

A Low Emission Zone for Aberdeen

Why, what and how to give your views

1. About Low Emission Zones

Low Emission Zones (LEZs) are intended to improve health by reducing pollution from road traffic. Within a LEZ, the only vehicles that can be driven are those which meet set standards for exhaust emissions.

Aberdeen City Council will decide on the vehicle types included in the LEZ, based on technical analysis and consultation feedback. But you might be affected if you drive a:

- Bus or goods vehicle which does not meet Euro VI standard (generally those registered before 2014);
- Diesel car which does not meet Euro 6 standard (generally those registered before 2015); or
- Petrol car which does not meet Euro 4 standard (generally those registered before 2006).

If your vehicle is newer than these, or if you drive an electric or hydrogen vehicle, you should not be affected

The Scottish Government has committed to introduce LEZs into Scotland's four biggest cities (Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow) and has introduced legislation (the [Transport \(Scotland\) Act](#)) to enable this to happen. Accompanying Regulations and Guidance due to be published by the end of 2020 will ensure standards are consistent across all LEZs.

Whilst Scottish Government sets the legislation, it is for Aberdeen City Council to decide the area that its LEZ will cover and which types of vehicles will be included.

Aberdeen City Council's decisions about an LEZ in Aberdeen will seek to achieve a range of related objectives:

- Improve air quality in Aberdeen by reducing harmful emissions from transport and delivering on the Scottish Government's statutory air quality objectives;
- Protect public health and wellbeing;
- Support climate change targets by reducing road transport's contribution to emissions;
- Support local and regional transport strategies¹ by contributing to the development of a vibrant, accessible, and safe city centre, where the volume of non-essential traffic is minimised and active and sustainable transport movements are prioritised; and
- Contribute to ongoing transformational change in Aberdeen, helping promote the city as a desirable place to live, visit and invest in.

¹The [Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan](#)
The [North East Scotland Roads Hierarchy Study](#)
The [Aberdeen Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan](#)

2. What is air pollution?

Air pollution is made up of invisible gases and particles in the air which are harmful to people and other life.

The higher the levels of pollution and the more time people spend in polluted air, the worse the effects on health can be. Some people notice its effects immediately, but long-term exposure to air pollution can lead to conditions includingⁱⁱ:

- heart disease;
- strokes;
- lung conditions (e.g. emphysema and chronic bronchitis); and
- asthma.

Some types of people are more likely to be affected, especially:

- unborn babies;
- infants and young children;
- elderly people; and
- people that have breathing or cardiovascular problems.

The two main pollutants of concern to human health from road traffic are **Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂)** and **particulates**.

NO₂ is produced by combustion processes, including in vehicle engines.

Very small **particulates** (10 micrometres or less, or about the width of a single thread in a spider's web) are also created by combustion in vehicle engines but also by wear from vehicle tyres and brakes.

ⁱⁱ http://www.parliament.scot/ResearchBriefingsAndFactsheets/S5/SB_16-35_Air_Quality_in_Scotland.pdf

3. Air pollution in Aberdeen

Air quality is good in most places in Aberdeen.

But there are locations where pollution levels are higher than standards set by EU and Scottish Government law. As such, the Council has declared three Air Quality Management Areas for:

- [Parts of the city centre \(including Union Street, Market Street, King Street, Virginia Street and Guild Street\);](#)
- [Wellington Road;](#) and
- [Anderson Drive/ Haudagain Roundabout](#)

The pollutant of most concern in Aberdeen is NO₂. There are no locations in the city where particulate pollution exceeds the legal limits.

By law, the annual average level of NO₂ pollution should not be more than 40 µg/m³.³ In 2018 in Aberdeen there were:

9 monitored locations	10 monitored locations
At which NO ₂ was higher than the standard (more than 40 µg/m ³)	At which NO ₂ was close to the standard (between 36 and 40 µg/m ³)

