

Harry Catherall
Chief Executive
Oldham Council
Civic Centre
West Street
Oldham
OL1 1UG

Our ref: EB/JB/do

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Email: harry.catherall@oldham.gov.uk

Dear Harry

OLDHAM COUNCIL RESOLUTION ON SAFETY CAMERAS

Thank you for writing to us on the matter of safety cameras and for Oldham's ongoing support for safety camera operations in general across the highways network. I will deal with your specific questions in the order set out in your letter.

1. Write to the Safer Roads Greater Manchester Partnership and the Westminster Government to update the criteria for speed cameras, making it easier to install cameras where there is evidence to do so including community demands, without having to wait for serious injuries or deaths to occur.

It is probably worth explaining where the criteria GM uses for determining where safety camera locations comes from and why. In 2020, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) undertook a full inspection of roads policing nationally. The DfT Circular (which sets out the criteria for when speed cameras should be used) was referenced within that inspection report, with a recommendation that all Chief Constables ensure that their force comply with the Circular, with immediate effect. The response provided from Greater Manchester outlined that Greater Manchester Police (GMP) remained compliant with that recommendation. The Inspection also identified the need for the DfT to review that guidance and made a separate recommendation to that effect.

In 2021 the GM Deputy Mayor for Policing, Crime, Criminal Justice and Fire supported the submission of a letter from the Safer Roads Greater Manchester (SRGM) Partnership to the DfT to seek clarity on the planned action to be taken to review the Circular and to offer our local support and expertise in the development of that work. This led to Greater Manchester having a seat at a national working group as a starting point to this work last summer where it was suggested that future criteria should incorporate a danger reduction approach focusing on prevention, alongside conventional casualty reduction criteria.

We understand that progress remains frustratingly slow whilst the DfT prioritised the completion of the wider national Roads Policing review. I am informed that the DfT expect to complete the refresh of the Circular this year, however, no specific date has been set for this.

Whilst we support the installation of safety cameras meeting the prevailing criteria accepted by GMP, we must also be mindful of the GMP back office capacity and operating & maintenance costs. Safety camera criteria concludes that enforcement should be a last resort before all other engineering measures have been fully considered, rather than the first or only solution.

As confirmed in the BBC Panorama documentary referenced within your letter, safety camera housings are local authority assets, including ultimate responsibility for maintenance; repairs; and replacement. Unlike other similar partnership areas, local authorities in GM are not currently required to make a net contribution towards the operating costs of the partnership or safety cameras. Currently local authorities only fund the cost of related signs, white lines and foliage issues, with the SRGM Partnership funding other maintenance costs such as annual inspections; electrical testing; electricity supply; maintenance; and repairs.

As local authorities in GM are not required to contribute to safety camera operating costs, GM did not experience the switch off or removal of safety cameras, following the withdrawal of the DfT's specific road safety grant, as occurred in other areas including those mentioned within the documentary. In addition, the percentage of digital speed safety camera housings in GM is almost 60%, not the 40% mentioned in the correspondence. 100% of these digital safety camera housings are fully maintained and available for use, but please note that the physical presence of the housing is the main deterrent rather than actual use, or as many professionals will say "the fear of enforcement, rather than the enforcement itself, is the deterrent"

2. Write to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority to reinforce the need for any non-working cameras to be replaced as soon as possible, as part of the work to replace 'wet film cameras' across the region with digital cameras.

We welcome support from Oldham Council, a member of SRGM, for upgrades and replacement to safety camera housings in GM. The partnership has previously implemented phases of digitisation, however the current digital technology in use is approaching 15 years old. Therefore TfGM, on behalf of GM local authorities, is

progressing a proposal to replace existing speed safety camera technology at 147 locations. Subject to approval of the tender process and full business case, we anticipate the project starting during Summer 2022, with completion across GM in 12 months. We will formally note Oldham Council's support for such an activity in support of the business case.

I will reply to your other letter on long term funding as soon as I can.

Yours sincerely



Eamonn Boylan
Chief Executive
Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) &
Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM)