facilities to expand the reach of Metro, bus and local rail;
- Working with employers to help them implement new working practices and ways for their staff / deliveries to travel;
- Investment in cycling networks, particularly routes leading to Metro stations, transport interchanges and to local facilities like schools;
- A charge on employers in Newcastle city centre who provide free parking spaces for their employees;
- Making Metro services more frequent, reliable and convenient.



SECTION 3 – A CHARGING CLEAN AIR ZONE

This information relates to Section 3 of the questionnaire.

The legal order we have been given by government means that we have to consider a charging Clean Air Zone (CAZ).

We have tested a number of charging CAZ options.

This section provides more information on how a charging CAZ would work as well as details of a potential CAZ option based on the results of our testing.

What is a charging Clean Air Zone?

Within a charging Clean Air Zone (CAZ), drivers are required to pay a charge if their vehicle does not meet minimum emissions standards.

Charges would only apply to the most polluting vehicles and the charges would be paid per day, not per visit.

The type of vehicle that would be affected depends upon the level of the CAZ.

The level of CAZ we are considering is a class D. This would apply to all motor vehicles, including taxis, buses, lorries, vans and cars. The current proposal is to not charge motorcycles and mopeds.

Newer vehicles and those with zero emissions would not be affected.

Why are we considering a class D charging CAZ?

Government has told us that we must put in place measures that bring pollution to within legal limits as quickly as possible.

We have tested different levels of charging CAZ to try to predict the likely impact they would have on traffic and air quality.

Our tests indicate that lower levels of CAZ, which target fewer types of vehicle, would not achieve improvement quickly enough.

A class D charging CAZ, which targets all types of vehicle that are not compliant with the minimum emissions standards, is the most likely CAZ option to achieve the required improvement.

However, our tests also showed that even this highest level of charging CAZ would not be enough on its own to address the problem.



What area could a charging CAZ cover?

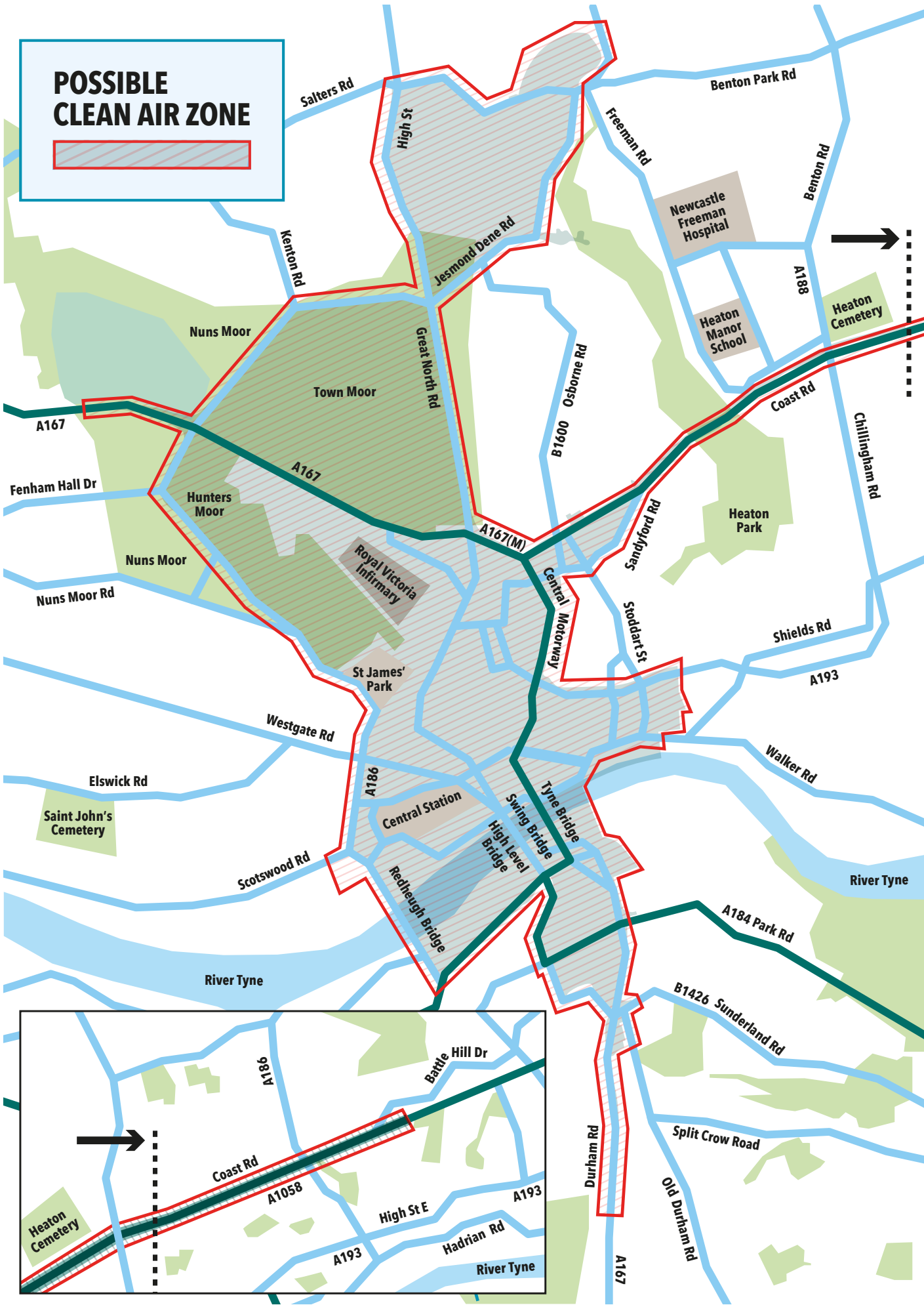
The government has told us we have to address, in particular, pollution levels on the Coast Road and the Central Motorway.