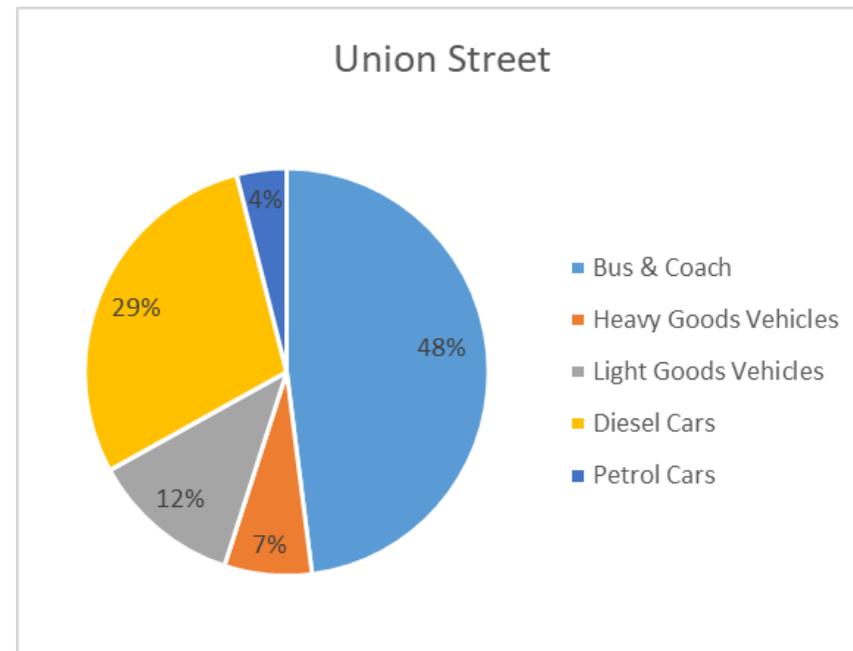
The observed air quality data collected by Aberdeen City Council shows that the city centre currently contains the majority of locations where levels of NO₂ is higher than legal limits.

³ This means not more than 40 micrograms of NO₂ in a cubic metre of air. 1 microgram is 1 millionth of a gram.

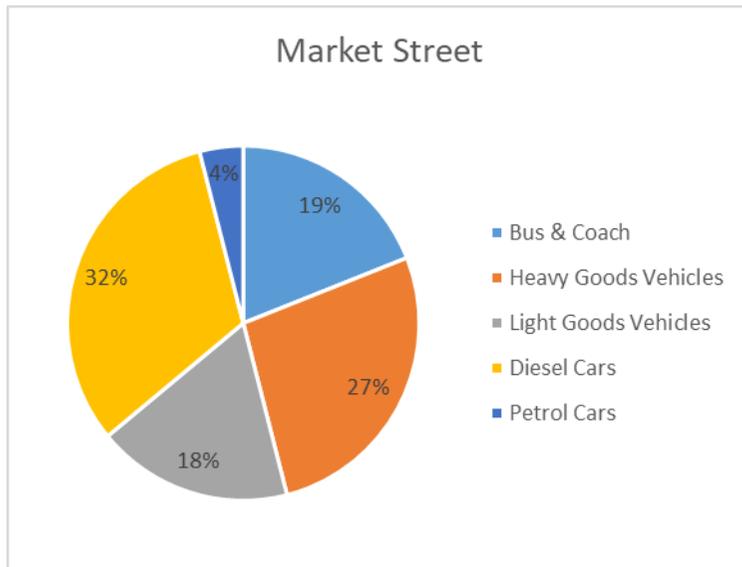
Road traffic is the biggest single cause of air pollution in Aberdeen.

The amount of pollution that is caused by different types of traffic also varies by location.

For example, on streets where buses make up a large proportion of traffic, these buses contribute a significant proportion of emissions, e.g.:



In other locations, the proportions are much more varied, e.g.:



4. By how much could pollution be reduced?

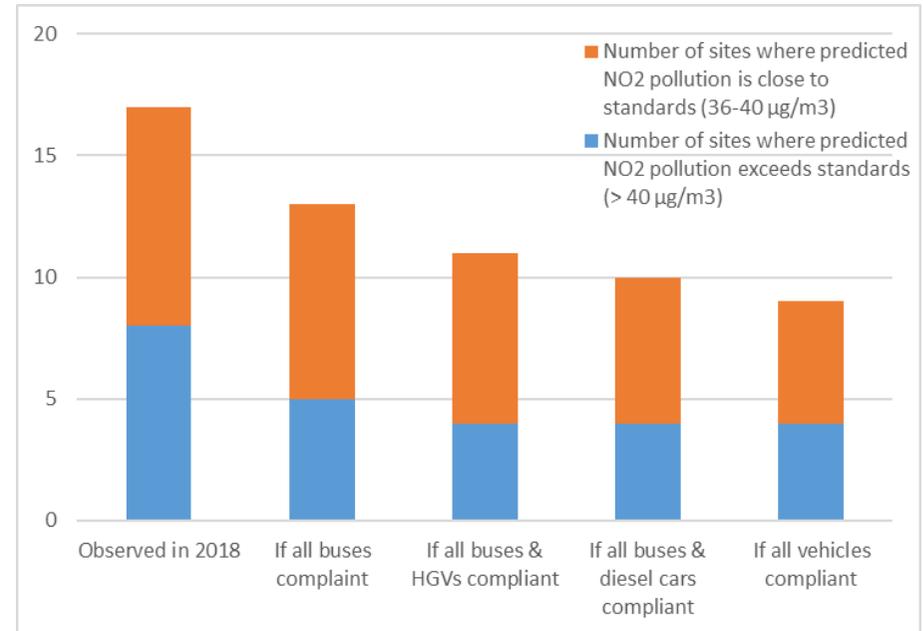
The improvement in air quality at any given location depends on very local effects of traffic flows and the nature of the areas surrounding a road (especially where there are canyons of high buildings, which can trap pollution).

