

On the challenges of implementing the first charging Clean Air Zone

Bath's Clean Air Zone

National Traffic Managers' Conference

October 2021



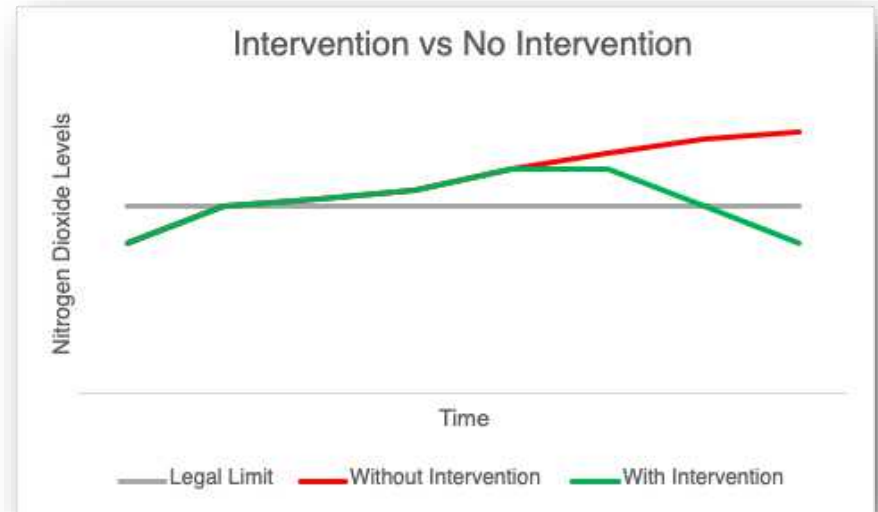
Why is a Clean Air Zone necessary?

- An Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) has been declared in Bath since 2002.
- Bath was mandated by Government to urgently tackle air pollution and bring nitrogen dioxide levels down to the legal limit.
- High NO₂ levels are linked to major health issues such as asthma, cancer and strokes.
- Air pollution is also linked to other adverse health effects including diabetes, cognitive decline and dementia.



Why is a Clean Air Zone necessary?

Despite the AQMA in place, Bath continues to exceed legal limits of NO₂. Without an intervention, this was predicted to continue until 2025.



Getting the public on board

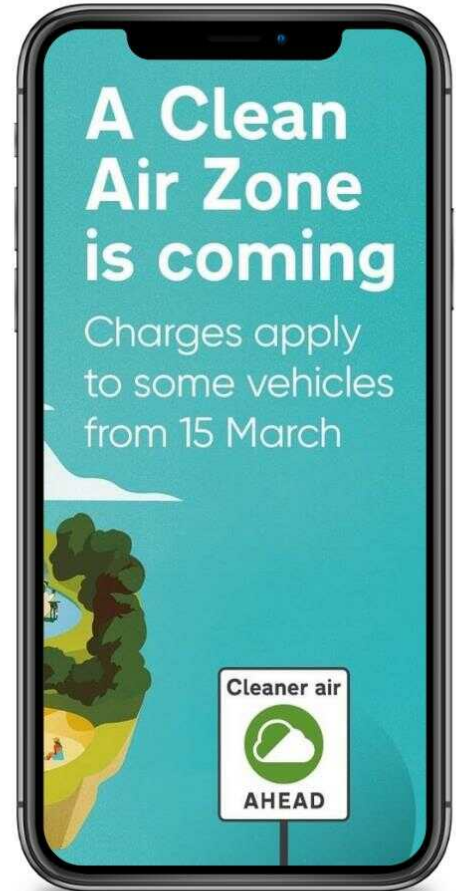
Challenge

- Nitrogen Dioxide – you can't see it or taste it
- Individuals might not be directly affected because they own a private car, live outside the zone or they do not suffer adverse health effects
- Clean Air Zones are a new type of intervention – they differ from congestion charges that already exist

Solution

A substantial budget allocated to communications and engagement to increase awareness about the zone, the health effects of NO₂ and the support on offer.

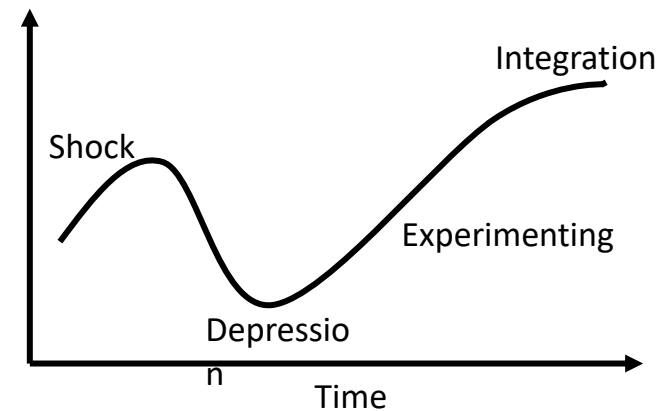
- Direct telemarketing – 9500+ businesses contacted.
- Multi-channel comms campaign including, out of home advertising (billboards and petrol pumps), radio, paid social media, trade leaflets, flyers, pre-launch advance signage and sending out over 8000 early warning letters.
- Maintaining the pressure on those not affected (car drivers and people with exemptions) by promoting walking & cycling and by limiting exemptions.