However, it is not enough to only introduce measures on those individual stretches of road as this risks simply moving traffic – and therefore pollution – onto neighbouring streets and residential areas.

For a CAZ to be successful it needs to cover the right area to consider impacts of re-routing traffic.

We have tested a potential area for a charging CAZ, which is shown on the map to the right. This area was used for testing and we are asking for people’s views on it as part of the consultation.

This area was tested as it covers the two stretches of road which the government has told us we must target along with other areas where we know there are issues with poor air quality. These include Newcastle city centre and the existing Air Quality Management Areas in Gosforth and Gateshead town centre.








What vehicles would be affected?

Only vehicles that do not meet minimum emissions standards would be charged.

We would advise people to check their vehicle by entering their registration number at eurostandards.co.uk

This table provides a basic guide as to which vehicles are likely to meet minimum emissions standards based on the date of registration.

	Type of vehicle	Vehicle registration date required to meet minimum emissions standard	Name of minimum emissions standard
	Cars, including taxis	Diesel – after September 2015 Petrol – generally after 2005, although cars that meet the standard have been available since 2001	Diesel – Euro 6 Petrol – Euro 4
	Vans (LGVs)	Diesel – after September 2016 Petrol – after January 2006	Diesel – Euro 6 Petrol – Euro 4
	HGVs, buses and coaches	After 2014	Euro VI

How much could charges be?

We have not made any final decisions on what the level of any charges would be. However, the charges we have used as the basis for our testing are:

These charges are based on those tested by other councils that are also having to consider introducing charging Clean Air Zones.

- Heavy goods vehicles - £50 per day
- Buses - £50 per day
- Coaches - £50 per day
- Taxis / private hire vehicles - £12.50 per day
- Vans - £12.50 per day
- Private cars - £12.50 per day

SECTION 4 – A LOW EMISSION ZONE WITH TOLLS

This information relates to Section 4 of the questionnaire.

As well as considering a charging Clean Air Zone (CAZ), which would charge the most polluting vehicles to enter the zone, we are also looking at other charging options that we believe would improve air quality within the timeframe set by government.

An alternative charging option could be to introduce tolls for vehicles to cross the Tyne using city centre bridges. This type of charging measure would need to be introduced alongside a Low Emission Zone (LEZ) covering Newcastle city centre.

This section provides more information on how this potential measure could work.

What is a Low Emission Zone (LEZ)?

Under a Low Emission Zone, certain vehicles that do not meet minimum emissions standards would be banned from entering or moving within the proposed area.

Banned vehicles which enter the Low Emission Zone would be fined.

What area could a LEZ cover?

We have tested a potential area that a LEZ could cover and this is shown on the map to the right.

