

# **Chideock Bypass Working Group**

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## **Proposed Low Emission Zone for Chideock**

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Chideock Bypass Working Group (CBPWG)  
Research Paper & Conclusions

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# Proposed Low Emission Zone for Chideock

## Summary

While a Low Emission Zone (LEZ) may suit other areas of the UK such as big cities, Chideock has a unique topography and is one of the major pinch points along the A35, one of the 18 key strategic routes in England.

Ten key issues have been identified that have to be resolved before a LEZ could be considered as a viable proposition for Chideock, namely:

- Where does the traffic go?
- What charges and penalties will be set?
- What exemptions will apply to local residents?
- What happens to Heavy Goods Vehicles?
- How will the local farming community be affected?
- Will motorcycles get charged or fined?
- Can modified vehicles be identified?
- What about illegally modified vehicles?
- What will happen to foreign registered vehicles? and
- Will vehicles be checked before they enter the LEZ?

Six alternative routes have been identified but only one is considered remotely viable and this would divert traffic round the LEZ via the A37 from Dorchester to Yeovil. The route would then follow the A30, A3088, A303 and A30 to Honiton. This was the preferred route put forward in the 2002 plan by the Highways Agency (predecessor of Highways England) but the A37 is not currently designated as a trunk road. The route would add approximately 25 miles to the journey and take around an hour longer, thereby adding to transport costs and deterring visitors.

Pollution is not the only problem facing Chideock. Introducing a LEZ will not solve the problems of some of the most dangerous airborne pollutants generated by traffic. Neither will it solve the problems of noise pollution, vibration, safety, quality of life and the protection of a unique medieval village. Chideock residents live under the constant threat of traffic accidents, in particular the catastrophic potential of out of control HGVs destroying the centre of the village. See [www.chideockbypass.co.uk](http://www.chideockbypass.co.uk) for pictures and videos of recent incidents.

What is quite clear is that none of our local elected representatives or Highways England have any idea where the traffic would go after implementing a LEZ!

**The only answer is a bypass.**

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# Proposed Low Emission Zone for Chideock

## Main Report

While a Low Emission Zone (LEZ) may suit other areas of the UK, Chideock has a unique topography and I wonder whether all of those involved really understand the implications. Quite apart from getting the technical side right, various signs will have to be sited in places as far away as Dorchester and Honiton with reminders all the way along the stretches of the A35.

### The most important issues are:

- 1) Where does the traffic go? Have the alternatives actually been considered? See the **Alternative Routes** section below.
- 2) What charges and penalties will be set to ensure the LEZ works and reduces pollution to acceptable levels?
- 3) What exemptions will apply to local residents of Chideock, Morcombelake, Ryall, Whitchurch Canonorum and others? Will they be offered compensation for having to change to a much more expensive vehicle to enable them to carry out their business? Will they get a free pass to travel in and out of the LEZ several times a day, and how will that operate? Will a plumber from Bridport called out to repair an emergency leak in Chideock get a free pass or be charged? There will be a long list of exemptions.
- 4) What happens to Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) 4.5 tonnes and over? Unlikely someone is working on electric or hybrid HGVs. What about HGVs requiring access for delivery to the businesses, three pubs, B&B's and Cains Farm - who operate HGVs out of Chideock?
- 5) How will the local farming community be affected? During late summer when hay making is in full swing there are frequent convoys of large tractors and trailers passing through the village.
- 6) Will motorcycles get charged or fined? Chideock is on a popular touring route for motorcyclists, we have many come through the Village and big bikes like Harley Davidsons generate high emissions.
- 7) Can modified vehicles be identified? If vehicle registrations are checked by the DVLA to show the type of pollution for that vehicle, this may not include details of modifications to either improve or worsen emissions. Until modern technology is available that can sample and identify emissions in real time some vehicles will avoid charges and fines.
- 8) What about illegally modified vehicles? In theory, HGVs should no longer contravene the EU directive, since large fleets with continuous use will re-invest in the best possible and cleanest HGVs. There are the cowboys of course, but it still comes down to good and frequent maintenance. There is a black market in second hand Catalytic converters, these are punched with holes, blasted at high pressure and then re-sold.
- 9) What will happen to foreign registered HGVs, vans and cars? The UK does not have reciprocal arrangements with the EU for recovery of fines for motoring offences. The tanker that had 13 failed attempts at climbing Chideock hill had tractor and trailer units registered

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in different countries. Government wrote off £26m of uncollected fines from the Dartford crossings when the franchises expired and responsibility transferred to Local Authorities.

- 10)** Will vehicles be checked before they enter the LEZ? There is land available at Dorchester, just past McDonald's at the Monkey Jump roundabout, which I believe was used as a park and ride to Weymouth for the 2012 Olympics. Vehicles found not to conform could be diverted via the A37. Drivers could also use the facility to check their vehicle's compliance before continuing on to Chideock.