But, as a guide, the following table shows by how much total NO₂ pollution may fall in the city if all vehicles in the category shown were compliant with the vehicle emissions standards of a LEZ:

All buses (to Euro VI standard)	15%
All diesel cars (to Euro 6 standard)	4%
All heavy goods vehicles (to Euro VI standard)	5%
All light goods vehicles (to Euro 6 standard)	2%
All petrol cars (to Euro 4 standard or better)	Less than 1%

Reducing emissions from buses therefore makes the biggest impact of any one vehicle type, but technical work shows this is not enough to improve air quality to meet standards at every location.

The work shows that if a bus-only LEZ were to affect all buses operating in the city, then the number of pollution hotspots would fall substantially, but that not every location would meet air quality standards; some other vehicle types would also need to be included:



Analysis has shown that some locations in Aberdeen would still be at risk of high levels of NO₂, even if a city-wide LEZ restricted multiple different vehicle types.

5. Options for Aberdeen's LEZ

Aberdeen City Council and their consultants have followed national guidance to consider a wide range of options for:

- the area which Aberdeen's LEZ could cover; and
- which types of vehicles may be included within it.

Technical work can predict the changes in pollution that would result from any option^{iv}, but the Council also wants to hear your views about what type of LEZ would be best.

Factors that will be considered are that the preferred option for a LEZ should:

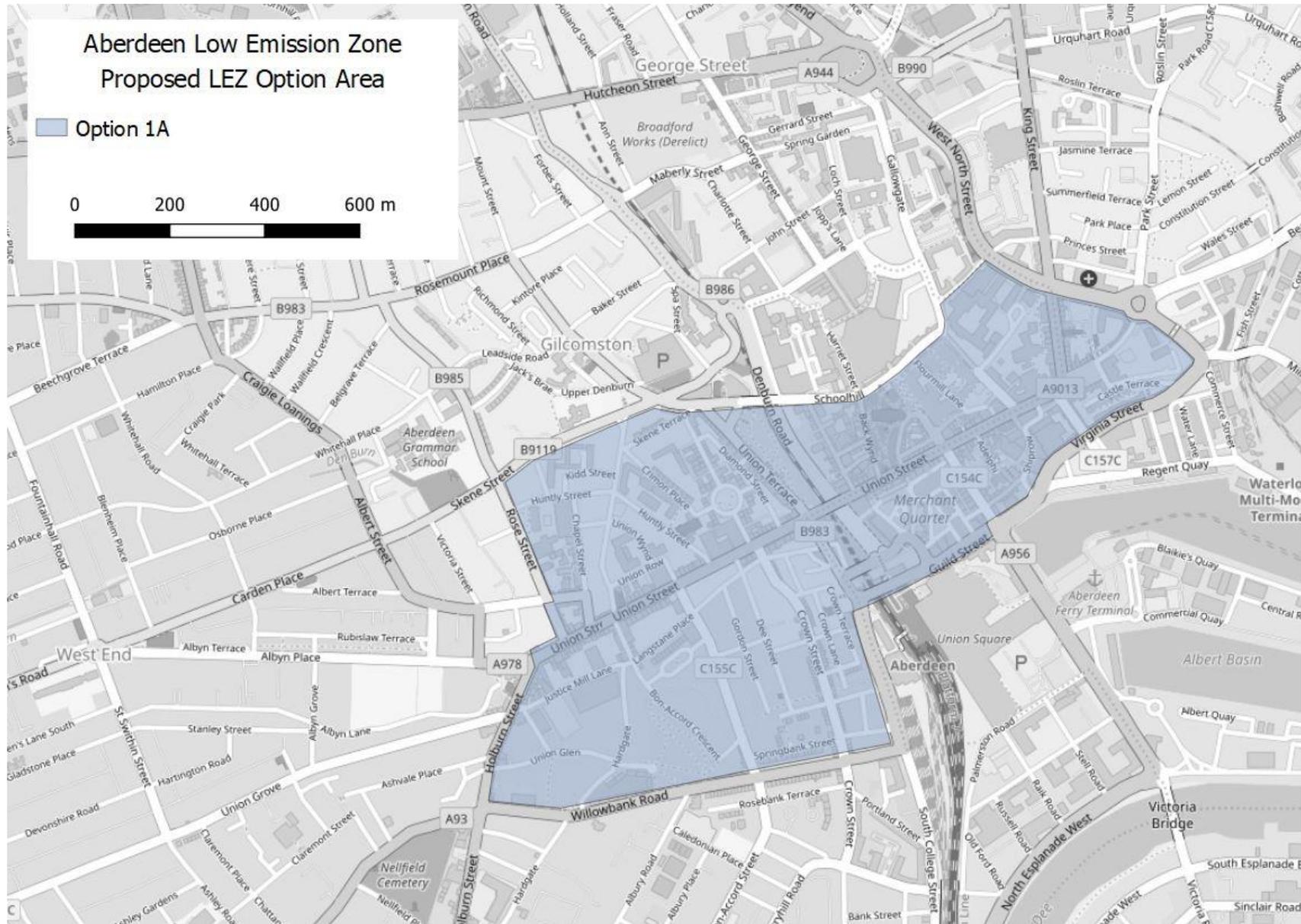
- Achieve the objectives described in Section 1 above;
- Cover a geographically logical area which is easy for drivers to understand;
- Has reasonable alternative routes for drivers that would need to drive around the zone; and
- Is easy to enforce.

