
together
we are

**GREATER
MANCHESTER**

GMCA

GREATER MANCHESTER
COMBINED AUTHORITY

Using technology to tackle serious crime

Consultation on change
of use for Clean Air Zone
Automatic Number Plate
Recognition (ANPR) cameras
in Greater Manchester

ANPR cameras originally installed across Greater Manchester for a proposed charging-Clean Air Zone that is now not going ahead could be used to help tackle serious crime and keep communities safe.

Consultation aims

The aims of this consultation are to:

- gather views on changing the primary use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras (originally installed for a proposed Clean Air Zone) to law enforcement purposes
- Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) wants to understand and consider your views to help shape a final proposal for the ANPR cameras, with the aim of keeping Greater Manchester as safe a place as possible to live, work and drive in
- ensure transparency and fairness when making a decision about future use of the Clean Air Zone ANPR cameras

The proposal is being made with the aim of creating safer and stronger communities across the city region.

Give your views

This consultation will gather views from residents, businesses and community groups in Greater Manchester, including road users and non-road users.

The consultation is taking place for six weeks from Friday 26 September (12am) to Thursday 6 November (11.59pm).

Find out more and fill out the survey at [**gmconsult.org/ANPR**](https://gmconsult.org/ANPR)

A decision on the future use of the Clean Air Zone ANPR cameras is expected by the end of 2025.

Background

ANPR cameras originally installed across Greater Manchester for a proposed charging-Clean Air Zone that is now not going ahead could be used to help tackle serious crime and keep communities safe.

Like many areas across the country, Greater Manchester local authorities are under a government direction to meet legal limits for nitrogen dioxide on local roads.

The government has now [approved an investment-led Clean Air Plan](#) that does not include charging drivers, so the cameras are no longer needed to monitor vehicle compliance with a charging-Clean Air Zone.

However, we do need to keep the ANPR cameras as some data from the cameras still needs to be used to understand the types of vehicles on local roads and how they are contributing to air pollution.

This will help Greater Manchester monitor the effectiveness of the Clean Air Plan and progress toward meeting legal air quality limits for nitrogen dioxide on local roads.

These ANPR cameras have been funded by the government's Joint Air Quality Unit and are owned by Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM).





Proposal to change the main use of the ANPR cameras

Greater Manchester Police (GMP), TfGM, and GMCA are now looking at how they can legally and practically use the former Clean Air Zone ANPR cameras for law enforcement and community safety purposes. The government is supportive of this approach. The proposal is to:

- transfer ownership of the former, proposed Clean Air Zone ANPR cameras to GMP and include them in GMP's existing ANPR network
- change the ANPR cameras' primary use from clean air purposes to detecting, preventing and tackling crime, to improve community safety
- allow TfGM to continue to access anonymised camera data for transport planning and Clean Air Plan monitoring

This proposal would also allow GMP to make better use of and get good value out of this existing infrastructure to help keep people and communities safe.

GMP already has a network of ANPR cameras and is committed to following the National ANPR Standards for Policing and Law Enforcement, using ANPR in an ethical way that keeps public trust and confidence, while improving public safety.

This proposal would also allow GMP to make better use of and get good value out of this existing infrastructure to help keep people and communities safe.

Benefits of ANPR use for law enforcement

ANPR technology is already used by GMP and forces across the United Kingdom.

GMP has its own ANPR network and can currently request Clean Air Zone ANPR camera data for law enforcement purposes on a case-by-case basis, but this can take time.

The delay can limit the Clean Air Zone ANPR data's effectiveness and usefulness for GMP.

The proposal to bring these ANPR cameras into GMP's existing network would:

- give GMP real-time access to data and allow it to better respond to incidents and improve police investigations
- improve coverage and effectiveness, bringing the size of GMP's network across the Greater Manchester city region in line with that of comparable metropolitan police forces

Clean Air Zone ANPR data requested by GMP has already contributed to investigations including murders, fatal road traffic collisions, serious sexual offences, robbery, aggravated burglary, firearms offences and missing persons.

ANPR cameras are not used to monitor or enforce speed limits or to issue Fixed Penalty Notices.



ANPR and crime prevention

ANPR has a proven track record, playing an important role to provide lines of enquiry and evidence in crime investigations. GMP already uses its limited ANPR network to:

- detect and disrupt criminal activity at a local, force, regional and national level
- tackle traveling criminals (using the road network to avoid being caught), Organised Crime Groups and terrorists
- investigate serious crimes (e.g. murder, violent crime, sexual offences, robbery and burglary)
- prevent neighbourhood crime, support victims of crime and protect the wider public
- locate missing persons and safeguard vulnerable individuals

How ANPR works

The cameras are pointed at a fixed location on the road and read vehicle registration plates on the back of vehicles that pass through that location.