Solution

Extensive consultation and engagement throughout the business case development process.

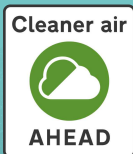
- Extensive consultation and engagement resulted in nine amendments to the zone to reflect feedback.
- Took a 'Cup of Tea' approach – prepared to speak and engage with people about the new intervention and its impacts.
- Over time, these challenging conversations are beneficial to helping people along the Kübler-Ross change curve – from shock to integration.



Working Together

Challenge

- We had to deliver a complex, technical project that affects a wide geographic area and multiple stakeholders
- Managing change e.g. moving into pole position in clean air zone delivery during a pandemic, after a change of political administration!



Solution

A varied and skilled workforce.

- Councillors and officers worked together on the project board to enable agile decision making on the project.
- The council's procurement, finance and legal teams were fully engaged and on board.
- We engaged with as many stakeholders as possible including RHA and Client Earth.
- We worked hard at ensuring alignment at all levels including council senior management, councillors and equivalents in government.
- Importantly, we recognised when and where to bring in experts.



Solution

Our work culture

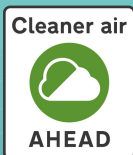
- Everybody is part of the team as opposed to the standard top-down approach.
- Having a positive & collaborative attitude to 'make it happen' within the team.
- There is no 'no'!
- Being brave, tenacious and having the sheer bloody mindedness that it's going to happen.



A 'carrot' to balance the 'stick'

Challenge

- The need for mitigations that successfully minimise the social and economic impact of the charging scheme
- Mitigations include exemptions to support the most vulnerable, delivering a financial assistance scheme, a bus upgrade programme to achieve compliant fleets and e-cargo bike delivery schemes



Solution

Our approach to minimise negative impacts

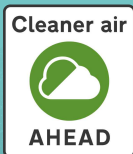
- We were flexible and accepted that not "one size fits all" which allowed for unique cases and creativity.
- Talked to people, listened and trialled ideas
- Worked with specialists in designing the Financial Assistance Scheme and delivering the bus retrofits.
- Brought stakeholders together e.g. encouraging First Bus to share their knowledge with smaller local operators.
- Recognised that people need to see fairness and transparency to successfully engage with them.
- Applied the same ethos to enforcement – this stage is another intervention point for engagement and behaviour change as opposed to just penalising.



Landing the scheme

Challenge

- Being the first charging CAZ in the UK to launch (during a pandemic)
- Creating awareness and operational understanding of the zone and bedding this in with the public



Solution

Our enforcement approach and responses

- We built a business support team with the capacity to process PCNs and engage with people as opposed to just an 'enforcement team' – we still expect the zone charge to be paid but they can help change behaviour too.
- Soft enforcement approach for the first 3 months so the public could get accustomed to the zone. Only the zone charge was collected during this period.
- We took common sense approaches to resolve inevitable teething issues such as central service rule changes and ANPR camera misreads to preserve the integrity and reputation of the project.



Solution

Showing the zone's progress and using surplus revenue

- Release of the Q1 monitoring and evaluation report in September 2021 to showcase the progress and impact of the zone so far.
- This includes data about air quality levels and vehicle compliance rates.
- These statistics help provide evidence of behaviour change and air quality improvement which further beds this in with the public because they start to 'see' results.
- Surplus revenue from charges allow us to further establish the zone as we can begin to promote and lead other air quality initiatives e.g. e-cargo bike delivery, liveable neighbourhoods etc.



Summary

The Bath CAZ is first and foremost a behaviour change programme. Being the first charging CAZ to launch in the UK, the programme has been met with challenges but solutions are in place to conquer these.

The solutions include:

- Allocating significant budgets to communications and engagement
- Engaging transparently with the public
- Building a skilled and varied workforce to take on its complexity
- Ensuring there is a behaviour change approach right through from consultation to enforcement
- Showcasing the progress and future potential of the project.

By having these solutions in place, it enables us to overcome the challenges to improve air quality and improve public health in the shortest time possible



Questions?