This area is smaller than the potential charging CAZ area and is focused on Newcastle city centre.

This area was tested as it covers only Newcastle city centre and therefore would have a limited impact on residential communities outside the city centre.

What vehicles would be affected by a LEZ?



Buses, lorries and taxis that do not meet minimum emissions requirements would be banned from entering the LEZ.

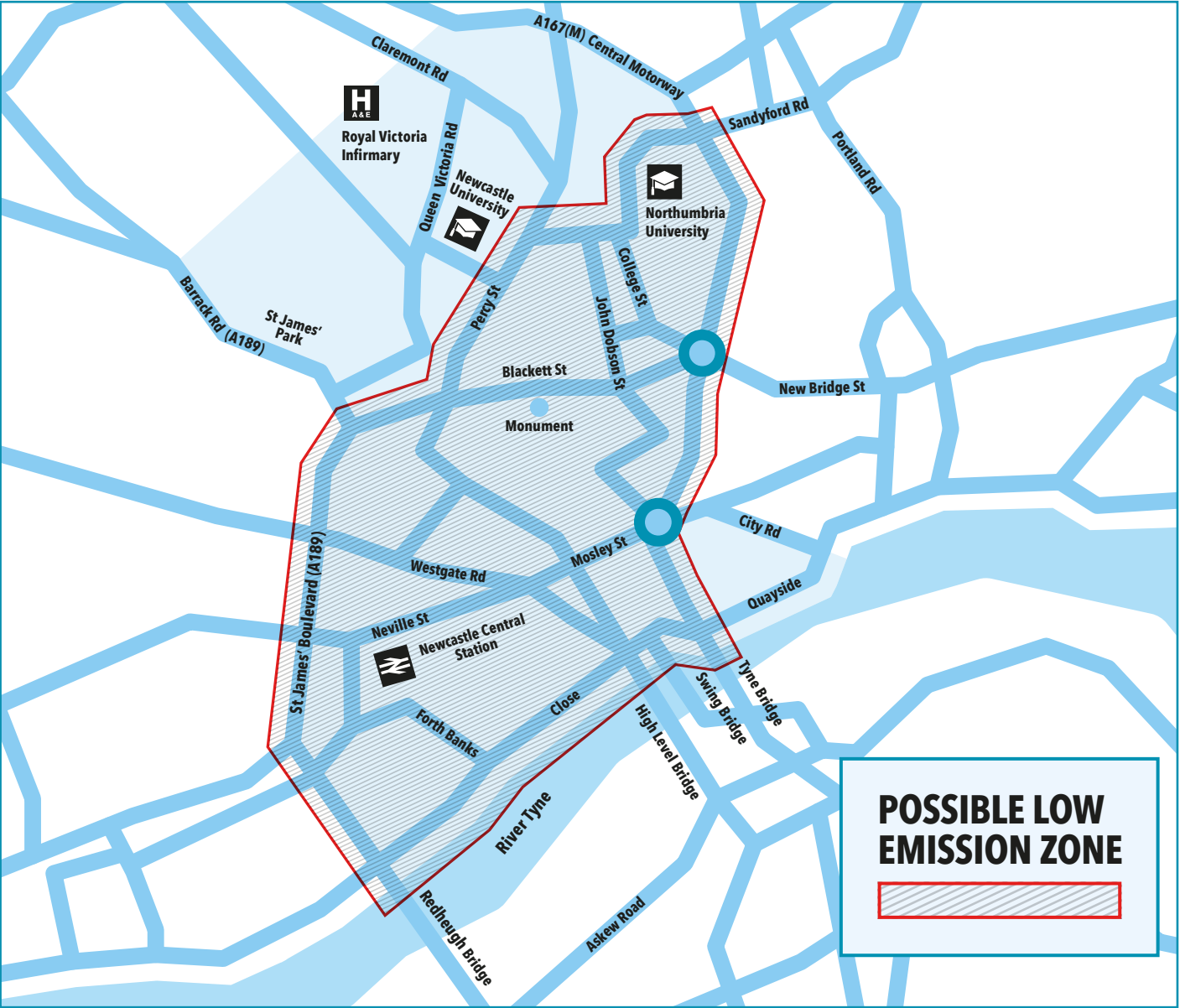
The table to the right provides a basic guide as to which vehicles are likely to meet minimum emissions standards based on the date of registration.