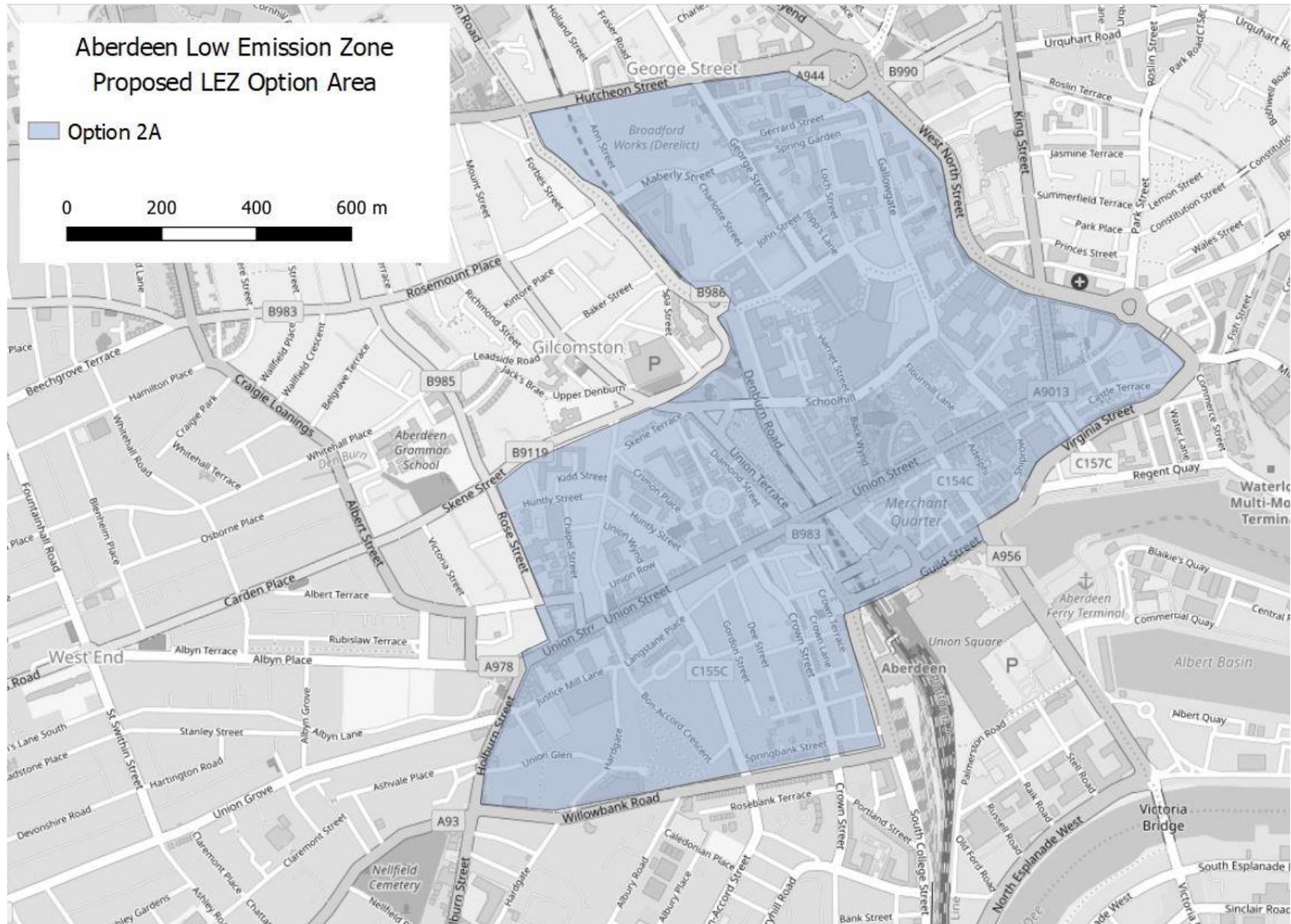
Many potential geographic boundaries have been considered of which three have been considered in detail:

