

Update on the GM Clean Air Plan and Minimum Licensing Standards

GMCA reports published on 21 January 2020

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Headlines from GMCA report

- The consultations ended in December 2020, with **4,765 responses for CAP** and **1,682 responses for MLS**.
- Assessment of public consultation responses and impacts of COVID-19 on Clean Air Zone proposals and funding support packages is now taking place.
- Decision makers will consider the Final Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan as soon as possible and by **summer 2021** at latest.
- The nearer term influence of COVID-19 on air quality is not expected to lead to sufficiently long term reductions in pollution such that the modelled exceedances of the legal NO₂ limits will be met without implementing a Clean Air Zone.
- Preparatory work is continuing for the Clean Air Zone in order to meet timescales for the achievement of NO₂ compliance.
- Minimum Licensing Standards, analysis of the consultation is in progress, continued engagement with taxi/phv trade and joint letter with other LAs to government being finalised.



Clean Air Consultation

- The ten Greater Manchester authorities conducted an eight-week consultation from **8 October to 3 December** that adhered to the government COVID-19 guidance around social distancing.
- The purpose of the consultation was to seek views from residents, visitors, stakeholders and businesses on the proposals to achieve compliant NO₂ levels in Greater Manchester.
- The consultation was **not** seeking a decision on whether to introduce a scheme as that has been mandated by the Secretary of State.
- **4,765 responses** received on key elements such as the proposed Clean Air Zone boundary, daily charges for affected commercial and passenger vehicles, and the proposed £150m government funding support package.
- The consultation also sought feedback on how COVID-19 has affected businesses and organisations in Greater Manchester.

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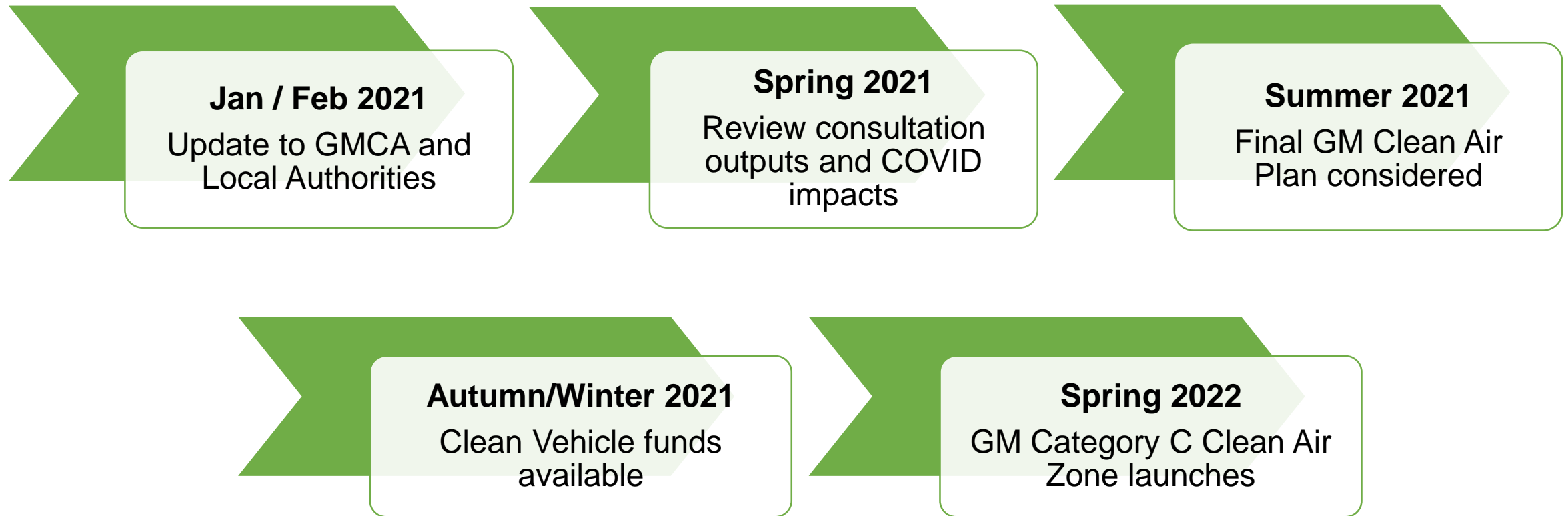
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Next steps on the consultation responses

