

Clean Air Greater Manchester

Preparing for cleaner air in Greater Manchester

23 March 2022



In summary

- Government has agreed to lift a legal direction requiring Greater Manchester (GM) to deliver a Category C charging Clean Air Zone to deliver compliance with legal air quality limits by 2024 after GM said the original plan was unworkable.
- GM will now work with government on a new Clean Air Plan to be submitted in July based on new legal direction to deliver compliance in the shortest possible time and by 2026.
- The new Clean Air Plan will be informed by targeted engagement with stakeholder groups and vehicle owners. Further public consultation will be considered alongside the new plan.
- GM's 10 local authorities remain committed to cleaning up the air residents breathe, but new plan must tackle poor air quality whilst protecting jobs and businesses.
- Charging clean air zone for HGVs, Non-GM Taxis and Private Hire and Buses, Coaches will not go ahead in May 2022.
- HGV and bus funding remains open to support people to upgrade and help deliver improved air quality.
- Applications for funding for light goods vehicles, minibuses, taxis and PHVs, and discounts or exemptions under the previous plan have been paused. Vehicle owners who have already placed orders should seek advice to ensure they are not detrimentally affected by the decision to pause the opening of the funds.
- All costs associated with the new plan, including the essential requirement to update existing signage, will continue to be funded by government.

Cleaning up our air

Greater Manchester (GM) has illegal levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) air pollution on a number of local roads across all ten local authority areas. This affects everyone's health, particularly the most vulnerable people in our society: disadvantaged communities, children, elderly people and those with chronic conditions like stroke, heart disease, lung cancer and asthma. Poor air quality also contributes towards around 1,200 deaths in GM every year.

The 10 Greater Manchester authorities remain committed to cleaning up the air residents breathe – but in a way that helps people to make a change to cleaner vehicles and does not put jobs, livelihoods and businesses at risk.

The principle of the GM Clean Air Plan is to tackle the annual mean concentration, which looks at air quality over the year and can indicate where there is a long-term risk to public health. GM also reports the Daily Air Quality Index, which communicates information about real-time and forecasted levels of pollution in the short-term, it is not specifically based on legal standards and also doesn't take into account the cumulative long-term impact of air pollution.

Current status of the GM Clean Air Plan

A new government direction now requires Greater Manchester's 10 local authorities to bring nitrogen dioxide on local roads to within legal limits as soon as possible and by no later than 2026. **Greater Manchester's 10 local authorities have until 1 July 2022 to work with government to develop a new plan.**

The original GM Clean Air Plan included a Greater Manchester-wide category C charging Clean Air Zone. Only the most polluting vehicles which don't meet emission standards would have been charged to drive in the Zone.

The Clean Air Zone was designed to comply with a legal direction from government issued before the coronavirus pandemic. However, since then there have been significant vehicle supply chain issues, particularly for vans, and the cost of living has increased leading to concerns about the availability of compliant vehicles and financial hardship for local people.

Following evidence submitted by the Greater Manchester Mayor and Leaders that the previous Clean Air Plan was unworkable, Government agreed in February 2022 to lift the previous legal direction requiring the 10 Greater Manchester local authorities to implement a Category C Clean Air Zone to deliver compliance with nitrogen dioxide legal limits on the local road network by 2024.

Now that the direction has been lifted, the Greater Manchester Clean Air Zone, which had been due to go live with charges for some non-compliant vehicles on 30 May 2022, will not now go ahead.

A sticker to cover the opening date on installed signs on local roads is programmed to be completed by the end of March. The stickers state the scheme is 'Under Review'. Signs on the strategic road network (SRN), managed by National Highways, have also been updated to reflect the scheme is under review.

ANPR cameras that have been installed for the Clean Air Zone will be used, under agreement with government, to gather 'real time' data to inform the new plan, including monitoring vehicle fleet renewal trends and specific traffic mix at key locations where nitrogen dioxide levels are in breach of legal limits.

All costs associated with the new plan, including the essential requirement to update existing signage, will continue to be funded by government.



Review approach for new Clean Air Plan

The Greater Manchester Air Quality Administration Committee met in March 2022 and agreed next steps in the process of reviewing the evidence and options that will inform the creation of a new Clean Air Plan for Greater Manchester. This includes:

- Reviewing the evidence to inform a new Clean Air Plan for Greater Manchester, including air quality and the vehicle fleet in the city-region
- Assembling a proposed package of preferred measures to achieve legal levels of NO₂ in the air, including measures specific to particular locations
- Assessment of preferred measures to improve air quality and their economic and equalities impacts



The Committee's report set out that the new plan will be informed by targeted engagement with stakeholder groups and vehicle owners.

Targeted engagement and evidence gathering will be delivered through a partnership approach by Transport for Greater Manchester, local authorities, government and representative groups. It will be focused on relevant vehicle types within scope as the policy review progresses and align to the national Clean Air Zone framework where appropriate.

Wider consultation on the revised plans may be required later in the year. The approach to a consultation on the reviewed plan will be reported to GM authorities in June 2022, alongside the output from the participatory policy development activity and the final proposals on the proposed way forward.

Funding for cleaner vehicles

Under the previous plan, £120m in government funding was secured to support eligible owners of vehicles which would be non-compliant in a category C Clean Air Zone to upgrade to cleaner, compliant vehicles (through upgrades or retrofit). Government has advised that this funding will continue to be available to support the delivery of the new plan.

Funding applications for HGVs, including small businesses, and buses are open to support people to upgrade their vehicle and help deliver improved air quality.

During 2022, over 80 per cent of the bus fleet in Greater Manchester will meet cleaner emissions standards, compared to around 10 per cent in 2018, this has been made possible due to the Clean Bus funding provided provided through the original Clean Air Plan allocation.

Under the previous plan, Clean Air funding was due to open for eligible vans, coaches, GM licensed taxis and private hire vehicles at the end of January 2022. Applications for funding for these vehicle groups, along with applications for discounts and exemptions agreed under the previous plan, have been paused while the new plan is developed.

Vehicle owners who had already placed orders in preparation for the opening of these funds at the end of January can contact Clean Air GM for advice to ensure they are not detrimentally affected by the decision to pause the opening of the funds.

For anyone who is successful in applying for financial support it will be considered full and final. If the financial support offer subsequently changes it will not be possible to claim any additional funding in the future for the specific vehicle being upgraded.



Find out more and get in touch

If you have any enquiries about the Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan, please contact info@cleanairgm.com or call **0161 244 1333** (support for non-English speakers is available)

The Growth Company can also help businesses, sole traders and self-employed people understand their options and provide support, via a dedicated team of advisors www.cleanairbusinesssupport.co.uk

To sign up for updates as the new plan is developed, visit: cleanairgm.com/#newsletter
For media enquiries, call 0161 244 1055 or email mediarelations@tfgm.com