

**ANDY BURNHAM**

**MAYOR OF  
GREATER  
MANCHESTER**

3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022

Ref AB/KL

*Dear Prime Minister,*

**Greater Manchester Clean Air Zone**

Yesterday in Parliament, you said that the Greater Manchester Clean Air Zone (CAZ), the design of which you attributed to me, was “thoughtless” and should be scrapped.

May I start by reminding you of three facts.

First, it was your Ministerial Direction that required Greater Manchester to model a charging CAZ and your Government which signed off the original scheme.

Second, that Direction was issued by the Government to the ten GM councils, not to me or the GMCA.

Third, it was the Greater Manchester Leaders and I who went back to the Government earlier this year and asked you to scrap the original scheme due to the fact that it had become unworkable following the pandemic.

Your comments yesterday appear to contradict your own Environment Secretary who three weeks ago imposed a new Ministerial Direction on the ten GM councils and required a plan for a revised CAZ to be developed jointly with the Government. Can you urgently clarify whether that remains your Government’s position of whether that has changed with your comments yesterday?

All this said, your comments in the House do perhaps indicate grounds for a way forward.

The Greater Manchester Labour Leaders, with my support, have been considering the next steps and have agreed constructive proposals, which are set out in the attached position statement.

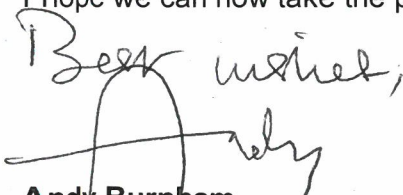
Given none of us want a single job or business to be lost due to a CAZ, we believe the additional time which Greater Manchester asked for will enable us to have a non-charging Category B CAZ.

We are of the clear view that any new scheme should be based on incentives for individuals and businesses to change vehicles rather than a charging penalty regime. But, to succeed, this will require your Government to agree to the extra financial investment needed to enable vehicle upgrades to happen without the owners incurring unacceptable costs.

We trust that your views are shared by the Secretary of State and DEFRA Ministers and that the proposals we have set out can form the basis for agreement on a new scheme.

It is only the Government which can remove the pressure from Greater Manchester to have a charging CAZ. So, following the proposal from the Leaders, the ball is in your court.

I hope we can now take the politics out of this issue and move quickly to a resolution.

*Best wishes,*  


**Andy Burnham**  
Mayor of Greater Manchester

## **Statement from the Greater Manchester Labour Leaders supported by the Greater Manchester Mayor**

Yesterday the Prime Minister said that he agreed that the Greater Manchester Clean Air Zone should be scrapped. However, that is completely at odds with the new Ministerial Direction his Government imposed on the ten Greater Manchester councils just three weeks ago. We urgently need clarity from the Government.

Assuming the Government intends to continue with a Greater Manchester Clean Air Zone, this statement sets out our position.

For the last two years, Greater Manchester's ten councils have been under a Ministerial Direction from the Government to achieve air quality compliance "as soon as possible and by 2024 at the latest".

Over recent months, the Labour Leaders and Mayor became increasingly clear that the 2024 deadline was not achievable without causing significant harm to jobs and businesses in Greater Manchester.

Earlier this year, Greater Manchester took the decision to go back to the Government and request that the Ministerial Direction be lifted.

The Government argued for a one-year delay to the scheme. But the Labour Leaders and Mayor held out for a two-year delay. This was eventually agreed by the Government and is reflected in the new Ministerial Direction setting a deadline of 2026 for compliance.

Successfully securing the two-year delay is important because it now allows for a very different scheme to be put in place.

This new scheme has to be agreed by the Government by July.

This statement sets out Labour's position as we enter talks with the Government.

Greater Manchester has continued to review the latest evidence and modelling with regard to levels of air pollution across the city-region and we believe that if the current trajectory is maintained, and if the Government provides the necessary support, we could achieve compliance by the required deadline.

In our proposal to Government, Labour will exempt all vans (LGVs) from any clean air zone. Given the additional time we have secured from Government, this now means that the inclusion of vans should not be necessary. We will not support their inclusion and, if the Government wishes to include them, they will have to impose it. This exemption will be in addition to private cars, motorhomes, horseboxes, motorbikes and mopeds.

Labour will press for a non-charging zone for any vehicles. Should the Government impose charges, we will only accept them for a Category B clean air zone if the Government provides full financial support to enable individuals and businesses to upgrade their vehicles and with sufficient time being provided in light of the supply-chain issues.

Ultimately it is for the Government to decide – as they did with the previous scheme. But we have made our position clear.