

Minutes of the GM Air Quality Administration Committee, held on 1st October 2024 at GMCA Offices, Tootal Buildings, Oxford Street, Manchester.

Present:

GMCA	Councillor Eamonn O'Brien
Bolton	Councillor Richard Silvester
Bury	Councillor Alan Quinn
Manchester	Councillor Tracey Rawlins
Oldham	Councillor Abdul Jabbar
Rochdale	Councillor Tricia Ayrtton
Salford	Councillor Mike McCusker
Stockport	Councillor Mark Roberts
Tameside	Councillor Andrew McClaren
Wigan	Councillor Paul Prescott

Officers in Attendance:

Megan Black	Head of Logistics & Environment, TfGM
Gillian Duckworth	GMCA Solicitor and Monitoring Officer
Nigel Bellamy	Air Quality Consultant, TfGM
Kate Jackson	Senior Legal Officer, TfGM
Martin Lax	Transport Strategy Director, TfGM
Frank Tudor	Deputy Director Corporate Services, TfGM
Paul Harris	Governance & Scrutiny Officer, GMCA

AQAC 24/01 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received and noted from Councillors Denise Ward (Tameside), Aidan Williams (Trafford)

AQAC 24/02 Appointment of Chair of the Committee

The GMCA Solicitor and Monitoring Officer sought nominations for the appointment of Chair of the Committee for the 2024/2025 municipal year.

A nomination of Councillor Eamonn O'Brien was moved and seconded. There were no other nominations moved.

Resolved/-

That Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, GM Lead Member for Clean Air, be appointed as Chair of the committee for 2024/25.

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien in the Chair

AQAC 24/03 Chair's Announcements and Urgent Business

AQAC 24/04 Membership of the Committee 2024-2025

Resolved/-

The Membership of the Committee for the 2024-2025 municipal year as follows, noting also that Tameside has made a change to their representative, with Councillor Denise Ward replacing Councillor Jacqueline North:-

District	Member	Substitute
GMCA	Eamonn O'Brien (Lab)	
Bolton	Richard Silvester (Labour Co-operative)	Hamid Khurram (Lab)
Bury	Alan Quinn (Lab)	Gareth Staple-Jones (Lab)
Manchester	Tracey Rawlins (Lab)	To be confirmed
Oldham	Abdul Jabbar (Lab)	Josh Charters (Lab)
Rochdale	Tricia Ayrton (Lab)	To be confirmed
Salford	Mike McCusker (Lab)	Jane Hamilton (Lab)
Stockport	Mark Roberts (Lib Dem)	Grace Bayham (Lib Dem)
Tameside	Denise Ward (Lab)	Andrew McClaren (Lab)
Trafford	Aiden Williams (Lab)	Steve Adshead (Lab)
Wigan	Paul Prescott (Lab)	Joanne Marshall (Lab)

AQAC 24/05 Terms of Reference

Resolved/-

That the Terms of Reference of the GM Air Quality Administration Committee be noted.

Ordinary Meeting Business

AQAC 24/05 Declarations of Interest

There were no declamations made by any member of the committee in respect of any interests regarding any item on the agenda.

AQAC 24/06 Minutes

To consider the approval of the minutes of the previous meeting held on 20th December 2023.

AQAC 24/07 Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan - September 2024 Update

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, GM Lead Member for Clean Air introduced a report which provided Committee members with an update on the Case for a new Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan.

The update confirmed that an updated 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.

The report set out significant investment in cleaner buses including an increase in Euro 6 type buses in response to the challenges with electrical charging infrastructure at Stockport and Queens Road depots.

The request for the provision of a clean taxi fund is part of the GM commitment to increase standards within the taxi trade to achieve a common standard of age and emissions of vehicles.

Practical improvements to the road network in Salford and Manchester were highlighted. The National Highways decision to change the speed limits on the M602 from 60 mph to 70 mph has been included in the modelling within the Plan.

The Chair explained that this investment-led plan will enable clean air compliance by 2026, in a way that will be cheaper, quicker and fairer than a charging plan.

In welcoming the report and the proposed way forward, a Member thanked the Chair for a recent meeting regarding the delays to the electrification of Stockport depot and the assurances that electric bus fleet will be deployed in Stockport once this issue had been rectified.

