

Interim Update 2: Greater Manchester Clean Air Zone

On 1 July 2022, the GM Air Quality Administration Committee met and agreed to a number of recommendations, including noting that an 84-page document, “*Case for a new Greater Manchester Plan*” (ref. 1) had been submitted (1 July 2022) to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and agreeing to a participatory policy development approach, given that the document proposes a non-charging Clean Air Zone (CAZ), whereas the communication on 1 June 2022 (see our Interim Update 1) from the Secretary of State had stated a preference for a Category C charging scheme limited to Manchester City Centre.

The accompanying **meeting notes** (ref. 2) include a “do minimum” scenario, which shows, in section 8.2, the locations forecast to have exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) air quality limit (an annual average limit of 40 µg/m³) in Greater Manchester during the period 2023 to 2026, were no further action to be taken. Section 8 of those notes shows a rapidly declining trend:

79 exceedances in 2023
37 exceedances in 2024
13 exceedances in 2025
5 exceedances in 2026
0 exceedances in 2027

[The government target (revised in February 2022) for compliance was, “as soon as possible, and no later than 2026”.] However, the GM plan does not propose to “do nothing”; it proposes a range of measures, listed in section 13 of the meeting notes, many of which involve the provision of funding packages to incentivise upgrades to the “cleanest possible vehicle”, i.e. least polluting. It is interesting to note that most of the pie charts in section 8.6 of the meeting notes indicate the dominant source of NO₂ emissions is buses. The main exception is Regent Road, which connects the M602 and the Mancunian Way (A57(M)).

To put the exceedances into a local context, in High Lane in 2014, one of the monitoring sites along the A6 was found to have exceeded the NO₂ limit, with an annual average concentration of **43.1 µg/m³** (ref. 3) and it was predicted (around 2018/2019) that there would be further exceedances in High Lane in 2021 (ref. 4). However, circumstances have changed a lot since then! The most recent official measurements of NO₂ annual averages in High Lane were as follows (ref. 5):

2019 24.0 µg/m³
2020 18.6 µg/m³
2021 23.5 µg/m³

References

1. <https://democracy.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/documents/s21643/Appendix%201%20-%20Case%20for%20a%20new%20Greater%20Manchester%20Clean%20Air%20Plan.pdf>
 2. <https://democracy.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/documents/s21642/GM%20CAP%20Update%20July%202022.pdf>
 3. Site HL1,
http://www.semmms.info/wp-content/uploads/A6MARR_BaselineReport_Final_appendixes_JtoLonly.pdf
 4. https://mappinggm.org.uk/clean-air-plan/?lyrs=gm_boundaries#os_maps_light/18/53.36454/-2.07379
 5. <https://cleanairgm.com/data-hub/diffusion-tubes/Stockport%2035>
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