

Minutes of the meeting of the Greater Manchester Air Quality Administration Committee, held on Wednesday, 5th February 2025 at GMCA, Tootal Buildings, 56 Oxford Street, Manchester.

Present:

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien	Chair and GM Lead Member for Clean Air
Councillor Richard Silvester	Bolton Council
Councillor Alan Quinn	Bury Council
Councillor Abdul Jabbar	Oldham Council
Councillor Tracy Ayrton	Rochdale Council
Councillor Mike McCusker	Salford City Council
Councillor Mark Roberts	Stockport Council
Councillor Stephen Adshead	Trafford Council (Substitute)
Councillor Paul Prescott	Wigan Council

Officers in Attendance:

Megan Black	TfGM
Gillian Duckworth	GMCA
Nigel Bellamy	TfGM
Kate Jackson	TfGM
Frank Tudor	TfGM
Paul Harris	GMCA

AQAC/24/08 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received and noted from Councillor Laura Boyle (Tameside) with Councillor Jacqueline Owen (Tameside) attending as a substitute member; Councillor Aiden Williams (Trafford) with Councillor Stephen Adshead

(Trafford) attending as a substitute member and from Councillors Tracy Rawlins (Manchester) and Councillor Anthony McCaul (Manchester).

The Chair extended a welcome Committee members and officers.

AQAC/24/09 Chair's Announcements and Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business raised.

AQAC/24/10 Membership of the Committee 2024-2025

The Chair explained that since the last meeting of the committee, there had been changes to the membership.

Resolved/-

That the appointments of Councillor Laura Boyle (Tameside) (Lab) as a member of the Committee and Councillors Anthony McCaul (Manchester) (Lab) and Jacqueline Owen (Tameside) (Lab) as substitute members of the Committee for the remainder of the 2024/2025 municipal year, be noted.

AQAC/24/11 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made by any member of the committee in respect of any item on the agenda.

AQAC/24/12 Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Air Quality Administration Committee, held on 1st October 2024, were submitted.

Resolved/-

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Air Quality Administration Committee, held on 1st October 2024, be approved as a correct record.

AQAC/24/13 GM Clean Air Plan - January 2025 Update

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, GM Lead Member for Clean Air introduced a report which provided an update on the Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan noting that the government had accepted the assessment that an investment-led, non-charging Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan will achieve compliance with nitrogen dioxide levels on the local road network in the shortest possible time and Greater Manchester will not need to implement a charging Clean Air Zone (CAZ).

In introducing the report, the Chair explained that the GM Clean Air Plan will be an investment-led plan to clean up the air by providing cleaner buses, cleaner taxis and better road junctions.

It was noted that there was still work to do faster and further to clean up the air.

Members noted that the investment-led package of £86m confirmed by government consists of:

- £51.1m towards bus investment, including 40 zero emission buses, 77 Euro VI standard buses and charging infrastructure;
- £5m for local traffic management measures in Manchester and Salford;
- £8 million to support moving Greater Manchester's taxi fleet to cleaner vehicles;
- Up to £21.9m for administration, delivery, monitoring and other associated costs.

The Chair extended thanks to local licensing authorities in ramping up standards on taxi licensing. Particular thanks were extended to Megan Black and her team at TfGM for their hard work in developing this plan.

Issues relating to signage and ANPR cameras were to be considered.

It was noted that a letter of direction had recently been received from Government and officers were looking at the detail outlined in this letter.

A Member sought clarification on what the repurposing of the signage. In response, officers noted that CAZ signage would be removed and that the remaining pole could be used by districts for alternative local signage. In addition, members also noted work was to take place to identify signage on the strategic road network that could be sign post people to transport hubs and park and ride facilities.

In welcoming the progress made and the efforts of TfGM officers, a Member recalled the timeline involved in to get to this position of a non-charging Clean Air Plan for GM.

In respect of the proposal of repurposing ANPR cameras, a member commented that anything which can help deter crime and terrorism activity will benefit all communities, noting that proper consultation on this matter would be needed.

Members recognised the efforts of the GM Mayor, officers and this Committee to reach this position. It was also recognised that there is a need to go further and continue improve the air quality across the region. The introduction of a non-charging investment led approach, particularly at a time where the cost of living for residents is challenging, was welcomed.

In respect of taxi funding, a member highlighted that investment opportunities, similar to the funding opportunities as those received by hackney carriage vehicles was needed for private hire drivers. It was noted that there is a commitment to explore opportunities to find resources to support private hire drivers.

A member asked if signage could be removed as soon as possible, where repurposing was not an option. Concerns were raised in respect of the growing amount of street clutter in the public realm.

Member reiterated that the introduction of a Clean Air Zone was a directive from Government and not a Mayoral decision. The work to develop and deliver an investment led, non-charging scheme was welcomed. This could only be achieved by bring bus operations back under public control.

A member supported the proposals for the repurposing of ANPR cameras from civic to criminal use, noting that legal considerations were needed to be understood before doing so. It was suggested that the Blue Light Committee be consulted on this matter also. In addition, it was noted that this Committee would need to be involved in the decision on not using the cameras for their original purpose.