When would a Low Emission Zone come into effect?

A LEZ would be aimed at preventing older and more polluting buses, taxis and lorries from entering that area.

We would work with operators to seek to understand the timescales needed for them to be able to upgrade their vehicles and the introduction of a LEZ would be linked to this.

Type of vehicle	Vehicle registration date required to meet minimum emissions standard	Name of minimum emissions standard
	<p>Diesel – after September 2015</p> <p>Petrol – generally after 2005, although cars that meet the standard have been available since 2001</p>	<p>Diesel – Euro 6</p> <p>Petrol – Euro 4</p>
	After 2014	Euro VI





SECTION 4 – A LOW EMISSION ZONE WITH TOLLS

If tolls were introduced, where would they apply?

Tolls would apply on the three main city centre bridges that carry vehicles over the Tyne.

These are the Tyne, Swing and Redheugh bridges.

Which vehicles would have to pay?

The tolls would apply to all lorries, vans and cars.

Buses, taxis and ultra-low emission vehicles would not have to pay tolls.

The current proposal is to not charge motorcycles and mopeds.

How much would they be?

As with a charging Clean Air Zone, we have not made any decisions on how much any tolls would be but, as a guide, we have based our testing on the charges for vehicles using the Tyne Tunnel. These are:

- Heavy goods vehicles - £3.40 per journey
- Vans - £1.70 per journey
- Cars - £1.70 per journey

We could look at having different levels of toll, depending on the time of day.

This could mean that while all lorries, vans and cars would be charged, there might be higher charges for people travelling at peak times, when there is heavier traffic and congestion.

SECTION 5 – INFORMATION ABOUT ADDITIONAL MEASURES

This information relates to Section 5 of the questionnaire.

As well as charging options, we are also considering what non-charging measures may be required alongside a charging option to help improve our air quality.

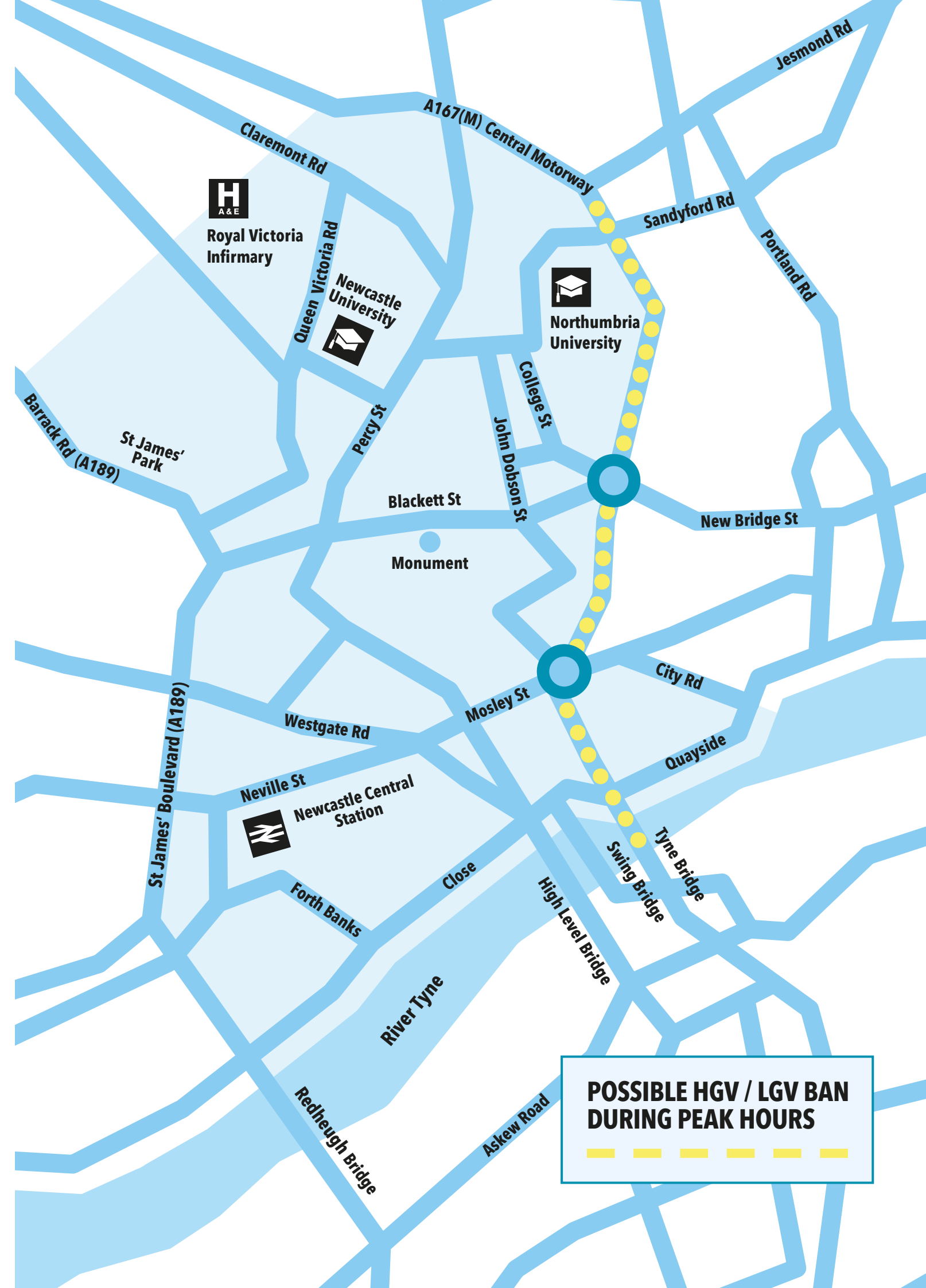
This section provides more information about some of the additional measures we've looked at and explains how they might work.