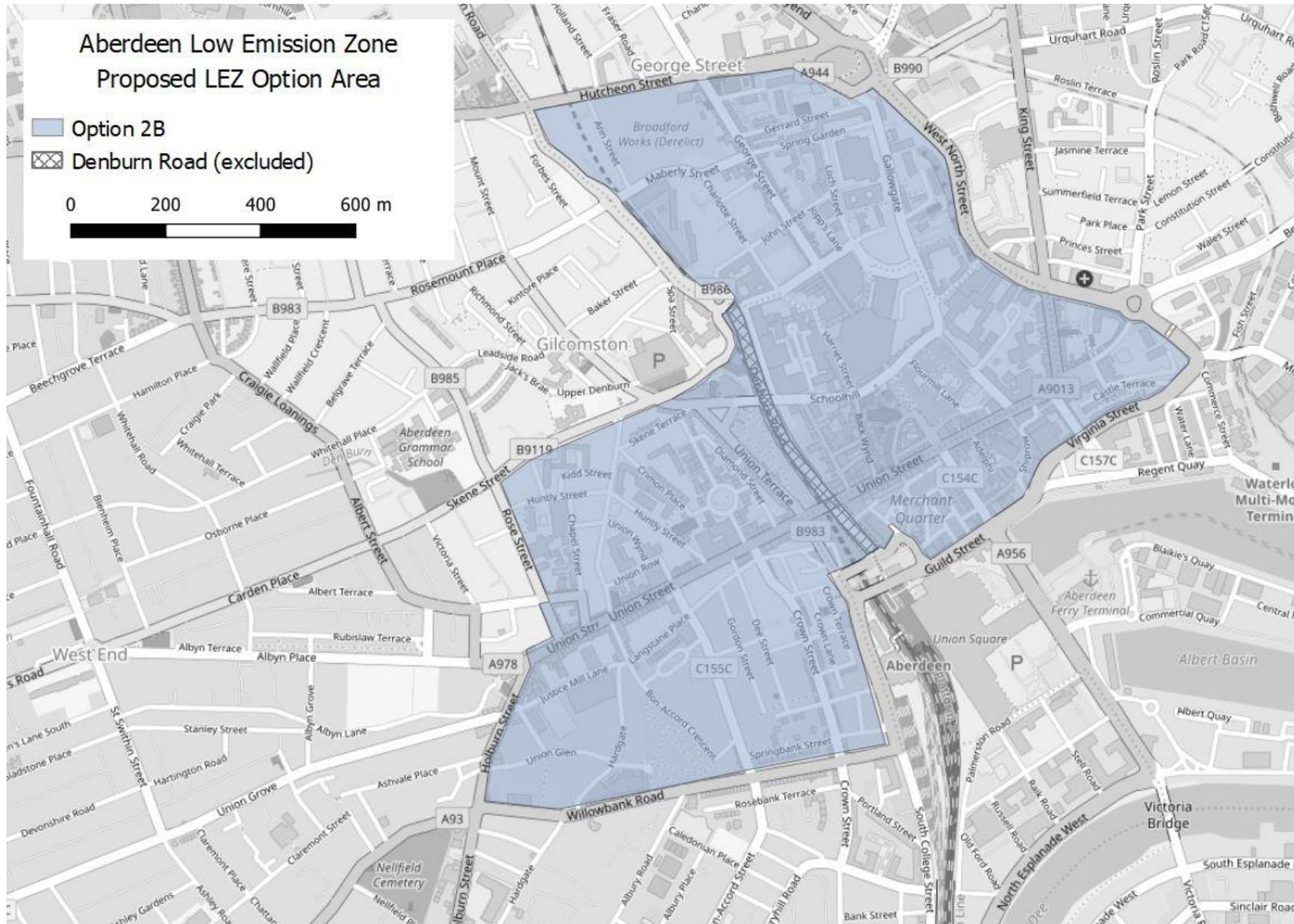
1. Union Street area;
2. Union Street & George Street area; and
3. City Centre Masterplan area.

