

Green City Region Partnership

Date: 16 October 2020

Subject: GM Clean Air Plan: Update

Report of: Simon Warburton, Transport Strategy Director, Transport for Greater Manchester

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To set out that GM have launched two major public consultations to get a wide range of views on the city-region's plans to reduce harmful air pollution on local roads and to introduce minimum standards for all taxis and private hire services licensed in the region.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Note the report
2. Promote the consultations and give their views at cleanairgm.com and gmtaxistandards.com,

CONTACT OFFICERS:

Megan Black – Interim Head of Logistics & Environment – megan.black@tfgm.com

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

The following is a list of the background papers on which this report is based in accordance with the requirements of Section 100D (1) of the Local Government Act 1972. It does not include documents, which would disclose exempt or confidential information as identified by that Act.

- 31 July 2020, report to GMCA: Clean Air Plan Update
- 29 May 2020, report to GMCA: Clean Air Plan Update
- 31 January 2020, report to GMCA: Clean Air Plan Update
- 26 Jul 2019, report to GMCA: Clean Air Plan Update
- 1 March 2019, report to GMCA: Greater Manchester's Clean Air Plan – Tackling Nitrogen Dioxide Exceedances at the Roadside - Outline Business Case
- 11 January 2019, report to GMCA/AGMA: Clean Air Update

- 14 December 2018, report to GMCA: Clean Air Update
- 30 November 2018, report to GMCA: Clean Air Plan Update
- 26 October 2018, report to GMCA: GM Clean Air Plan Update on Local Air Quality Monitoring
- 15 November 2018, report to HPEOS Committee: Clean Air Update
- 16 August 2018, report to HPEOS Committee: GM Clean Air Plan Update
- UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations, Defra and DfT, July 2017

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The severe and long-lasting health implications of poor air quality as well as the legal obligations placed on Greater Manchester local authorities means that authorities need to act decisively and swiftly to reduce harmful air pollutants, and nitrogen oxides in particular.
- 1.2 Greater Manchester authorities in deciding to work together to respond to this vital issue are demonstrating collective leadership, which is essential to help clean the air for our combined population of nearly three million residents. Greater Manchester authorities have been formally directed by the Secretary of State under section 85 of the Environment Act 1995 to take steps to implement a local plan for compliance with limits for nitrogen dioxide, as analysis revealed that locations of damaging roadside nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) concentrations can be found in every district.
- 1.3 Given that air pollution does not respect boundaries, this coordinated approach is also the most effective way to deal with a problem that affects all parts of Greater Manchester, and cannot be remedied on a site by site or district by district basis. The 10 local authorities, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), collectively referred to as “Greater Manchester” or “GM”, have worked together to develop a Clean Air Plan to tackle NO₂ Exceedances at the Roadside, referred to as GM CAP.

2. Background

- 2.1 The core goal of the GM Clean Air Plan is to address the legal requirement to remove ALL concentrations of NO₂ that have been forecast to exceed the legal Limit Value (40 µg/m³) identified through the target determination process in the “shortest possible time” in line with Government guidance and legal rulings.
- 2.2 Greater Manchester proposes the following package of measures to deliver compliance in the shortest possible time, at the lowest cost, least risk and with the least negative impacts. They are:
 - A charging Clean Air Zone (CAZ) category C which will target the most polluting commercial vehicles including older heavy goods vehicles, buses, coaches, taxis and private hire vehicles from the summer of 2021, and older polluting light goods vehicles from 2023 (i.e. a CAZ C with a van exemption until 2023).
 - A Clean Commercial Vehicle Fund of c.£98m to provide financial support for the upgrade of light and heavy goods vehicles, minibuses and coaches, which will be targeted to support smaller local businesses, sole traders and the voluntary sector, registered in Greater Manchester.
 - A Clean Taxi Fund of c.£28m, to support the upgrade of non-compliant Greater Manchester Licensed taxi and private hire vehicles.

- A Clean Bus Fund of c.£30m to provide, where possible, the retrofit of older engine standards to the less polluting Euro VI standard for those buses registered to run services across Greater Manchester.
- A Hardship Fund of c.£10m to support individuals, companies and organisations who are assessed to be most vulnerable to socio-economic impacts from the CAZ.

2.3 In March this year along with a further Ministerial Direction to implement a category C Clean Air Zone the Government provided initial funding of £41m for clean vehicle funds to award grants or loans to eligible businesses: £15.4m for bus retrofit, £10.7m for Private Hire Vehicles, £8m for HGVs, £4.6m for coaches and £2.1m for minibuses. [These figures include estimated delivery costs at 5%]. In her letter that accompanied the direction to act Minister Pow expressed the government's desire for GM to consult on a charging Clean Air Zone Category C. Councillor Western in his reply emphasised the need for government support for key sectors, including the hackney and LGV business users.

2.4 The Combined Authority meeting on 31st July considered a report that set out the progress that has been made on the development of Greater Manchester's Clean Air Plan. The report outlined that the GM Local Authorities will move to a statutory public consultation on the GM Clean Air Plan, it also set out the link to taxi and private hire common minimum licensing standards. The report also set out the Clean Air Zone (CAZ) will be implemented in Spring 2022.

2.5 The report was not seeking a decision on whether to introduce a scheme as that has been mandated by the Secretary of State. It set out a position for consultation on the daily charge, discounts and exemptions of a Category C GM Clean Air Zone, and the proposals for the supporting funds that have been developed taking stakeholder engagement and statistical modelling into account. It sought agreement to consult and endorsement of the policy for consultation.