Restrictions for lorries and vans using Central Motorway

This would involve banning lorries and vans from using Central Motorway between the Tyne Bridge and the Coast Road junction during peak travel times.

We have looked at the impact a ban between 7am and 10am and also between 4pm and 7pm would make. We would be interested to hear from businesses themselves during the consultation about how this would affect them.

The aim of this measure would be to keep certain vehicles, particularly those making deliveries which could be scheduled at other times of day, off this section of road when it is busiest with commuter traffic.



POSSIBLE HGV / LGV BAN DURING PEAK HOURS

Restricting access for all vehicles on Central Motorway

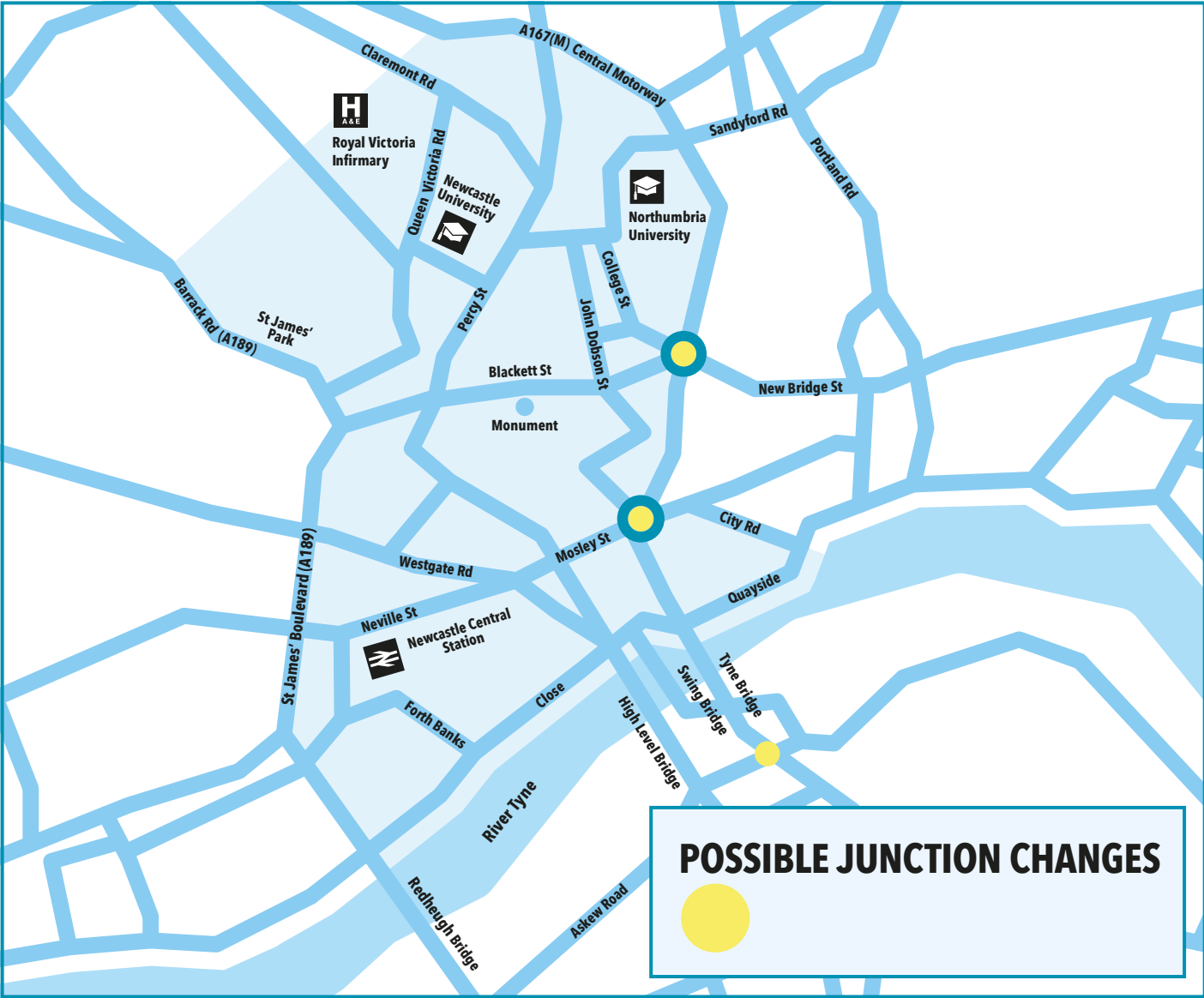
This would involve some access changes onto the Central Motorway and Tyne Bridge. Access changes would affect all vehicles.