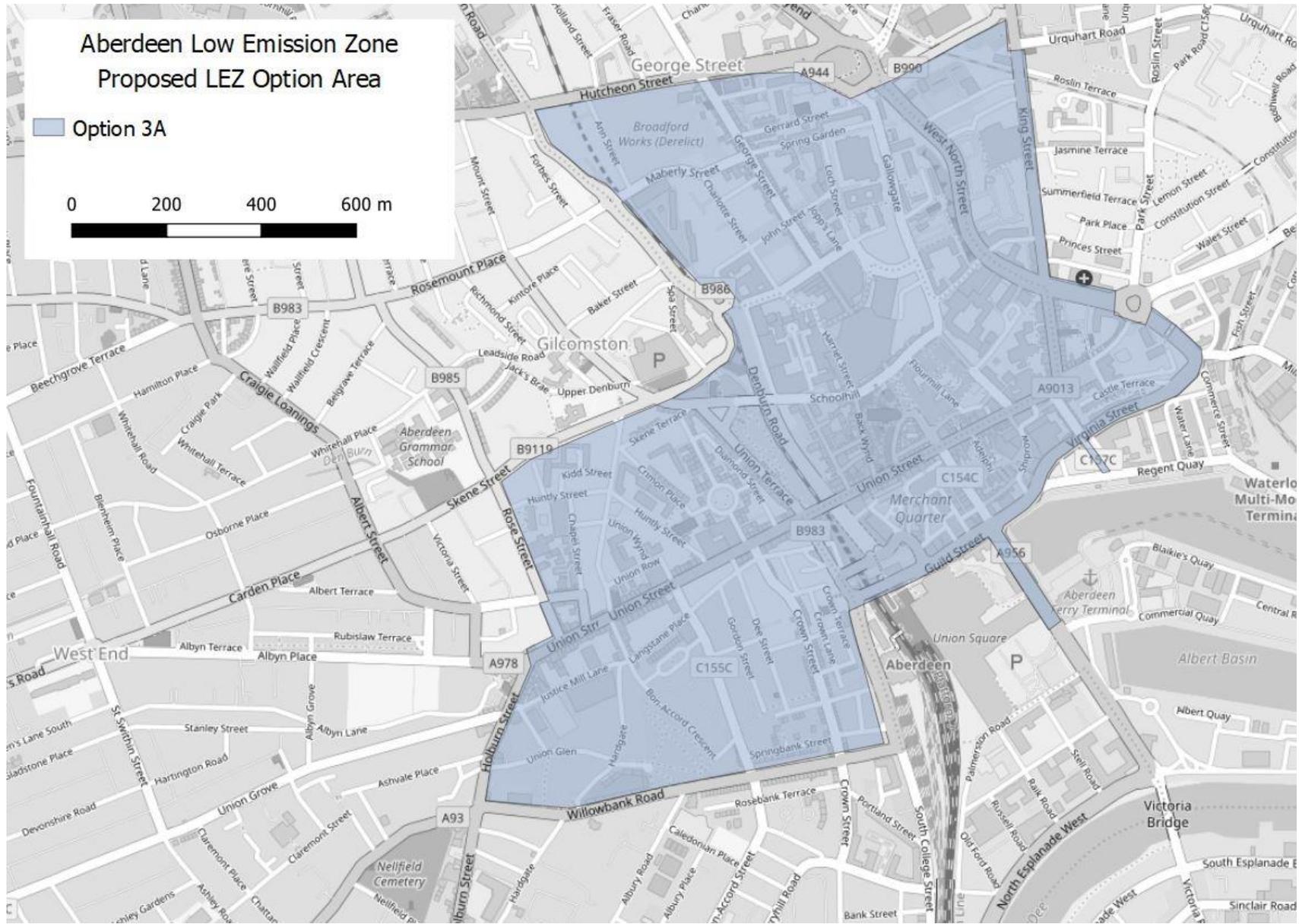
Technical work is continuing to predict the effect of different options for the boundary of Aberdeen's LEZ. Work by consultants so far has led them to recommend to Aberdeen City Council that eight LEZ options are taken forward for consultation and further technical analysis. Maps of all eight option areas are shown below.

