

BRIEFING TO HEALTH SCRUTINY

Air quality: an update on recent developments to the policy and legislative context in Oldham and Greater Manchester

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Summary

In January 2018, a report was brought to Health Scrutiny setting out the public health impacts of air pollution in the UK and describing work being done at a Greater Manchester level, through the Greater Manchester Air Quality Action Plan, to address the issue across the conurbation.

The report also clarified that the government has mandated 29 local authorities, including 7 districts within Greater Manchester, to undertake comprehensive feasibility studies, assessing a wide range of options, to identify solutions to specific local exceedances as soon as possible.

Oldham was not one of the 7 districts in Greater Manchester required to undertake this study, but it was agreed that all 10 districts would be included as air pollution does not recognise administrative boundaries.

This work has been progressed accordingly, led by Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), however, in April 2018, Oldham was identified in a subsequent wave of local authorities at risk of not meeting the nitrogen dioxide pollution levels on specific road links by 2021 and a ruling was made that each authority must produce a plan to achieve compliance as soon as possible.

The following report therefore provides an update on the Oldham local feasibility study in as well as expanding on the link with the work being led by TfGM.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Air quality has become an increasingly important and high profile topic over the last decade and local authorities have a range of statutory and public health responsibilities in this area.
- 1.2 Nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter are the emissions of most concern as their detrimental impacts on public health are now beginning to be fully understood and so - largely driven by court cases brought by the environmental lobbying group, Clientearth - in July 2017 the government published a plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide in the UK, to bring concentrations within the statutory limits in the shortest possible time.
- 1.3 Based on air quality modelling data which predicts future non-compliance, the plan expanded the number of local authorities already required to take action to 28 in total (plus London), including 7 authorities in Greater Manchester - Manchester, Bolton, Bury, Stockport, Salford, Trafford and Tameside.
- 1.4 Oldham was not identified as being in scope in this 'first wave' however it was acknowledged that air pollution does not recognise administrative boundaries and so a regional approach including Oldham would be taken and led by Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) on behalf of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA).
- 1.5 TfGM representing the 10 authorities have since been working on a wide package of measures to improve air quality across the conurbation.
- 1.6 However, in February 2018 the High Court found that a further 45 local authorities (a 'second wave') were at risk of not meeting the nitrogen dioxide pollution levels on specific road links within their administrative boundaries by 2021 and a ruling was made that each authority must produce a plan to achieve compliance as soon as possible.
- 1.7 Oldham was identified in this 'second wave' and as such, we received a ministerial directive in April to carry out a feasibility study to evidence which, if any, measures can be taken to bring for nitrogen dioxide compliance in the shortest time possible on the stretch of road that has been identified as being in exceedance.
- 1.8 In this respect, it should be noted that a recently published LGiU "Joint Parliamentary Report on Air Pollution" highlights the following:

"Local authorities have a choice – to take a similar approach to national government in introducing measures that target minimum legal compliance in specific geographies (specific roads for example), or, to enshrine air quality as a fundamental pillar of their urban planning, transport & health approach. Reaching minimum compliance will lower, but not eliminate, the figure of up to 40,000 deaths a year attributable to air pollution. The legal limits being exceeded are even less stringent than World Health Organisation (WHO) limits. Therefore a wider approach, that embeds air quality across policy domains, is one which will yield the greatest benefit for local citizens, for whom air pollution is an increasingly important topic."

- 1.9 The stretch of road cited in the Oldham directive is the A62 by-pass which runs from King Street roundabout to the traffic lights at Mumps – see Appendix 1 & 2 for maps and details of levels of exceedance.
- 1.10 As such, Oldham is in the unique position now of working across AGMA to meet target levels for 2020 and a separate directive working on different data to meet target levels by 2021 and that the local study timeframe (submission by July 2018) actually precedes the regional study timeframe (submission by December 2018).
- 1.11 This presents a series of practical difficulties and therefore working closely with the Department for the Environment & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), it has been agreed that we will take a local approach focusing on the stretch of road identified by the government to respond to the individual directive placed against Oldham but recognizing that more detailed work is ongoing through TfGM to support the regional approach which has a greater likelihood of improving air quality across the region.
- 1.12 It is also important to highlight that early indications from TfGM’s regional modelling work show that there may be higher emissions and/or additional links identified across the wider conurbation than originally anticipated. However, these figures are still being refined and are subject to change so in order to meet the timescales associated with ‘second wave’ authorities, the focus of Oldham’s feasibility study will be restricted to the stretch of road identified in our directive.

