



## HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon George Eustice MP  
Secretary of State for the Environment & Rural Affairs  
Department for the Environment & Rural Affairs  
Seacole Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

6<sup>th</sup> January 2022

Dear George,

RE: Greater Manchester Clean Air Zone

We are supportive of the wide-ranging efforts that the Government and your department have taken to improve our environment. We also recognise in recent years that a key enabler of these environmental improvements has been due to technological advancements in nuclear energy, cleaner combustion engines and electric vehicles. Whilst the Government agreed with the ten Greater Manchester local authorities to implement a form of Clean Air Zone to meet legal requirements in relation to Nitrous Oxide levels, our concern is with the model chosen and the level of support that has been allocated.

We have always been clear that this Greater Manchester wide scheme is wrong for us because we need localised solutions to particular problems, rather than this crude one-size fits all plan. Therefore, the current clean air proposals in our view are too disruptive and is too much like a successor to the 2008 Congestion charge plan that was overwhelmingly rejected in a referendum by people across Greater Manchester.

This plan, following a new statutory consultation, does allow for an extension of the scheme to domestic vehicles and there is no certainty upon successful completion of this scheme that the infrastructure will be removed, which opens the possibility of it being repurposed into a 'Road Pricing Scheme' for all vehicles.

I know that you will be as concerned as we are of the impact coronavirus has had on so much of our society, especially on businesses. These businesses are finding it particularly difficult, even with the limited financial support that has been made available to replace non-compliant vehicles. The Road Haulage Association has pointed out the difficulties its members are finding in buying compliant vehicles.

One of the consequences of the disruption caused by COVID-19 has been the difficulty in manufacturers producing new vehicles that would meet the Clean Air Zone standards. It has been highlighted that a company seeking to purchase over 100 new compliant vehicles is unable to do so because the manufacturer cannot supply them in time. This is having obvious knock-on effects on the compliant second-hand vehicle market. This was never conceived of when this Clean Air Zone model was being adopted.





As we are emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, businesses are in a precarious position. Imposing these additional costs which are not adequately covered by the financial support will push many over the edge. Conservative colleagues across Greater Manchester have raised a range of concerns over the period of development of this scheme, which continue to be unresolved.

In conclusion, industry is already delivering cleaner vehicles that will improve air quality. We oppose this scheme and urge you to delay its rollout for further consultation, which would allow time for a comprehensive reassessment of how the change in work patterns since the beginning of the pandemic have affected and perhaps reduced concentrations of pollution. This would ensure that a new scheme both achieves its aims without having a deleterious impact on local businesses as we recover from COVID-19.

We look forward to working with you to resolve these problems on behalf of our constituents.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Green, Member of Parliament for Bolton West

Mark Logan, Member of Parliament for Bolton North East

James Daly, Member of Parliament for Bury North

James Grundy, Member of Parliament for Leigh

Mary Robinson, Member of Parliament for Cheadle

Sir Graham Brady, Member of Parliament for Altrincham and Sale West

William Wragg, Member of Parliament for Hazel Grove

Chris Clarkson, Member of Parliament for Heywood & Middleton

CC:

Jo Churchill MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Agri-Innovation and Climate Adaptation

Trudy Harrison MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport

The Rt Hon Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester

Leaders of the ten Borough Councils:

Cllr Martyn Cox, Leader of Bolton Council, Cllr Andrew Weston, Leader of Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council, Cllr Eamonn O'Brien, Leader of Bury Metropolitan Borough Council, Cllr Bev Craig, Leader of Manchester City Council, Cllr Arooj Shah, Leader Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council, Cllr Neil Emmott, Leader of Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council, Cllr Paul Dennett, Leader of Salford City Council, Cllr Elise Wilson, Leader of Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council, Cllr Brenda Warrington, Leader of Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council, Cllr David Molyneux, Leader of Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council