

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GM AIR QUALITY ADMINISTRATION
COMMITTEE HELD ON 20 DECEMBER 2023 AT THE GMCA OFFICES**

PRESENT:

Manchester	Councillor Tracey Rawlins - Chair
Bolton	Councillor Richard Silvester
Bury	Councillor Alan Quinn
Oldham	Councillor Abdul Jabbar
Rochdale	Councillor Tom Besford
Salford	Councillor Mike McCusker
Stockport	Councillor Mark Roberts
Tameside	Councillor Denise Ward
Trafford	Councillor Aidan Williams
Wigan	Councillor Paul Prescott

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

GMCA	Gillian Duckworth
GMCA	Kerry Bond
TfGM	Megan Black
TfGM	Frank Tudor
TfGM	Martin Lax
TfGM	Nigel Bellamy
TfGM	Kate Jackson

AQC 23/12 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received and noted from Councillor Eamonn O'Brien (Portfolio Leader) and Eamon Boylan, GMCA & TfGM Chief Executive.

AQC 23/13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received in relation to any item on the agenda.

AQC 23/14 CHAIR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

There were no Chair’s announcements or urgent business.

AQC 23/15 THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 JULY 2023

RESOLVED /-

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2023 be approved, as a correct record.

AQC 23/16 GM CLEAN AIR PLAN – DECEMBER 2023 UPDATE

The Chair opened the item advising Members that the Greater Manchester (GM) Joint Clean Air Scrutiny Committee held their inaugural meeting on 18 December where they provided feedback on the report being considered on this agenda. As part of this feedback the Committee commended the recommendations with the following additional comments and recommendations:

- That the population health need for cleaner air remains first and foremost.
- That the GM Authorities need to be clear with the public of the overall cost of developing, implementing, and decommissioning the Clean Air Plan from the outset in order to build public trust for the proposed investment approach.
- That there is significant concern that the National Highways and motorway network remain exempt from being required to improve air quality.

- That assurances have been sought that the modelling undertaken has been done using the best currently available data.
- That continued efforts are required to address the congestion caused by roadworks across GM, whilst also recognising that local measures should also be considered to address the number of short journeys taken by car.
- That following the Government's decision on the final approach, any additional use of Automatic number-plate recognition (ANPR) cameras will be subject to public consultation.
- That the GMCA should continue to lobby for additional powers to enforce antisocial behaviour, dangerous driving, and speed exceedances on our road network in support of the proposed city centre interventions.
- That the Clean Air Plan process is subjected to a lessons learned review in due course by persons not involved in the current process, with a focus on how Local Authorities, the GMCA and the Government could work more effectively together.
- That the GM Joint Clean Air Scrutiny Committee continue to keep a watching brief on this agenda as it goes forward.

Megan Black, Interim Head of Logistics & Environment, TfGM introduced the report that provided an update on the case for a new Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan, confirming that an appraisal of GM's proposed investment-led plan has been undertaken against a benchmark charging Clean Air Zone (CAZ) in the centre of Manchester and Salford.

At the meeting held in July 2023 an update was provided stating that in April 2023 the government had advised TfGM to pause any new spending on bus retrofit as it had evidence that retrofitted buses had poor and highly variable performance in real-world conditions. Following this, Joint Air Quality Unit (JAQU) issued revised guidance to local authorities producing Clean Air Plans, stating that air quality modelling should no longer assume any air quality benefits from a retrofitted bus. Government had advised that a six-month focused research programme to investigate the causes of poor bus retrofit performance and how it could be improved would be reported in Autumn 2023, to date the outputs of this study have not been made available to GM.

In the absence of the government's bus retrofit study outcomes, GM has incorporated the revised guidance from JAQU into the modelling which underpins the development of the Clean Air Plan (CAP) and have appraised GM's Investment-led Plan against the benchmark of a Clean Air Zone (CAZ) in the centre of Manchester and Salford. Evidence from the appraisal shows that only the Investment-led Plan complies with the requirement placed on the ten GM authorities to deliver compliance by 2026.

