

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GM AIR QUALITY ADMINISTRATION
COMMITTEE HELD ON 20 JANUARY 2022 AT MANCHESTER TOWN HALL
COUNCIL CHAMBER**

PRESENT:

GMCA	Councillor Andrew Western (Chair)
Bolton	Councillor Nadim Muslim
Bury	Councillor Alan Quinn
Manchester	Councillor Tracey Rawlins
Oldham	Councillor Abdul Jabbar
Rochdale	Councillor Sarah Rowbotham
Salford	Councillor Mike McCusker
Stockport	Councillor Tom McGee
Tameside	Councillor Allison Gwynne
Trafford	Councillor Stephen Adshead
Wigan	Councillor Paul Prescott

OTHER MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Rochdale	Councillor Shah Wazir
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OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

GMCA	Eamonn Boylan
GMCA	Kerry Bond
GMCA	Ninoshka Martins
GMCA	Liz Treacy
TfGM	Kate Mooney
TfGM	Kate Green
TfGM	Frank Tudor
TfGM	Megan Black
TfGM	Simon Warburton

AQC 21/31 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies received.

AQC 21/32 CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

There were no Chairs announcements or items of urgent business.

AQC 21/33 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED /-

There were no declarations of interest reported by any Member in respect of any item on the agenda.

AQC 21/34 THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 NOVEMBER 2021

RESOLVED /-

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2021 be approved.

**AQC 21/35 GM CLEAN AIR PLAN - FINANCIAL SUPPORT SCHEME JANUARY
2022 UPDATE**

Consideration was given to a report that provided an update on the arrangements to distribute Clean Air funds to support Private Hire Vehicles, Hackney Carriages, HGVs, coaches, minibuses, and Light Goods Vehicles (LGV).

The discussion was further supplemented with a report that outlined the analysis provided by ARUP/AECOM in relation to the market conditions within the LGV sector. It was reported that there were significant challenges within the supply chain as a result of global shortages arising from the pandemic, which had impacted the availability and cost of compliant vehicles. This emerging evidence supported a greater understanding of the impact on Greater Manchester (GM) businesses in sourcing compliant second-hand vehicles. It was highlighted that the factors reported in the van market were also being experienced by other vehicle types. Therefore, based on these findings and the reported issues for other vehicle types, the Committee was urged to write to the Secretary of State requesting a pause to the opening of the next phase of Clean Air Funds to jointly address these apparent and significant market issues; and to support the Greater Manchester authorities in reviewing the GM Clean Air Plan (GM CAP) policy in the light of this evidence.

The following comments were made:

It was highlighted that a number of individuals had proceeded to make arrangements to replace their non-compliant vehicles based on the assumption that funding would open at the end of January 2022. Therefore, members sought to understand what provisions were in place to support these individuals. It was recommended that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive of Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) to review on a case-by-case basis any representations from vehicle owners who had placed orders in anticipation of Clean Air Funds opening at the end of January to ensure they were not detrimentally impacted by the decision to pause the opening of funds pending a fundamental review of the policy and to make deemed appropriate awards.

Members highlighted the need to develop a publicity campaign that would seek to provide clear and accessible guidance for all GM residents. Members were advised of the support available to assist individuals with accessibility needs and assured members that a report outlining the communications strategy would be brought to the next meeting.

It was highlighted that the current financial support package agreed with the Government would be insufficient to support businesses given the significant challenges relating to supply chain issues and inflation. It was noted that pausing the next phase of Clean Air Funds would allow GM the opportunity to build a stronger evidence case and to develop clear proposals for the Government to consider.

A member sought to understand the timeframes around receiving a decision from Government. It was reported that GM was under legal obligation to deliver on the Clean Air plan and that a variation, revocation, or suspension of the implementation of the local plan would need to be approved by the Secretary of State. Members were advised that Government officials had been notified of the Committee's intention to request to pause the opening of phase two funds and that a further progress update would be brought to the next meeting.

In respect of the recommendation made to the committee to write to the Secretary of State requesting to pause the opening of the next phase of Clean Air Funds at the end of the month, Councillor Nadim Muslim (Bolton) proposed revised wording to the recommendation, requesting that the scheme be paused in its entirety until discussions are held with Government. As the requested amendment was not seconded, the proposal did not hold.

