

The Rt Hon George Eustice MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
(via email)

10 February 2022

Dear George,

Thank you for your letter of 8 February which outlines proposed next steps following a constructive meeting with Minister Churchill on 4 February. We would like to formally record our thanks to the Minister for her clear and unequivocal commitment to working with Greater Manchester to secure the right plan. We also welcome the fact that the evidence we provided of emerging global supply chain issues means that the current plan, designed to meet the requirements of the legal direction, is no longer deliverable and would in fact cause significant hardship to our businesses.

We clearly share a commitment to address the significant public health issue of poor air quality and to achieve compliance with legal levels of nitrogen dioxide in the shortest possible time and by no later than 2026 but in a way that protects jobs and businesses. Before instructing our officials to engage with the Joint Air Quality Unit (JAQU), we would like to clarify a number of points arising from your letter.

As set out in our letter of 17 January and in our meetings, it is essential that this policy review and the production of a new clean air plan is undertaken jointly between Government and Greater Manchester. Delivering a new Clean Air Plan by July will require full collaboration and all resources across local and central government to be focussed on effective and efficient design of the right solution, working with businesses and communities across the city-region to gather a broad evidence base.

The approach to the review and methodology will also be critical to enable us to jointly deliver the right solution for Greater Manchester. As we discussed with you and Minister Churchill, our evidence has demonstrated that the future Clean Air Plan will need to reflect very different conditions, brought about by the pandemic and its impact of vehicle supply. It was on this basis that we had discussed with the Minister the need for an agility and flexibility in policy development, to ensure that clean air is secured in a manner that can also promote economic viability across all business groups. This may require new methodologies to be considered and we will be very keen to ensure that our local business community is able to have full involvement in the review. We believe it is essential that officials are not constrained in their ability to consider the widest possible policy options with our team.

To secure the right outcomes and to meaningfully engage with our businesses and communities, it is important that we approach the review with an open mind. We are clear as Greater Manchester authorities that we must explore all options to achieve the right solution – it is a fundamental review and development of a new plan and not simply a delay to the implementation of the current plan. We accept that timely activation will be important in the interests of securing the public health outcomes that we share. Whilst we recognise the Government's wish to go live with a new plan in October, it is clearly important that the new plan sets out the right implementation arrangements in a way that supports our objectives to deliver Clean Air. A number of options will therefore need to be considered as part of this, including for example how we capture data later this year, or whether a localised approach may be more appropriate.

We would welcome the opportunity to agree jointly how we and your Ministerial team can meet on a regular basis to provide the requisite oversight of this very important work between now and July. We look forward to confirmation of these points.

Yours sincerely,

COUNCILLOR ANDREW WESTERN

**Portfolio Lead for Clean Air,
Chair of the Greater Manchester Air
Quality Administration Committee and
Leader of Trafford MBC**

ANDY BURNHAM

**Mayor of Greater Manchester,
Chair of the Greater Manchester
Combined Authority**

on behalf of Greater Manchester Leaders

cc

Jo Churchill MP - Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Agri-Innovation and Climate Adaptation) - DEFRA

Trudy Harrison MP Parliamentary Under Secretary of State – DfT