2.0 Oldham’s local feasibility study

- 2.1. The feasibility study requires Oldham to develop a list of measures which will bring about nitrogen dioxide compliance in the shortest possible time as well as setting out a preferred measure, as follows:

Part	Title	What is required	Deadline
Part 1	Understanding the problem	Information about the source of emissions and make-up & destination of traffic on the location in scope.	Monday 30 th April (submitted)
Part 2	Developing a long list of measures for addressing the exceedances	A list of measures that could in theory be implemented to bring about compliance in the shortest possible time. The measures given in Oldham’s submission were taken directly from TfGM’s work to ensure alignment.	Monday 30 th April (submitted)
Part 3	Assessing deliverability/feasibility and delivering a short list	Refining the long list based on whether the measures are practically feasible and deliverable to have impact within the required timeframe (e.g. it would not be practically feasible to introduce cycle lanes on a dual-carriage way.)	Thursday 31 st May (submitted)

Part 4	Evidencing the short listed measures to identify options that could bring forward compliance	Modelling the shortlisted measures to establish whether they would actually have the necessary impact e.g. incentivizing the uptake of electric vehicles may be practically feasible, but if there is only a 1% take up, this will not reduce emissions sufficiently to achieve compliance. It is possible that once modelled, no measures can be taken forward.	Friday 29 th June
Part 5	Setting out a preferred option	Measures that, once modelled, are shown to have impact, must then be assessed against further criteria (e.g. VfM). Again, it is possible that once assessed, there will not be a preferred option.	Tuesday 31 st July

2.2 As at Thursday 21st June, Oldham have submitted Parts 1, 2, & 3 in line with the required deadlines and our submission sets out all of the measures already taken and/or planned in Oldham to improve air quality (see Appendix 3).

2.3 Aligned with TfGM's work, the shortlist of measures outlined at this stage are:

- Incentivise drivers of light goods vehicles and cars to switch to electric vehicles
- Incentivise Oldham Council and partner staff to switch to electric vehicles.
- Renewal, upgrading and further expansion of the electric vehicle charging point network in Oldham.
- Improve Local Authority fleet to electric and/or low emission through a procurement policy
- Congestion Deal traffic management (which includes a wide range of options from signal optimization to changes in speed limit).
- Incentivise private hire vehicles (taxis) to switch to electric vehicles
- Communications campaigns/awareness raising of health and cost benefits of different modes or around a particular community/schools and programmes to support.

2.4 A wide range of measures have been discounted on the basis that they are not deliverable locally and are more likely to bring about compliance if approached from a regional level e.g. any measures related to regulation of buses.

- 2.5 It is also important to clarify that where measures have been discounted, we may still pursue them as part of the wider local air quality objectives, but we are not able to take them forward as part of this study because of the specific technical outputs required i.e. we must be able to clearly evidence how any measures taken forward will bring about the required reduction in NOx concentrations by 2021 through detailed emissions and dispersal modelling as well as a sound evidence base for modal shift assumptions.
- 2.5 The above measures are now being modelled to establish which, if any, will bring this road link within compliance.
- 2.6 The legal deadline for final submission of this feasibility study is the end of July and further feedback will be provided to Health Scrutiny on the final measures (if any) submitted, as part of an update in September on the wider TfGM regional work.

3.0 Regional study led by TfGM and the Greater Manchester Air Quality Action Plan

- 3.1 The regional feasibility study being led by TfGM builds on the Greater Manchester Air Quality Action Plan, which aims to improve air quality by:
- **Reducing traffic:** for example, by encouraging travellers to switch from cars to use public transport, cycle and walk more;
 - **Increasing efficiency:** improving traffic flow by reducing congestion and stop-start travel to decrease air pollution peaks and to lower emissions overall; and
 - **Improving the vehicle fleet:** by encouraging the replacement of older, more polluting vehicles with newer, smaller, cleaner, lower-emission vehicles.
- 3.2 Actions in the Air Quality Action Plan have been divided into seven main areas:
- **Development management and planning regulation:** including standardisation of regulation and policy across Greater Manchester;
 - **Freight and HGVs:** to reduce emissions associated with the movement of freight and goods by road;
 - **Buses:** buses have a vital role to play in public transport. New legislation and the development of Greater Manchester's 2040 transport strategy will assist in growing bus usage and improving vehicle standards;
 - **Cycling:** building on existing strategies and initiatives to encourage cycling as an attractive and convenient way to travel;
 - **Travel Choices:** encouraging the public and businesses to make sustainable travel choices is essential in improving air quality;
 - **Cars:** measures to reduce emissions from cars and reduce the number of vehicle trips can make real improvements; and
 - **Information and resources:** education and providing information to the public, businesses and policy makers is vital in bringing air quality improvements.
- 3.3 The regional feasibility study is broadly structured in the same way to align with the GM Air Quality Plan, however all the measures and interventions in the feasibility study are being put through an extremely detailed modelling exercise