Members received legal advice from Liz Treacy, GMCA Monitoring Officer, who stated that to breach the direction that had been issued by the Secretary of State requiring the 10 GM authorities to jointly implement a GM-wide CAZ, with additional measures as soon as possible and at least in time to bring forward compliance to 2024, would be unlawful and would leave the ten GM authorities open to legal action by the Secretary of State or other bodies, as such an action would be a breach of their duties.

Members sought to understand whether local authorities could decide to withdraw from the scheme at a local level once NO₂ figures reach the legal limit. It was reported that all ten GM local authorities were under legal obligation to deliver the Clean Air Plan to achieve legal NO₂ Limit Values and therefore would be subject to legal action for not delivering on the plan. It was explained that the direction was issued against all ten authorities and could only be amended or varied by the Secretary of State.

The detrimental effects of poor air quality were highlighted, and members noted the need to comply with their legal duties and to work with Government to secure clean air across GM.

A member sought to understand the impact of the pandemic on the HGV sector and queried as to whether there was any scope to broaden the applications for funding support under phase one of the scheme. Members were advised that funding was initially targeted to support micro-businesses and that an update on the mobilisation process and the modelling data around the impact of the pandemic on HGV's would be brought to the next meeting.

In conclusion, the Chair requested that members approve the recommendations as set out in the report including the additional recommendation to delegate authority to the Chief Executive of TfGM to review on a case-by-case basis any representations from vehicle owners who had placed orders in anticipation of Clean Air Funds opening at the end of January to ensure they are not detrimentally impacted by the decision to pause the opening of funds pending a fundamental review of the policy and to make awards as deemed appropriate. 10 members voted in favour and 1 member voted against the three recommendations.

RESOLVED /-

1. That Councillor Andrew Western, Chair of the GM Air Quality Administration Committee, would write to the Secretary of State requesting a pause to the opening of the next phase of Clean Air Funds at the end of this month to enable an urgent and fundamental joint policy review with Government to identify how a revised policy can be agreed to deal with the supply chain issues and local businesses' ability to comply with the GM CAP.
2. That the implementation of all other aspects of the agreed GM Clean Air Plan would continue to the schedule as previously agreed.

3. That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive of TfGM to review on a case-by-case basis any representations from vehicle owners who had placed orders in anticipation of Clean Air Funds opening at the end of January to ensure they are not detrimentally impacted by the decision to pause the opening of funds pending a fundamental review of the policy and to make awards as deemed appropriate.
4. That a progress update concerning the request for a joint policy review with Government be provided at the next meeting.
5. That a report outlining the communications strategy be brought to the next meeting.
6. That an update on the mobilisation process and the modelling data around the impact of the pandemic on HGV's be provided at the next meeting.

AQC 21/36 GM CLEAN AIR PLAN - CLEAN AIR ZONE DISCOUNT & EXEMPTIONS APPLICATIONS

Consideration was given to a report that outlined the information required to support an application for the agreed discount or exemptions that the owners or registered keepers of certain vehicle types would need to apply for, as there was no national database of these vehicles and sought approval to open the application process on 31 January 2022.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the owners or registered keepers of particular vehicle types would need to provide the information as detailed in section 3 of the report to support an application for the Clean Air Plan discount or exemptions.
2. That approval be given for the Clean Air Zone local exemptions and discounts application process be opened on 31 January 2022.

**AQC 21/37 GM CLEAN AIR PLAN - A628/A57, TAMESIDE - TRUNK ROAD
CHARGING SCHEME UPDATE**

Consideration was given to a report that outlined the progress made to date to establish the most appropriate solution for the charging mechanism to be applied on sections of the A628/A57 part of the Strategic Road Network (SRN) in Tameside.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the progress made to establish the most appropriate solution for the charging mechanism to be applied on the identified section of the A57/A628, be noted.
2. That the inclusion of the identified section of the A57/A628 SRN remains critical and vital to delivering improved air quality in Greater Manchester.
3. That GM local authorities would continue to press Government for the expedient implementation of the scheme on the A628/A57 SRN as a matter of urgency to ensure the benefits to the health of the residents in the villages of Hollingworth and Mottram can be realised without any further delay.

AQC 21/38 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED /-

28 February 2022; 2:00 PM