**I am certain that there are many more issues and examples, what has been considered so far?**

**I believe that the LEZ has to be set up by 2020, so not much time to consult the residents of Chideock and the surrounding areas.**

### **Alternative Routes**

Let us look at the options available to vehicles who are unable to travel through Chideock or pay the charge:

- 1)** A3066 from Bridport through Beaminster, B3163 through Broadwindsor, B3164, B3165 through Marshalsea and Marshwood before rejoining the A35 at Raymond's Hill.
- 2)** A3066 from Bridport through Beaminster, Brunel Tunnel, Mosterton, Misterton and Crewkerne then A30 through Chard to Yarcombe and then A303.

**Most other roads in the area are single track farm roads with passing places. Anyone who remembers when the Clockhouse Inn burnt down on Main Street, will recall the gridlock through these roads when traffic came to a halt at Shave cross for five hours.**

**I cannot see a lot of traffic wanting to travel through these roads, it would just cause havoc to farmers and residents of the farms and small hamlets.**

**Then consider the traffic through Bridport, Beaminster, Marshalsea, Marshwood, Broadwindsor and Raymond's Hill; and Mosterton, Misterton and Crewkerne. These towns and villages are congested at the best of times and of course the famous Brunel Tunnel has passing only for narrow vehicles. HGVs and wider vehicles have to use the centre of the carriageway. You certainly cannot contemplate HGVs travelling through these, towns, villages and Tunnel, with sharp bends and only suitable for local traffic not the 16,000 to 20,000 i.e., 50% of the traffic travelling through Chideock at peak times.**

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- 3) A37 from Dorchester to Yeovil then A30, A3088 to A303 and A30 to Honiton. This is the only viable HGV route but the A37 is not a Trunk Road.

**Would DCC or South Somerset want an extra 16,000 to 20,000 (at peak times) cars and HGVs on their road network.**

**This was the preferred route put forward in the 2002 plan by the Highways Agency (predecessor of Highways England).**

- 4) A37 from Dorchester to Yeovil then A30 through North and West Coker (20mph and narrow) , East Chinnock, Crewkerne, Chard, Yarcombe and then A303
- 5) A37 from Dorchester then A356 through Frampton, Maiden Newton, South Perrott, Misterton and Crewkerne, B3165 through Clapton, Birdsmoor Gate, Marshalsea, Marshwood to A35.
- 6) A37 from Dorchester then A356 through Frampton, Maiden Newton, B3163 to Beaminster through Broadwindsor, B3164, B3165 through Marshalsea and Marshwood before rejoining the A35 at Raymond's Hill.

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## Conclusion

Of the six alternative routes identified only options 4, 5 and 6 could take cars but not in the volumes required of a Trunk Road and are not suitable for HGVs. The routes pass through small villages like North and West Coker, East Chinnock, Frampton, Maiden Newton, Beaminster, Raymond's Hill, South Perrot, Misterton, Clapton and Birdsmoor gate. There are 20mph speed limits, width restrictions, sharp bends and steep hills like Chideock. All of these roads would require signage to prevent A35 vehicles using them. Otherwise there will be havoc and outcry in the villages of West Dorset, South Somerset and East Devon.

If a LEZ for Chideock is implemented Bridport will also need one as pollution in East Street is already very high. More vehicles passing through Bridport will cause gridlock and severe pollution. Traffic in East Street and West Street comes to a standstill at certain times every day except Sunday. Congestion increases on Wednesday and Saturday market days every week, with car parks full.

For a LEZ to be effective the charge not only the extra mileage should be taken into account but the time taken. So what is the charge to deter this traffic?

For example using option 3 as the only viable Trunk Route. The distance to Honiton using the fastest route is an 25.2 miles longer, which for a medium size car at 45p per mile (as per HMRC guidelines) amounts to £11.34 extra but the journey time is approximately an extra 56 minutes. So the charge has to be set to really discourage drivers. In the case of vehicles with high fuel consumption and HGVs the cost per mile could be tripled increasing the cost to around £34 the journey time would increase to 69 minutes. So a charge of £50 to £100 would seem appropriate. As another example travelling to Lyme Regis which is just 6.1 miles from Chideock, the alternative route from Dorchester via Yeovil then A303 to Honiton and then back on the A35 is approximately 59.5 miles. So an additional 53.4 miles at 45p per mile costs an extra £24.03, but the journey time is a massive 1 hour 42 minutes longer. For vehicles with high fuel consumption and HGVs the cost rises to £72 mileage plus some 2 hours longer. Therefore, a minimum charge of £100 for cars seems appropriate, rising to £200 for HGVs and gas guzzlers!

Of course, pollution is not the only problem facing Chideock. On its own a LEZ will not solve the problems of PM2.5 particulates, noise pollution, vibration, safety, quality of life and the protection of a unique medieval village. Finally there is the constant threat of traffic accidents particularly the catastrophic potential of out of control HGVs destroying the centre of the village, especially petrol and propane tankers. This has happened before on a number of occasions with damage to buildings but fortunately no fatalities.

At the Chideock Parish Council (CPC) meeting on 25 September 2017 following the late publishing of the minutes of the meeting with Highways England in May, CPC admitted that neither they nor anyone else involved had any idea where the traffic would go after implementing a LEZ!

**The only answer is a bypass.**

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