The registrations are automatically read and immediately checked against a national database of vehicles of interest.

If a match is identified, GMP officers are alerted and can conduct further analysis and allocate resource to respond to the intelligence.

GMP can also access vehicle registration data when undertaking investigations.

Where necessary, police can make arrests and/or safeguard vulnerable people.

What ANPR cameras are not

ANPR cameras do not monitor or enforce speed limits and are not used to directly issue Fixed Penalty Notices.

Cameras cannot be remotely moved or used to track vehicles in motion.

They do not have any biometric or facial recognition capabilities.

ANPR can help police detect and disrupt criminal activity at a local, force, regional and national level.



Clean Air Zone ANPR camera data requests from law enforcement so far

GMP does not currently store or have real-time access to Clean Air Zone ANPR data.

GMP can submit formal specific data requests to TfGM (as the current data owner) for law enforcement or to support criminal investigations, but this can take time.

- Since February 2022 TfGM has received 960 requests for personal data from Clean Air Zone ANPR cameras.
- 629 requests were fulfilled (around two-thirds).

From January 2023 to April 2025, these data requests supported investigations including:

- 27 major crimes (including murder and fatal road collisions)
- 36 serious crimes (including sexual offences, robbery, aggravated burglary and firearms offences)
- 30 other crime investigations
- 4 high-risk missing persons cases

TfGM reviews each request to ensure it complies with data protection laws and its privacy policy, which allows sharing data with police (and/or other law enforcement agencies) for crime prevention, detection, and apprehending or prosecuting offenders.

GMP does not currently store or have real-time access to Clean Air Zone ANPR data

Data privacy and security: How ANPR data is stored by GMP

GMP follows strict national standards for its existing ANPR network, including:

- [National ANPR Standards for Policing and Law Enforcement \(NASPLE\)](#)
- [National Compliance and Audit Standards for Law Enforcement ANPR \(Audit Standards\)](#)

There are clear rules:

- Access is limited to GMP staff with a valid reason relevant to their role.
- Most data is only accessible to people with permission for up to 90 days from the date it was collected.
- Serious, major or counter-terrorism investigations may allow some staff data access for up to one year, with senior approval.

GMP is committed to using ANPR within guidelines to help residents be and feel safe while having their privacy respected.

ANPR camera locations and oversight in Greater Manchester

In line with national policy, ANPR camera locations are not disclosed by GMP to protect their effectiveness. This information could be of benefit to offenders.

National guidelines state that to install any new cameras GMP must demonstrate a clear need, including assessing:

- local crime levels
- community confidence and reassurance, and crime prevention and reduction
- national security and counter terrorism
- serious, organised and major crime

GMP conducts Data Privacy Impact Assessments (DPIA) and consults with relevant people and stakeholders (with a reasonable interest) when making this assessment and before installing new cameras.

GMP is committed to regularly reviewing camera locations to ensure their use continues to be justified.

All reviews consider the impacts on privacy.



What is the 'change of use' proposal for Clean Air Zone ANPR Cameras in Greater Manchester?

ANPR cameras were originally installed to support a GM-wide Clean Air Zone that would charge drivers of polluting, non-compliant vehicles.

That plan has changed, and the Clean Air Zone is not going ahead. But the cameras do need to remain as some data from the cameras still needs to be used to help monitor how well the investment-led Clean Air Plan is working.

It's now being proposed that GMP take ownership of the ANPR cameras

and add them to their existing network. This would change their main purpose to helping detect, prevent and investigate crime.

This will allow GMP to receive and access the data instantly on their own IT systems, helping them better respond to incidents more quickly and improve safety across the region.

TfGM still needs access to data from the cameras to support transport planning and help understand vehicle emissions on the city region's local roads – and monitor and assess how effective the investment-led Clean Air Plan is.

It is proposed that GMP would therefore share anonymised data from the ANPR cameras with TfGM to support this.

Give your views

Thank you for taking the time to read this consultation document.

GMCA wants to understand and consider your views to help shape a final proposal for the ANPR cameras, with the aim of keeping Greater Manchester as safe a place as possible to live, work and drive in.

The consultation is taking place for six weeks from **Friday 26 September (12am) to Thursday 6 November (11.59pm)**.

Visit the consultation page and fill out the survey:
gmconsult.org/ANPR

Email us at:

pccenquiries@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk



together
we are

**GREATER
MANCHESTER**

GMCA GREATER MANCHESTER
COMBINED AUTHORITY