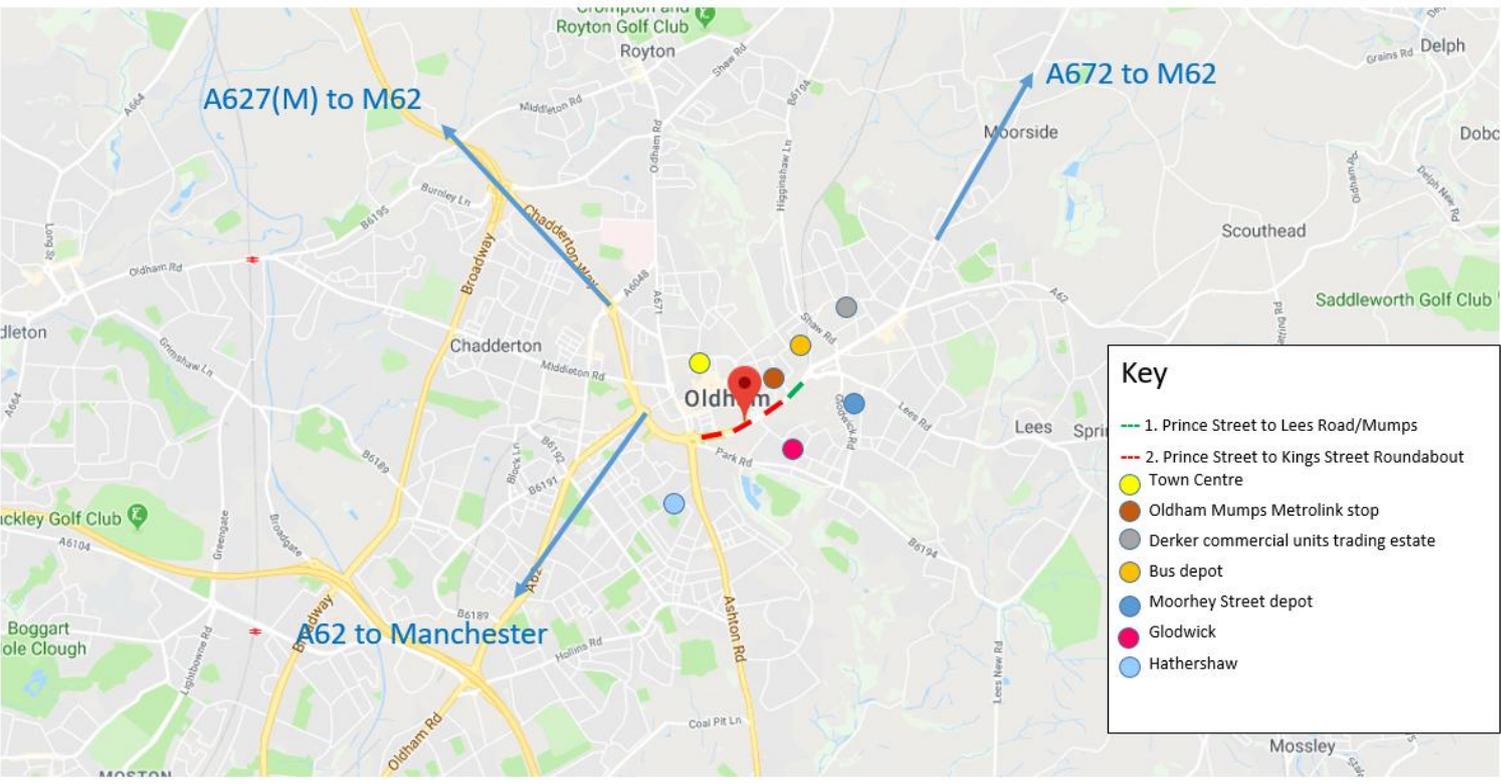
which reviews emissions and dispersal. Similarly to Oldham, only measures that show compliance can be taken forward however, early indications suggest that there will be a variety of measures which meet the relevant impact criteria.

