



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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Andy Burnham and Cllr Andrew Western
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Broadhurst House
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8 February 2022

Dear Andy and Andrew,

Thank you for your letter of 17 January requesting we agree to a pause in the distribution of the next phase of your Clean Air Fund and take the opportunity for a review in the light of issues with the supply chain for new vehicles. Andy and I had a very constructive discussion on 26 January and I have had an update from Minister Churchill regarding your discussions last Friday.

This government is committed to delivering clean air across the country. It is very important that we continue to work to achieve clean air for the people of Greater Manchester as soon as possible. We have always made clear that plans for air quality measures should be locally led and I am grateful for your work on the plans to date. However, we recognise your concerns that achieving the compliance date set out by Greater Manchester authorities in the present plans may no longer be achievable, based on your latest evidence base following the pandemic, and the impact of vehicle price rises, together with the concern of potential economic impacts current proposals may have.

In light of this evidence, I am content to allow Greater Manchester authorities to pause the launch of the Clean Air Zone, for a strictly limited time period, to enable a review of the plan for reducing nitrogen dioxide levels. Should Greater Manchester authorities agree a review is the right approach, this must be carried out as quickly as possible. My Department and the Department for Transport will be available to support this review by sharing relevant data.

We will therefore issue a new direction requiring Greater Manchester authorities to provide revised proposals within 5 months, by 1 July 2022, setting out how compliance will still be achieved in the shortest possible time, and by 2026 at the latest. This will revoke the current legal direction requiring Greater Manchester authorities to implement a CAZ C to achieve compliance in 2024. To ensure progress is maintained we would expect delivery of the agreed plans in July to commence by the end of October 2022.

It is essential revised plans must demonstrate how they achieve legal compliance in the shortest possible time. My officials will work with Greater Manchester to develop the most appropriate evidence base to ensure a plan that is credible and achievable. However, given the need to undertake the review quickly, there is not expected to be significant new or fundamental reworking of the underpinning evidence methodology. Officials will work with yours to agree the most appropriate approaches.

Within the scope of a review there should be potential to explore proposals to address this new evidence, but you must still demonstrate how you are achieving compliance in the shortest possible time. Any revision to existing funding schemes should focus on working within the existing Clean Air Funding allocation, our current funding framework and benchmarks. You should ensure that funding ensures that the scheme does not have disproportionate impacts on certain communities, whether geographical or demographic.

During a pause Greater Manchester authorities must minimise any costs relating to contractual liabilities that may arise from the plans we had previously agreed. For requests to fund contractual liabilities all costs must be clearly and fully evidenced, including evidence of how costs have been minimised. My officials will engage further with yours on the details required.

I have asked my officials to work with yours on next steps and look forward to continuing our close engagement on the issues.

We will write separately shortly to Greater Manchester authorities with the new direction.

yours ever
George Eustice

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