This measure would be aimed at removing some of the traffic from the Central Motorway, which has some of the highest levels of pollution that we need to address.

Other measures

This could include measures designed to reduce the amount of pollution in the air.

One such measure would be to install moss walls, which absorb and filter out pollutants from the air around them.



SECTION 6 – FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND EXEMPTIONS FOR PEOPLE AND BUSINESSES

This information relates to Section 6 of the questionnaire.

We know that some people and businesses would need financial support to help them if a charge is introduced.

As part of our testing we've looked at how different people would be affected and this has indicated that those on lower incomes and smaller businesses, including taxi drivers and operators, are more likely to need support.

Therefore, alongside any proposed charging option we are also considering what financial support could be provided and whether any exemptions or delays to the start of charging could be put in place.

These measures, which would depend on government funding, could include grants to help people replace or upgrade their vehicle to one that meets minimum emissions requirements. This could be for cars, taxis, vans or HGVs.

Another measure could be financial support for people on lower incomes to help them switch to public transport.

Subject to funding, support could include:

- Grants of up to £16,000 for HGV upgrades;
- Interest-free loans of up to £10,000 for LGV upgrades;
- Interest-free loans of up to £10,000 OR grants of up to £1,500 for taxi upgrades;
- Car scrappage grants of up to £1,500;
- £1,000 travel credits to help people within and travelling to the area to use public transport;
- Measures to improve walking and cycling routes, particularly focusing on routes to bus and Metro.

It may also be possible to introduce a sunset period for the charge. This would mean that drivers would have a set timeframe when no charges would be applied to give them the opportunity to prepare for the charge. During this period warning letters would be issued.

Certain vehicles including military and emergency services vehicles would be exempt from any charges. We will also consider whether other possible exemptions could be made and ask your views on this in the consultation.





WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Thank you for reading this document. We hope you have found it useful for answering the questionnaire about your views on potential measures for improving air quality in our area. If you would like to fill in the questionnaire online, please visit www.breathe-cleanair.com.

If you have a local business and would like to tell us more, please email us at contact@breathe-cleanair.com so that we can understand how different measures may affect you.

The consultation will close on 17 May 2019.

We will analyse all of the feedback we receive and this will help us prepare the final proposals.

Your responses will be used to inform the Final Business Case for the Tyneside Air Quality Feasibility Study which will be submitted to government for approval later in 2019.



