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Eco Friendly Brummies Set to Greenlight Congestion Charging

Despite increasing concerns about their environment, 92% remain unaware of Birmingham's targets to reduce carbon emissions

A majority of Brummies support congestion charge zones in Birmingham, but ONLY if public transport is substantially improved first, new research by eco-friendly community website Gumtree.com reveals today.

The research, which provides fascinating insights into what Birmingham residents really think about the environment, reveals that almost half (47%) of locals admit that C-charging is the best way to reduce traffic gridlock in and around the City. But it's a trade-off with 35% insisting that congestion charges will only work if the city's public transport system is made more reliable.

With the environment high on the news and political agenda, 60% of people in Birmingham admit to being 'concerned' about climate change, with more than half (56%) complaining that the city council needs to do more to clean up the city and make it easier for residents to go green.

Of course actions speak louder than words and when asked what they would do if they were Mayor of Birmingham for a day, 77% of Brummies say they would improve public transport so that people would use their cars less.

Money and time-saving incentives also rank high among would-be Lord Mayors, with 43% keen to introduce tax breaks for households that reduced their carbon emissions, and one in four (25%) pledging to bring in special green traffic lanes for green cars and those that rideshare.

The increasing popularity of green motoring and ridesharing is supported by Gumtree's own site data, with the Birmingham site recording a staggering 300% increase in the number of listings for rideshares since January.

Switched-On Green

When doing their bit to protect the environment, Brummies favour more cost-effective eco-friendly solutions:

- 81% use energy-saving lightbulbs
- 72% giving stuff away for free to other people who need it, rather than throwing it in the trash and having to pay more waste charges as a result
- Almost half (48%) buy local food in an effort to reduce food miles
- 21% plan on cutting back on long-haul travel to try to reduce carbon emissions

Sophy Silver of Gumtree says: "Brummies are clearly leading the way in their positive 'green' attitudes to environmental change, and it bodes really well for the city that they've given a resounding thumbs up to eco-friendly solutions such as home recycling and ridesharing.

"Our research shows that heavy items like fridge freezers, sofas, TVs and washing machines are the most popular items that Brummies throw out in the trash. This is such a shame as we've seen lots of requests for these items in the 'freebies' and 'swap shop' categories of Gumtree's Birmingham site. So when people are doing their next big clear out, we recommend they try to give their stuff away to others who need it – who knows, as well as doing their bit for the environment, they may also save themselves a small fortune in waste disposal charges."

Other research highlights:

- With local city elections set for 3rd May, local politicians will be interested to know that 13% of Brummies would vote for the party that pledges to make Birmingham greener
- Target neutral - a mere 2% of the population were aware that Birmingham has set a target of reducing carbon emissions by 30% by 2010, with a staggering 92% admitting that they didn't know what the target was.

Interesting Gumtree Birmingham Listings in Swap Shop and Freebies categories

Swap stereo for fish tank -

<http://birmingham.gumtree.com/birmingham/58/8318558.html>

Growing family looking to trade in their car for a 7 seater

<http://birmingham.gumtree.com/birmingham/74/8189874.html>

<http://birmingham.gumtree.com/birmingham/76/8395476.html>

Free freezer

<http://birmingham.gumtree.com/birmingham/70/8366370.html>

Free sand

<http://birmingham.gumtree.com/birmingham/27/7605727.html>

Free sofa

<http://birmingham.gumtree.com/birmingham/96/6985396.html>

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Research

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 218 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 14th - 15th March 2007. The survey was carried out online.