The Investment-led Plan has established that targeted investment in zero-emission buses and taxis would provide the most effective means to achieve compliance supplemented by local highway-based measures at known persistent exceedance locations.

The bus investment measures represents the most important mechanism for reducing exceedances under the Investment-led Plan due to GM operating a bus franchising scheme. Taxi measures also represent an important mechanism to reduce exceedances through licensing conditions, requiring an emissions standard for private taxis and hackney carriage vehicles to be adopted by the ten GM local authorities.

Using existing Clean Air Funds, GM propose to invest:

£51.2m to purchase 64 new zero emission buses and provide electrification required on Piccadilly Approach, at Bolton, Queens Road, and Middleton depots.

£30.5m for a Clean Taxi Fund (CTF) to support GM license owners to upgrade their vehicles.

£5m on targeted local traffic management measures to reduce Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) exceedance concentrations in Salford and Manchester.

Members supported the continuing lobbying of government by the GM Mayor to allow only taxis registered within GM to work within the conurbation.

Members were advised that the whole life costs of the investment-led CAP are based on high level estimates with a high level of contingency and risk built in, following confirmation of the way forward from government and discussion with suppliers the risk and contingency figures will be refined, with confidence that the figures will reduce to within the funding window.

Officers confirmed that regular discussions take place with bus suppliers and are confident that the supply of 64 zero emission buses for the CAP will be met.

Officers advised that the new CAP focusing on buses through franchising and taxis through licensing, means that a greater level of certainty can be built into the modelling with monitoring of assumptions and forecasts being tracked along with figures from other city regions and comparison of trends to ensure GM authorities can reduce harmful NO₂ levels to meet the long-term annual mean legal limit of 40 µg/m³ by 2026 as directed by government.

Members supported the recommendation, agreeing that additional use of ANPR cameras be subject to public consultation, and requested that any discussion take place within the relevant blue light committees.

Officers confirmed that there is sufficient funding for taxi and private hire vehicles across GM to upgrade to compliant vehicles and for hackney vehicles to be upgraded from compliant to zero emission.

Members were advised that GM will mobilise as soon as possible once confirmation from government has been given to remove the currently displayed clean air zone signage.

Members requested that the GM Mayor write to those councils that taxi drivers are exploiting the licencing gap to highlight the concerns raised.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the update from the Clean Air Scrutiny Committee held on 18 December 2023 be noted.
2. That the latest position with the government's National Bus Retrofit be noted.
3. To note that the modelling results now evidence that GM's proposed investment-led plan (the Investment-led Plan) can achieve compliance with legal limits of NO₂ concentrations in 2025 and that compliance is not achieved in either 2025

or 2026 under a benchmark charging CAZ C in the centre of Manchester and Salford.

4. To note that whilst it is for the government to determine what measures GM is to implement, the appraisal shows that only the Investment-led Plan complies with the requirement placed on the 10 GM Authorities to deliver compliance in the shortest possible time and by 2026 at the latest.
5. To note that bus measures represent the most important mechanism for reducing exceedances under the Investment-led Plan and are grounded in the ability of GM to control the emissions standards of vehicles operating on key routes having introduced a bus franchising scheme.
6. To note that the Investment-led Plan seeks to use £51.2 million of funds already awarded to purchase 64 Zero Emission Buses and to fund the costs for the electrification required on Piccadilly Approach, and at Bolton, Queens Road and Middleton depots.
7. That taxi measures represent an important mechanism for reducing exceedances under the Investment-led Plan and GM wants to offer £30.5 million of already awarded funding to support upgrades to help the GM licensed hackney carriage and private hire trade upgrade to cleaner vehicles (the Clean Taxi Fund) be noted.
8. That an emissions standard, requiring licensed hackney carriages (hackneys) and private hire vehicles to be a minimum of Euro 6 (diesel) or Euro 4 (petrol) by 31st December 2025, needs to have been adopted by all GM Authorities to secure compliance with legal limits in 2025 be noted.
9. That each GM Authority puts appropriate arrangements in place to facilitate a transitional start date for the implementation of emission standards by the 1st January 2025 with the end transition date being the 31st December 2025 be agreed.
10. That the Investment-led Plan proposing taxi funding being issued directly to applicants, subject to meeting the relevant criteria and production of relevant evidence be noted.
11. To note that the Investment-led Plan seeks to use £5 million of funds already awarded to deliver targeted local measures to reduce NO₂ exceedance