- Work is ongoing to analyse and report the information gathered from the GM Clean Air Plan and GM MLS consultations to help local authority decision makers make a fully informed decision on the final plans.
- Further work is taking place to understand the economic impact of COVID-19 on traders and businesses whose current vehicles would not meet the mandated standards that the Clean Air Plan must enforce.
- The final Clean Air Plan will be brought to decision makers as soon as possible and set out the consultation results, the assessment of COVID-19 and a final recommended package of measures to ensure the achievement of NO₂ compliance.



Timeline for the proposals



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Impact of COVID-19 on the proposals

- The GM Clean Air Plan is required to take action to take NO₂ levels over a number of years into the future in order to demonstrate compliance with legal limits.
- The nearer term influence of COVID-19 on air quality is not expected to lead to sufficiently long term reductions in pollution such that the modelled exceedances of the legal NO₂ limits will be met without implementing a Clean Air Zone.
- Whilst the COVID-19 pandemic has radically altered transport patterns and behaviour, the relaxation of 'lockdown 1' travel restrictions, since June 2020, has seen more and more vehicles on the roads.
- By the introduction of November 2020's 'lockdown 2' traffic flows were at around 85% of typical pre-COVID-19 levels.
- There are many ways in which COVID-19 could affect air quality, both improving or worsening it.



Update on Funds

Clean Bus Fund – Retrofit

- Government awarded £14.7m as an initial tranche of funding to retrofit buses running services in GM that have older engines which are not compliant with the GM CAZ emission standards.
- The distribution of Bus Retrofit funding started in December 2020.
- This fund offers operators of locally registered bus services with up to £16k of funding towards the retrofit of non-compliant vehicles before the launch of the Clean Air Zone in Spring 2022.
- The funding is available for vehicles, including minibuses and coaches, operating on a registered bus service within GM. This includes cross-boundary services operating within the GM CAZ boundary.



Hackney Carriages & LGV fleet support

- Government has accepted the need for vehicle replacement funds for Hackney Carriages and Light Goods Vehicles.
- GM have submitted the further evidence requested by Government; however, the Government have not made an offer of funding as yet.

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Update on Strategic Road Network

Strategic Road Network managed by Highways England

- The 10 GM Authorities continue to ask the Government to direct Highways England to tackle NO₂ exceedances on the Strategic Road Network (SRN).
- Tameside MBC have highlighted to Ministers particular concerns around the A628/A57. This route, managed by Highways England, will be left with NO₂ exceedances that are not being addressed.
- Government ministers have agreed to consider extending Greater Manchester's Clean Air Zone (CAZ) charges to the sections of the A628/A57 which form part of the Strategic Road Network, within the proposed CAZ boundary.
- Following the assessment, which is expected to be completed by early 2021, ministers will take the final decision on whether or not charging should be implemented on the A628/A57.

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Clean Air Zone Preparatory Arrangements

GM Local Authorities have been directed by Government to introduce a category C Clean Air Zone and must prepare to deliver it in Spring 2022 to meet the compliance timescales required by the Ministerial Direction. Government provided an initial tranche of £36m of funding to take this forward.

To deliver a charging Clean Air Zone in Spring 2022, procurement exercises are underway, with formal contract awards expected to be made throughout 2021. This includes:

CAZ Signage: for the manufacture, installation, management and de-commissioning of signs.