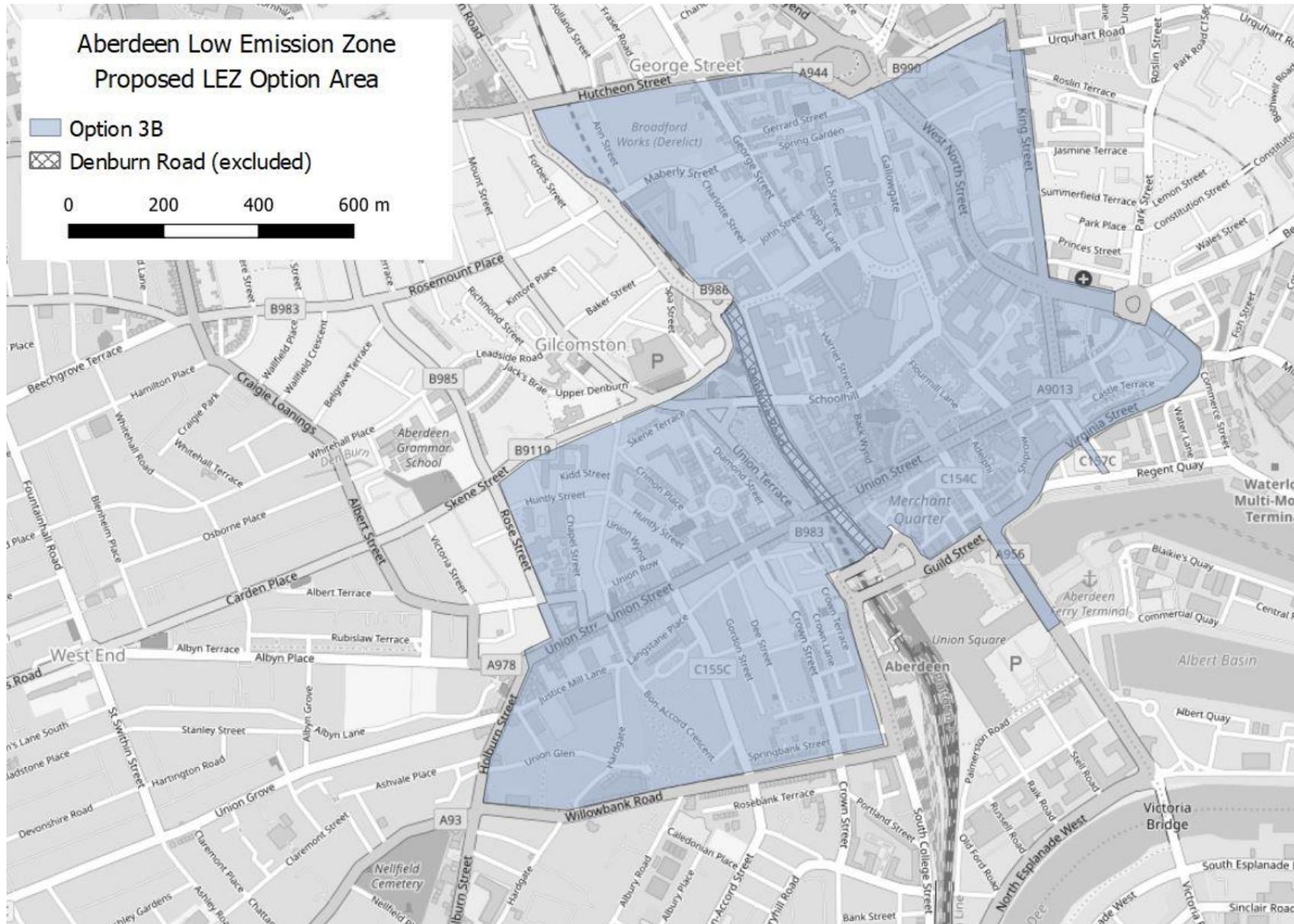
^{iv} The process is following the guidance set out by the Scottish Government in its [National Low Emission Framework](#)