A member expressed disappointment that the full level of taxi fund support was not achieved. In addition, there needed to be Government involvement in respect of out of area taxi registrations which impact on the quality of the taxi fleet. Residents want the assurance that the taxis they are using are accountable to the licensing authority within their local area.

A Member suggested that the repurposing of the ANPR cameras may support GMP in tracing vehicles involved in criminality entering or leaving the motorway network.

In summing up, it was noted that TfGM was continuing to work with district officers in respect of the repurposing of the CAZ signage infrastructure. It was suggested that an amendment to the report to include a to the Group Chief Executive, GMCA, GMFRS and TfGM, in consultation with the GM Clean Air Lead, specifically to the termination, part termination or variation of contracts and deal with any supplementary requests from the Joint Air Quality Unit in support of the implementation phase of the investment-led Clean Air Plan. This delegation would also explore with districts the most appropriate and cost-effective method for the removal or repurposing of the signs and report back to the next meeting of this Committee.

The amendment was moved and seconded.

Resolved/-

1. That it be noted that the has government confirmed it has accepted the assessment that an investment-led, non-charging Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan will achieve compliance with nitrogen dioxide levels on the local road

network in the shortest possible time and by 2026 and that Greater Manchester will not need to implement a charging Clean Air Zone (CAZ).

2. That it be noted that the investment-led package of £86m confirmed by government consists of:
 - £51.1m towards bus investment, including 40 zero emission buses, 77 Euro VI standard buses and charging infrastructure;
 - £5m for local traffic management measures;
 - £8 million to support moving Greater Manchester's taxi fleet to cleaner vehicles;
 - Up to £21.9m for administration, delivery, monitoring and other associated costs.
3. That a new direction from the government is expected to be issued to the Greater Manchester authorities imminently which will allow TfGM to understand the detailed breakdown of the funding awarded for Development, Administration, Risk & Contingency, be noted.
4. That proposals on funding to support Greater Manchester's taxi fleet move to cleaner vehicles, including timelines for next steps, be noted.
5. That TfGM and the GM Authorities are working together to assess the potential alternative use of signage, be noted.
6. That a public consultation on the use of the cameras for potential law enforcement activity related to the detection of crime is anticipated for the summer of 2025, subject to a review of the financial, technological and legal options available to facilitate a change of use, be noted.
7. That approval to delegate authority to the Group Chief Executive, GMCA, GMFRS and TfGM, in consultation with the GM Clean Air Lead, be granted specifically to:-

- 7.1 Approve the termination, part termination or variation of contracts and deal with any supplementary requests from the Joint Air Quality Unit in support of the implementation phase of the investment-led Clean Air Plan, be granted; and
- 7.2 Approve the most appropriate and cost-effective method for the removal or repurposing of the signs and report back to the next meeting of this Committee.

AQAC/24/14 GM Clean Air Plan - Expenditure Update January 2025

Members considered a report of the GMCA Group Chief Executive Officer which provided 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 was developed to the end of November 2024 and notes the decision made by Government in January 2025 to approve the GM preferred investment led Clean Air Plan.

Following a question from a Member regarding any potential to vire surplus funding across budget headings, officers noted that discussions were continuing with JAQU in respect of funding arrangements.

In response to an enquiry from a Member regarding the part termination of contract arrangements, officers clarified the contracts that had been terminated and the continuing arrangements in respect of the ANPR cameras, as set out in appendix 3 to the report.

A Member highlighted the number of cameras that have been damaged and enquired if other CCTV cameras were in position to protect these cameras. In response, it was noted that additional CCTV cameras and other measures were not deemed cost effective or in support of the public realm and therefore such measures were not introduced.

A Member encouraged a quick resolution in the contract termination and suggested if there was potential funding flexibility, support to the private hire fleet be provided.

A Member asked if the consultation process on ANPR cameras can be accelerated. In response, it was noted that a clear and comprehensive consultation plan for the proposed change of use of ANPR cameras was being developed. Issues in relation to the cost to GMP in taking on the cameras and the technological challenges of transferring the cameras were being explored.

Resolved/-

1. That the expenditure update provides further details on the aggregate spend following on from the “GM Clean Air Plan – Expenditure Update” dated 26 October 2022 and 20 December 2023, be noted;
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 and operated, be noted;
3. That it be noted 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 CAZ revenues and £12.2 million was provided to fund that shortfall and covered the period up to 31st March 2023; and a further £8.1 million was provided to cover costs up to March 2024;
4. That it be noted that TfGM was 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 was received from the government;
5. That following the decision by Government to endorse the Investment-led Clean Air Plan, it be noted that steps will be taken to terminate, partly terminate or vary the existing contracts to close down ongoing superfluous liabilities.

6. That it be noted that TfGM and the GM Authorities are working together to assess the potential to repurpose and explore alternative uses for the equipment and signage to minimise waste.

AQAC/24/15 Date of Next Meeting

Resolved/-

Members agreed that the next meeting of the Committee will take place on Thursday 27th March 2025, commencing at 10:00 am.

CLERKS NOTE: Subsequently to the meeting, the next meeting date was moved to the 8th April 2025.