



Department for Transport

Simon Warburton
Transport for Greater Manchester
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19 April 2023

Dear Simon,

Update on HMG Funding for Selective Catalytic Reduction Bus Retrofits

I am writing to inform you that Government is pausing new funding for Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) exhaust retrofitting pending the outcome of further studies to ensure that the implementation of retrofitting is delivering the air quality benefits we expect. Our most recent in-service monitoring has highlighted evidence to suggest that the SCR technology on retrofitted buses is not, in the sample studied, reducing NOx emissions to the levels expected.

There is considerable variability in performance, therefore we have put in place a further focused research programme to quickly investigate the causes of this poor performance and the scope for improving performance, which we expect to be completed in Autumn this year.

We are not at this stage proposing any changes to the Clean Air Zone (CAZ) compliance status of buses that have already been retrofitted with SCR whilst we carry out further studies. However, we do not recommend any further retrofit purchases are made until this research has been completed. Your dedicated JAQU Account Manager will be happy to discuss impacts and mitigations specific to your area. We will also be engaging bus operators and retrofit suppliers to assist in the further studies.

I know that local authorities which have received funding for bus retrofit will have a number of questions about what this means for their area. We are setting up a call where you will have the opportunity to ask those questions.

Attached to this letter is a report summarising the results of the remote sensing monitoring and the data tables for the campaign undertaken in Manchester City Centre between 21 November and 12 December 2022. This information is sensitive and we request that you do not share beyond your authority without prior approval from the Joint Air Quality Unit.

The Government remains committed to achieving cleaner air. The UK has a high ambition for domestic air quality, as set out in the Clean Air Strategy and enshrined in the Environment Act 2021 and Environmental Improvement Plan 2023. We will continue to work with you and all of the other local authorities through the NO₂ Programme to deliver legal levels of NO₂ by helping to develop and implement local air quality plans and to support those affected by these plans.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Claire Wren', with a horizontal line underneath.

Claire Wren

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Henry Shennan'.

Henry Shennan

Directors, Future Transport Systems and Environment (Job Share)