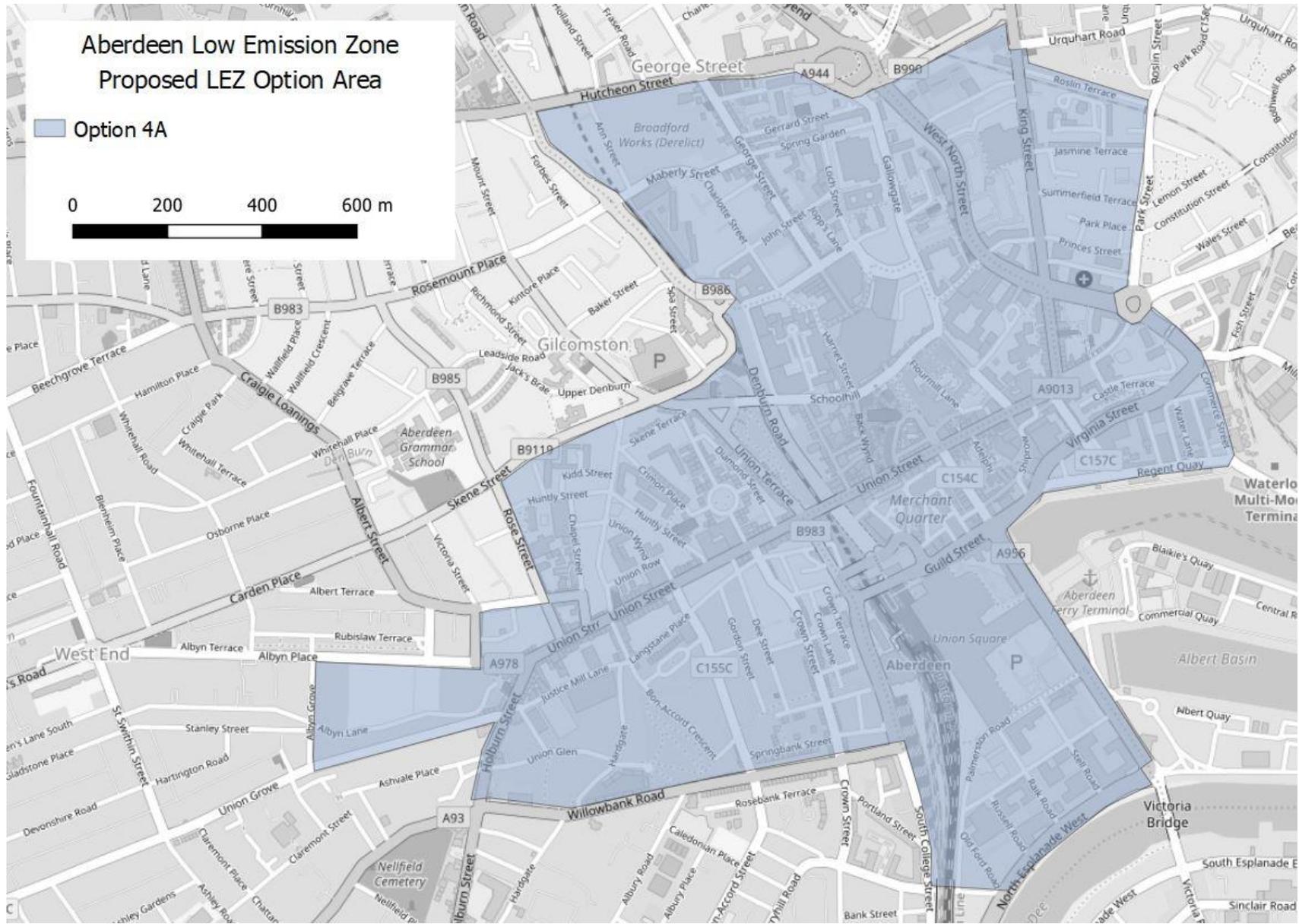














6. Give your views

Aberdeen City Council wants to hear your views about the concept of a LEZ for Aberdeen, and about which of the emerging proposed options is best. Please complete the online survey at: <https://consultation.aberdeencity.gov.uk/planning/lez> by 11th October 2020. All responses will be considered before a final decision is made.

7. For more information

About air quality in Scotland: <http://www.scottishairquality.scot/>

About the proposals for LEZs in Scotland: <https://www.lowemissionzones.scot/>

About air quality in Aberdeen: <https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/environment/air-quality-aberdeen>

About the technical process that is being followed: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-low-emission-framework/>