GM CAZ Service: which will comprise:

1. A Vehicle Detection and Processing Service to operate and maintain Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) devices,
2. Handle queries from members of the public and enable integration with a Central Government Payment Portal.
3. A Penalty Enforcement Service, which will interface to the DVLA, the Traffic Enforcement Centre (TEC), Traffic Penalty Tribunal (TPT) and the Enforcement Agents.

Debt Recovery Service: to secure payment of outstanding fines, penalties and any charges as directed by the TEC and TPT.

Clean Vehicle Funds Service: to administer the Clean Air Funds through a Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) authorised Clean Vehicle Fund Service (CVFS) and a panel of FCA authorised Financiers.

Air Quality Monitoring: to supply, installation and decommissioning of the diffusion tubes at 467 monitoring sites, monthly monitoring and provision of analysis to support the GM CAP programme.

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Governance for the GM Clean Air Plan

As there are several key functions that can only be discharged by the charging authorities (and as the GMCA is not a charging authority), the approach that GM will take will be to establish:

- a **Joint Committee of charging authorities** to enable decisions to be taken that are required to be taken jointly by the Constituent Authorities' as charging authorities in relation to the Greater Manchester Clean Air Zone.
- a **Joint Committee of the charging authorities and the GMCA** to enable the joint discharge of the GMCA's and Constituent Authorities' functions under sections 82 to 84 of the Environment Act 1995 and in relation to the Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan (excluding such decisions that must be taken by the charging authorities jointly).

These formal governance arrangements need to be in place before the GM Authorities make a decision to award the contracts necessary to deliver a charging Clean Air Zone.

The report seeks agreement to set up the committees, membership and the terms of reference.



Other Cities Clean Air Plans

Bath & North East Somerset

- Clean air zone, a city centre CAZ C, will launch on 15 March 2021.

Birmingham

- Clean air zone due to launch on 1 June 2021. The scheme is a city centre CAZ D (includes private cars).

Bristol

- Consulted on clean air zone proposals between 8 October and 13 December 2020.
- The Council consulted on their revised plans after multiple changes to their preferred options due to revised modelling.

Leeds

- The government's Joint Air Quality Unit (JAQU) undertook a joint review with Leeds to analyse the impact of COVID-19 on air quality and to understand if a Clean Air Zone remains necessary, or whether NO₂ compliance to the same timeframe can be achieved and maintained in other ways.
- Due to the dramatic shift to cleaner vehicles, the review found that air pollution in Leeds is significantly below legal limits and is not likely to exceed them again.

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- The trade has asked for certainty, funding, and long lead in times for these changes. This is extremely challenging within the current and emerging policy environment. Officers have developed policy proposals that can meet these needs as far as possible, which is why parallel consultations have been undertaken for MLS and GM CAP, and that charging, funding, and licensing policy positions are coherent and joined-up.
- In addition, GM understands that, like many parts of the economy, and in particular the transport sector, the taxi and private hire trade have been severely impacted by COVID-19, lockdown and the effects of social distancing policies.
- Therefore, the MLS consultation, which is a matter for the 10 district councils, included questions designed to elicit a fuller and more informed understanding of the wider effects of COVID-19 on the economic health and sustainability of the taxi and private hire trades.
- **1,682 responses** were received to the consultation these will be considered by the 10 councils to agree the final standards and the timings of the implementation of those standards for each district.
- Due to the link between CAP and MLS the governance process for MLS is proposed to take place along the same timescales as CAP.



Engagement with the trade and letter to government

- Several meetings were held with the taxi trade coalition, who represent a large proportion of the GM hackney trade, to discuss MLS and GM CAP.
- A separate PHV working group has been established and meetings are underway to also discuss MLS and GM CAP.
- A joint letter from the GM local authorities along with other clean air areas (incl. Birmingham, Sheffield and Portsmouth) is due to be sent to the Secretary of State for Transport. This sets out the challenges the areas share in relation to supporting the taxi trade through the COVID-19 pandemic and clean air policies, as well as calling for re-regulation of private hire services to prevent out of area operation.