3. Clean Air Consultation

3.1 An 8-week statutory consultation on Greater Manchester's Clean Air Plan commenced on 8 October 2020 and will run for eight weeks until Thursday 3 December. GM is consulting with businesses and residents across Greater Manchester and beyond to get their thoughts on the key elements of the Greater Manchester Clean Air Zone, and the proposals for the supporting funds that have been developed.

3.2 GM is conducting a consultation that will adhere to the Government guidance around social distancing and any regulations in place and undertake engagement activity that will enable residents, businesses and visitors to engage with the consultation materials and respond in a meaningful way, taking into account that Government guidance both nationally and locally/regionally.

- 3.3 The consultation document can be found at www.cleanairgm.com, it presents the policies that have been developed, as well as explaining which parts of the policies respondents can have their say on. At the end of each section, the questions relevant to that section, are set out that are being asked in the consultation.
- 3.4 The Government has asked Greater Manchester to continue to progress the Clean Air Plan, and to undertake the consultation, based on proposals developed before the COVID-19 pandemic that showed compliance would be achieved by 2024. GM is assessing the possible effects of COVID-19 on the Clean Air Plan and the consultation is asking questions about the impact of COVID-19 on impacted groups. This information will inform future decisions on each aspect of the final plan.

4. Minimum Licensing Standards and the GM Clean Air Plan

- 4.1 Taxi/Private Hire services are a significant part of GM's transport offer. In 2018, GM's ten local authorities agreed to collectively develop a common set of minimum licensing standards (MLS) for Taxi and Private Hire services that cover the whole of GM. At that time, the primary driver for this work was to improve public safety, but vehicle age and emission standards in the context of the Clean Air agenda are now also a major consideration.
- 4.2 As licensing is a local authority regulatory function, the work to devise the Standards has been undertaken by the GM Licensing Managers Network, with TfGM supporting the co-There are four areas of focus for the MLS:
- Drivers: Criminal Records Checks; Medical Examinations; Local knowledge test; English language; Driver training; Driving Proficiency; Dress Code.
 - Vehicles: Vehicle emissions (diesel Euro 6 and above, petrol Euro 4 and above); Vehicle ages (under 5 years at first licensing, no older than 10 years); Vehicle colour (Black for Taxi/Hackney, white for PHV); Vehicle livery (common GM design with Council logo incorporated); Accessibility (all Taxis to be wheelchair accessible); Vehicle testing; CCTV; Executive Hire; Vehicle design and licensing requirements.
 - Operators: Private Hire Operators / staff will require basic criminal record check; more stringent requirements in relation to booking records; Operators to take more responsibility for the behaviour of their drivers.
 - Local Authorities: Applications may be submitted up to 8 weeks in advance of licence expiry; Once determined, licence issued within 5 working days; Agree to develop common enforcement approach and a framework to which licensing fees are set; Councillors to receive training before they hear applications.
- 4.3 The GM CAP will require taxi/Private Hire vehicles (PHV) to meet stricter emissions standards than at present, which will mean a significant proportion of the trade will need to upgrade their vehicles to meet these emissions standards to avoid a charge. The CAP has the potential for a significant pot of funding to support the trade to upgrade their vehicles.

- 4.4 In addition, The GM Five Year Environment Plan (5YEP) sets an ambition for GM to be carbon neutral by 2038. This means sectors such as transport need to take very significant action now to reduce carbon emissions. For transport this means a rapid shift to vehicles that are not powered by fossil fuels.
- 4.5 From a policy perspective, GM wants to develop a position that minimises the impact on the trade while meeting the targets set out in the GM CAP and 5YEP. Incentivising a switch to an electric (or zero-emission capable, “ZEC”) vehicle, using clean air funding, provides a long-term solution to compliance and meets climate obligations.
- 4.6 To invest in ZEC vehicles, taxi proprietors also require long term confidence in the local policy landscape, including future interventions and supporting infrastructure. Other local authorities have a ZEC requirement now or have set out a clear roadmap to when their taxi/PHV fleets should be emission free. Therefore, the following dates for ZEC adoption are proposed as part of the MLS consultation:
- From 2025 all new to license vehicles would need to be ZEC; and
 - From 2028 all vehicles would need to be ZEC, meaning an entirely zero emission Taxi/PHV fleet across GM by 2029.
- 4.7 The trade has asked for certainty, funding, and long lead in times for these changes. This is extremely challenging within the current and emerging policy environment. Officers have developed policy proposals that can meet these needs as far as possible, which is why parallel consultations are being undertaken for MLS and GM CAP, and that charging, funding, and licensing policy positions are coherent and joined-up.

5. Minimum Licensing Standards Consultation

- 5.1 An 8-week statutory consultation on Greater Manchester’s Minimum Licensing Standards commenced on 8 October 2020 and will run for eight weeks until Thursday 3 December. GM is consulting with businesses and residents across Greater Manchester and beyond to get their views on the proposed standards. The feedback will inform local authorities’ decisions on agreed standards and the timelines for their implementation.
- 5.2 The consultation document is can be found at www.gmtaxistandards.com, it presents the policies that have been developed and the questions that are being asked in the consultation.
- 5.3 Like many parts of the economy, and in particular the transport sector, the taxi and private hire trade have been severely impacted by COVID-19, lockdown and the effects of social distancing policies. Therefore, the MLS consultation, includes questions designed to elicit a fuller and more informed understanding of the wider effects of COVID-19 on the economic health and sustainability of the taxi and private hire trades. This information will inform future decisions on each aspect of the final plan.