- 3.4 The legal deadline for submission of the regional feasibility study is December 2018 and as such, each of the individual GM authorities will be required to take the proposed measures through their respective governance processes in order to meet this deadline.

4.0 Link with Public Health

- 4.1 Updates on both the local and regional study will be brought back to Health Scrutiny in September 2018.
- 4.2 In the interim, endorsement and support is sought of both the local and regional work from public health colleagues, particularly in terms of communications and engagement with the public to continue to raise the profile of this major health issue

Appendix 1 – Map of location in scope



Appendix 2 – Emissions data

Oldham Council

Table of Projected Exceedances

Road(s) in exceedance	Census ID	Annual mean nitrogen dioxide concentration. All figures are provided in $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ and $40 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ is the statutory annual mean limit value for NO_2 .					Source apportionment for total NO_x 2015 (figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding)
		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
A62	36632	47	45	43	41	38	5% Regional background, 11% Urban background (non-traffic), 12% Urban background (traffic), 31% Diesel cars, 7% Petrol cars, 18% Diesel LGVs, 0% Petrol LGVs, 11% HGVR, 3% HGVA, 2% Buses
M60 (Highways England managed)	77006	46	44	42	40	38	5% Regional background, 10% Urban background (non-traffic), 19% Urban background (traffic), 27% Diesel cars, 3% Petrol cars, 25% Diesel LGVs, 0% Petrol LGVs, 6% HGVR, 5% HGVA, 0% Buses
M60 (Highways England managed)	77007	47	45	43	40	38	5% Regional background, 11% Urban background (non-traffic), 21% Urban background (traffic), 26% Diesel cars, 3% Petrol cars, 22% Diesel LGVs, 0% Petrol LGVs, 7% HGVR, 5% HGVA, 0% Buses

Appendix 3 – Measures taken already (B) and/or planned (C) in Oldham

B1. Direct link/impact on A62: The Oldham Cycle and Pedestrian-Friendly Town Centre scheme – we completed this scheme last year, which included improvements to the Union Street West pedestrian-cycle bridge and the Campus Oldham Highway Improvement Scheme. The Campus Oldham Scheme included the reallocation of road space to pedestrians and cyclists and new cycle and pedestrian crossings on King Street. King Street runs from north to south on the edge of the town's shopping area and connects Oldham College, Oldham Leisure Centre, the Oldham King Street Metrolink stop and Oldham Sixth Form College. The scheme was partially funded through the Cycle City Ambition Grant 2 Fund (CCAG2), which made a contribution of £1.2 million.

B2. Direct link/impact on A62: Supporting schools - On the back of our successful CCAG2 bid, we assisted both the Oldham Sixth Form College and the Oldham (FE) College to bid for CCAG2 funding. Both colleges were successful in securing around £80,000 each to prepare cycling action plans and deliver improvements such as cycle parking that will complement our physical changes and increase levels of cycling to the colleges. They have used their CCAG2 grants to provide more than 140 new cycle parking spaces at Oldham College and Oldham Sixth Form College with improvements to changing rooms and upgraded CCTV. They are now also part of TfGM's Cycle Schools and Colleges project and as a result they have been supplied with pool bikes and students are being offered free cycling taster sessions by TfGM.

B3. Direct link/impact on A62: Improvements to walking and public transport into the town centre - we have delivered pedestrian and bus infrastructure improvements with a £2 million Local Growth Deal contribution. Works included the creation of a new pedestrianised link, Parliament Square, as part of the redevelopment of the Old Town Hall into a restaurant and cinema complex, which connects the new development to the Oldham Central Metrolink stop and the town centre's retail core via Clegg Street and Parliament Square.

B4. Direct link/impact on A62: Further improvements to walking and public transport into the town centre Greater Manchester Local Growth Deal 2 - we have almost completed delivery of a £5 million programme of Growth Deal 2 funded improvements designed to improve the town centre and make it more attractive for cyclists, pedestrians and public transport users to access - these schemes have focused on the Prince Street/Oldham Mumps area adjacent to the A62 as well as the Yorkshire Street corridor and links including Retiro Street. The programme connects the town centre retail core, the Mumps/Prince's Gate development and the Oldham Heritage and Arts Centre proposed development.