concentrations at Regent Road (Salford), Quay Street and Great Bridgewater Street (Manchester) sites.

12. That funding awarded by government to help van, minibus, coach, HGV owners upgrade and mitigate against the economic impact of a GM-wide Category C charging Clean Air Zone that has not been committed would be redistributed under GM's Investment-led Plan be noted.
13. That the funding for HGVs should be closed to new applicants and applicants that have an existing funding award should be given to 1st January 2025 to spend the committed funding be agreed.
14. To note that from an equality impacts perspective, the Investment-led Plan would deliver an air quality improvement that benefits individuals with protected characteristics. An air quality improvement is likely to be faster for the Investment-led Plan than a benchmark CAZ due to the former achieving compliance earlier.
15. To agree that government be requested to give urgent consideration to agreement to the removal of the 1309 signs installed for a GM-wide category C charging Clean Air Zone across GM and its boundary Authorities, as the appraisal shows that only the Investment-led Plan meets the legal requirement to deliver compliance in the shortest possible time and by 2026 at the latest and therefore the signs are no longer required.
16. That the Investment-led Plan would require an additional £22.9m of funding versus £56m for a benchmark CAZ when considering whole life costs be noted.
17. That a delegation be made to the Chief Executive, GMCA and TfGM, in consultation with the GM Clean Air Lead to approve the final submission of material to the Government's Joint Air Quality Unit and deal with any supplementary requests from the Joint Air Quality Unit in support of the appraisal be agreed.
18. That Members support the continuing lobbying of government by the GM Mayor to allow only taxis registered within GM to work within the conurbation be agreed.
19. To agree that the GM Mayor writes to those councils who's taxi drivers are exploiting the licencing gap, to highlight concerns raised.

AQC 23/17 GM CLEAN AIR PLAN EXPENDITURE UPDATE

Megan Black, Interim Head of Logistics & Environment, TfGM introduced the report that provided Members with an update on the funding received from Government, the expenditure made and the funding requirements that have emerged as the new Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan is developed to the end of November 2023

RESOLVED /-

1. To note that the report provides further details on the aggregate spend following on from the “GM Clean Air Plan – Expenditure Update” dated 26 October 2022 which provided spend to the end of September 2022;
2. That the funding received from Government, the expenditure made and the funding requirements that have emerged as the Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan has been developed be noted.
3. That an additional £8.2 million of forecast expenditure, for the fiscal year 2023/24, requires funding from JAQU and is subject of an additional funding request to cover the ongoing case development work as well as the operational costs for the Clean Air Zone and Financial Support Scheme be noted.
4. To note that TfGM and JAQU reached an agreement in Q4 2022/23 over the funding required to fund the continued development of the GM Clean Air Plan to fill the gap that would have been covered by the Clean Air Zone revenues and £12.2 million was provided to fund that shortfall and covered the period up to 31st March 2023;
5. To note that TfGM is unable to materially change or terminate the contracts that have been put in place for the delivery of a charging Clean Air Zone or the delivery of the Financial Support Scheme, until a formal decision is received from the government.

AQC 23/18 DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETING

RESOLVED /-

To note that future meeting requirements are being clarified and will be notified to members following consultation with the Chair.