A Member sought clarification in respect of the use of retrofit buses instead of Euro 6 vehicles. In response, it was noted that a study by Government concluded that the retrofit approach was of limited benefit. In response to this, TfGM had undertaken a modelling exercise which identified air quality exceedance in Stockport. The Plan asks for seventy seven Euro 6 buses to operate within Stockport to address exceedance points.

A Member highlighted the campaigns to further improve clean air going forward but the introduction of green walls close to highways and wider tree planting to help decarbonisation. In response, it was noted that DEFRA funding has been provided to support a local government campaign advising residents of air quality issues associated with burning at home. Consideration of nature-based measures were to be considered at a future meeting of the Committee.

A Member enquired when a Taxi Fund would be available in order for vehicles to be upgraded. A conclusion is needed quickly in order to enable promote this scheme.

A Member highlighted that GM had to spend significant funding to invest in retrofitting buses, where recent analysis had shown that such investment only made an 11% difference.

A Member commented on the lack of investment by private bus operators in the GM bus fleet. GM is now introducing electric and cleaner diesel buses. In addition, work is taking place to try and address those barriers for providing charging points for electric vehicles.

It was suggested that if air quality is improved in reducing motorway speed limits to 60 mph, then this approach should be explored further.

In respect of wider tree planting to address carbon, a Member highlighted the cost of introducing street trees in localities.

A Member highlighted that the investment-led plan will give the best outcomes in the shortest period of time and was hopeful that the Government would view the submission of the Plan positively and hopefully the signs within districts can be removed.

In respect of timing, it was noted that work is continuing with JAQU regarding GM evidence base. It is hoped that a decision will be made by then of 2024. In terms of signage, should a direction be received from Government a meeting of the committee will be convened to review the decision. A Member suggested that although a decision is yet to be received, preparatory work be undertaken in respect of the potential removal of information signs.

It was suggested that it may be helpful to put dates in diaries for the committee to be convened in November and December.

In hoping for a positive outcome, a Member asked if there was confidence that the market can support the investment-led Plan. It was also suggested that clear messaging is developed to inform residents. In response, discussions are taking place with district partners regarding their respective capacity for the possible removal of signs and the distribution funding for the delivery of local measures. There were no concerns currently regarding market supply. Part of the provisions of the Plan is to have regular performance reviews. A communications plan will be an important aspect of the Plan, however it is only when the decision from Government on the proposed was forward is received that any communication or engagement can be undertaken.

A Member highlighted how industry can impact on air quality and consideration of how such impacts can be addressed as part of any future improvements to the Clean Air Plan.

Resolved/-

1. That the factors which have resulted in material updates to baseline modelling scenarios and the need to re-submit an appraisal of GM Investment-led Clean Air Plan, as set out in the report, be noted.

2. That it be noted that the update to the modelling does not alter the conclusion of GM's December 2023 Submission that GM's Investment-led Plan performs better than the CAZ Benchmark.

3. That it be noted that the revised Investment-led Plan, given the delay to the electrification of Queens Road depot and the removal of the temporary speed limit on the M602, will deliver compliance in the shortest possible time and by 2026 at the latest.

4. That the update to GM's proposed bus measures that are grounded in the ability of GM to control the emissions standards of vehicles operating on key routes, having introduced a bus franchising scheme, be noted.

5. That taxi measures remain unchanged be noted.

6. That the progress to put an emission standard in place for licensed taxis, be noted.

7. That the progress to determine highway measures to ensure compliance at Regent Road, Salford and Quay Street, Manchester, as set out in the report, be noted.

8. That from an equality impacts perspective, the Investment-led Plan would deliver an air quality improvement that benefits individuals with protected characteristics, be noted. And also noted that an air quality improvement is likely to be faster for the Investment led Plan than a CAZ Benchmark due to the former achieving compliance earlier.

9. That it be noted that that the 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.

10. That the Investment-led Plan would require an estimated additional £15.2 million of funding versus £61.9 million for a CAZ Benchmark when considering whole life costs, be noted.

11. That it be noted that Local Partnerships have been asked by JAQU to review the Investment led Plan aspects of the GM Appraisal Report (and relevant annexes), focusing on the commercial, financial and management elements.

12. That the Committee agrees to grant delegated authority to the Group Chief Executive, GMCA, GMFRS 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.

13. That the 2023 GM Clean Air Plan monitoring data indicates that nitrogen dioxide air pollution has seen an overall reduction in nitrogen dioxide exceedances compared to 2022, and a significant improvement to 2019 levels, as set out in the report, be noted.