B5. Direct link/impact on A62: Metrolink - the Oldham-Rochdale Metrolink line opened in 2012, and was extended to run through Oldham Town Centre from January 2014. Patronage on this line has been growing faster than on any other line since it opened. Tram frequencies were increased and some double units introduced on the line when the Exchange Square tram stop was opened in Manchester City Centre in December 2015 in advance of Manchester's full Second City Crossing being completed in early 2017. There are still capacity problems on the line, especially at peak times, which has been recognised recently and action taken to address the situation: the GM Mayor has allocated £83 million of the GM Transforming Cities

<p>Fund for the purchase of 27 new trams, some of which will be deployed to further increase the number of double units operating on the Oldham line between Manchester and Shaw to provide additional capacity. An initial order for 24 vehicles will be placed before the end of June 2018.</p>
<p>B6. Direct link/impact on A62: Cycle Hub - In March 2018, a new cycle hub was opened right next to the Mumps Metrolink Stop which is adjacent to this stretch of the A62 Oldham Way. TfGM has installed the hub, which provides secure, attractive cycle parking for 40 bikes alongside a bicycle pump and repair stand. The hub, which is ideally located at the Metrolink park and ride on Regent Street and is close to the town centre, adds to hundreds of bike parking spaces available at a growing network of local cycle hubs across Greater Manchester aimed at encouraging more people to cycle as part of their journey. It is the second hub to open in Oldham this year: the Hollinwood Metrolink Cycle and Ride Stop hub opened in February 2018.</p>
<p>B7. Direct link/impact on A62: Partnerships to encourage cycling Oldham Council has also teamed up with Positive Cycles to create a community bike hub at a prominent location in the heart of Oldham Town Centre, which opened in February 2018. This charity recycles, services, and make bikes roadworthy before selling them back to the community at a discounted price. Bikes are also donated to students accessing the Positive Steps Career Guidance Service, so they can travel to and from college/training. Positive Cycles also works closely with Oldham Council service users and Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), providing ‘wheels’ to jobseekers as part of the “Bike Back to Work” scheme.</p>
<p>B8. General air quality improvement: Electric vehicles - we have continued to expand the network of GMEV electric vehicle charging points in Oldham, with new charging points being installed at the Mumps Metrolink car park in January 2018, with usage continuing to increase year on year since the first posts were installed in 2014.</p>
<p>B9. General air quality improvement: Bikeability with schools - We also work with schools to promote sustainable travel through our Road Safety Team, including providing cycle training to primary school children through the Bikeability programme having secured over £1/3 million from the Department for Transport to provide training until March 2020, including core Bikeability sessions and the Learn to Ride element of Bikeability Plus</p>
<p>B10. General air quality improvements: Walk to School Project We are also involved in delivering the GM Walk to School Project in partnership with TfGM and Living Streets, which aims to increase the number of children walking to school. There are currently 7 Oldham primary schools signed up to the project, which have been selected as they either lie within areas of the highest risk for child road casualties or lie within an Air Quality Management Zone.</p>
<p>B11. General air quality improvements: GM Travel Choices and Active Travel programmes We also work closely with TfGM to ensure that people living and working in Oldham have the opportunity to access the GM Travel Choices and Active Travel programmes as set out in the examples below. Our aim is to maximise take-up of the initiatives on offer in Oldham. The programme includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Travel Choices Business Engagement, which provides support to facilitate and encourage the use of sustainable transport for commuting and business trips to employers in the Business Travel

Network. The cycling and walking packages include events, Dr Bikes, pool/loan bikes, learn to ride training, cycle maintenance classes, cycle champions, grants for cycle parking, changing facilities and loan bikes, and walking programmes. In Oldham, 21 businesses are signed up to the network, 12 of which have developed Sustainable Travel Action Plans. Five businesses in Oldham have received grants for active travel infrastructure. JD Williams and Pennine Acute Trusts (Oldham Royal Hospital) have both received TfGM Travel Plan Accreditation (gold and silver standard respectively).

