

25th July 2007



Dear Councillor

I am writing to you on the eve of the AGMA meeting regarding the crucial and historic opportunity presented to you and the people of Greater Manchester by the proposed GMPTA application to the Transport Innovation Fund (TIF).

The Clean Air Now (CAN) Coalition is made up of over a dozen organisations and networks concerned with environmental and health issues across Greater Manchester and in all, our members represent over 15,000 voters. CAN believes that the business case for the TIF bid has been more than proven by the GMPTA and the recent endorsement of the proposals in a poll of Chamber of Commerce members underlines that the case has been well made.

Like many people, you too may well suspect that climate change is happening and much faster than we first thought. Many recent peer-reviewed scientific papers offer increasing evidence that positively links the flash floods, forest fires and extreme heat waves happening in the UK, Europe and other parts of the world right now to the rising levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

This TIF bid has the potential to save lives, literally. Our air quality is worst along the arterial routes in Greater Manchester and as you will know, Air Quality Management Areas have been declared to deal primarily with the NOx and particulates that are the products of motor vehicles. Every six hours in the UK someone dies of asthma. Levels of childhood asthma in Greater Manchester run at twice the national average with 1 in 5 children over the age of five affected. Pollution from road traffic is the major contributor to asthma levels and by using your influence to reduce congestion and get more of our citizens onto public transport you can make a real difference. If you were in any need of a further reason to support this proposal, our coalition believes that there could be no better argument than the future health of our children.

Clearly there is also an overwhelming case for a public transport led TIF bid in order to materially reduce greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to significantly reducing our contribution to climate change. The proportion of greenhouse gas emissions from transport contributes approximately 25% of our national CO2 emissions and these proposals offer us a reduction in emissions of up to 10% on current projections. As well as reducing emissions from private cars and encouraging more fuel-efficient vehicles, the TIF bid will fund investment in better quality buses and extend Metrolink thus reducing pollution and environmental impact in our area.

Greater Manchester is presented with the opportunity of becoming the first major conurbation in the UK to develop a significant carbon reducing transport strategy and set an example to the world. By doing this we will demonstrate that just as Greater Manchester in the 1800's led the way in an industrial revolution, so now it is now in the 21st century it is serious about leading the way in sustainable economic and environmental revolution.

As an AGMA leader I urge you not to be distracted by the hectoring tone of the extremist, pro-car lobby as you make this pivotal decision. We have a duty to tackle congestion and the associated economic, environmental and health issues. We have to clean up air pollution for the people of Greater Manchester today and tomorrow and start to take significant action on climate change for the sake of our children and our future.

Speaking personally as both a businessman and like many who support CAN a driver, for me, doing nothing is not an option.

I urge you on behalf of the CAN Coalition and the people of Greater Manchester to move forward on Friday and say 'Yes' to the TIF bid and embrace this opportunity for our future.

Do contact me if you require any further information, my email is: dave@cleanairnow.co.uk

Yours sincerely,

Dave Coleman
Spokesperson for the CAN Coalition