

London low emission success shames Amsterdam

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Air pollution in London is worse than in any other UK city and among the worst in Europe. Attempts to address the problem in recent years have undoubtedly brought about a significant improvement, but the city still lags behind in the race to tackle air pollution.

Road traffic emissions are the principal cause of air pollution in London. They are the greatest source of particulate matter and oxides of nitrogen, which are the primary causes of air quality related health problems.

[N135 Image 1](#)

Low Emission Zone

The city authorities are doing their best to combat the problem, however. Transport for London, the local government body responsible for London's transport system, has implemented a Low Emission Zone (LEZ) to discourage the greatest offenders from entering the city: older, diesel engine lorries, buses, coaches, large vans and minibuses.

The LEZ is an invisible boundary, enforced with closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras, which cannot be entered by vehicles that do not meet minimum emissions criteria without a charge being levied.

Daily charge

Since 4th February 2008, lorries, motor caravans, horse boxes and vehicles exceeding 12 tonnes which don't meet the emissions standards have been obliged to pay a two hundred pound daily charge for entering the LEZ.

The scheme will continue to be rolled out throughout summer/autumn 2008 to include a greater range of high emission vehicles, with daily charges ranging from a hundred to two hundred pounds. Transport for London's long term plan is to exclude all vehicles not up to Euro IV standards for particulate matter emissions, by 2012.

To help potential offenders avoid the levy, the Transport for London website also includes useful information on how vehicles can be modified to produce less emissions.

Contrast

The success of this initiative in London is in contrast to the situation in Amsterdam, on which we [reported on 19th May](#). There, a similar proposal to ban from the city cars produced before 1992 has been dropped after coming up against strong opposition from the Minister of Transport, and a definitive plan of action is yet to be adopted.