- Travel Choices Access to Employment, which supports jobseekers to overcome travel barriers to work, including through personalised travel advice, discounted public transport tickets or supply of a free refurbished bicycle and training (Bike Back to Work). A similar offer also exists for apprentices to support them accessing training. In 2016/17, 45 people benefited from Bike Back to Work in Oldham.
- Active Travel initiatives including: Business support for cycling and walking; Information, Events and Marketing; Cycle Parking and Infrastructure; and Cycle Training and Safety. Examples of our activity in this area include the Oldham Cycle Network Map, which we update regularly and is part of the GM cycle network series of maps, and our participation in the GM Walking Festival which takes place throughout the month of May.

C1. Direct link/impact on A62: Oldham Council staff travel As a major employer in Oldham Town Centre the Council is working pro-actively to reduce the impact of staff commuting and business travel on the environment. We have a number of arrangements in place with local public transport operators, including First Buses, and have recently reviewed and refreshed some of our existing facilities, including our showers, drying room and lockers at the Civic Centre. As part of a planned relaunch of the Plan, we will be carrying out a staff travel survey in May 2018 and will be using the results to inform further development of the Plan. We are a member of TfGM's Business Travel Network and will be seeking accreditation of our travel plan through TfGM's Travel Choices Accreditation Award Scheme later this year.

C2. Direct link/impact on A62: Oldham Council Partners staff travel - We are looking to lead by example with the work we are doing on our staff travel plan by working with our Oldham Plan partners in both the public and private sector through the Oldham Partnership Board over the course of the coming year to encourage and support them to reduce the impact of their commuting and business travel on the environment and become part of TfGM's Business Travel Network.

C3. Direct link/impact on A62: Third phase of improvements to walking, cycling and public transport into the town centre We are in the early stages of developing and delivering a £10 million programme of improvements in Oldham Town Centre which have been awarded £6 million from the third bidding round of Local Growth Deals. This programme includes schemes that will improve connectivity to and across the town centre for pedestrians and cyclists, such as high quality public realm and connectivity improvements to the King Street cycle/pedestrian bridge at the

<p>western end of the A62 link that is the subject of this feasibility study as well as around the Civic Centre hub and Market Hall area. This programme is still under development and as such not all elements are indicated on the map of measures implemented and underway (Map 2). This programme however, does include the refurbishment of Middleton Road Bridge which is part of a DfT-funded Challenge Scheme and which is temporarily causing queuing and delays on this stretch of Oldham Way as a result of the extensive traffic management needed to deliver the scheme safely. The works are due to be completed by the end of 2018.</p>
<p>C4. General air quality improvements: Bikeability programme with schools We will continue to work with schools, including on the delivery of the Bikeability training programme for which we have funding up to March 2020.</p>
<p>C5. Direct link/impact on A62: Streets for All - We will be working with TfGM on developing the Streets for All corridor proposal for the Ashton-Oldham-Rochdale corridor and will ensure that air quality issues on the A62 Oldham Way, which lies within the corridor, are given a high priority.</p>
<p>C6. Direct link/impact on A62: Congestion Deal - We will work TfGM and our partners to deliver the Mayor's Congestion Deal proposals in Oldham.</p>
<p>C7. General air quality improvements with potential direct link/impact on A62: Oldham Council staff travel survey We will use the results from our staff travel survey to further develop our staff travel plan to encourage sustainable commuting and business travel.</p>
<p>C8. General air quality improvements with potential direct link/impact on A62: Rapid chargers for EVs - We will work with TfGM to identify suitable locations for a rapid charger(s) in Oldham following Greater Manchester's successful £3 million bid to the Clean Air Plan Early Measures Fund.</p>
<p>C9. General air quality improvements: Work with Mayor's Cycling and Walking team We will work with the Mayor's Cycling and Walking Team to develop our cycling and walking networks with a view to submitting a funding bid to the Mayor's Challenge Fund;</p>
<p>C10. General air quality improvements with potential direct link/impact on A62: GM Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan We will work with TfGM to develop the Oldham element of the GM Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan by December 2018.</p>
<p>C11. General air quality improvements with potential direct link/impact on A62: Town Centre surveys - TfGM will undertake a town centre perceptions survey this summer which will include questions to determine the attractiveness and feasibility of accessing Oldham Town Centre by sustainable modes and enable us to focus our efforts on the type of initiatives that are more likely to result in more people travelling sustainably.</p>
<p>C12. General air quality improvements: Travel Choices and Active Travel programme in Oldham. We will continue to work with TfGM to implement the Travel Choices and Active Travel programme in Oldham.</p>
<p>C13. General air quality improvements: GM Clean Air Day 2018 We will be supporting Greater Manchester's Clean Air Day in June.</p>