

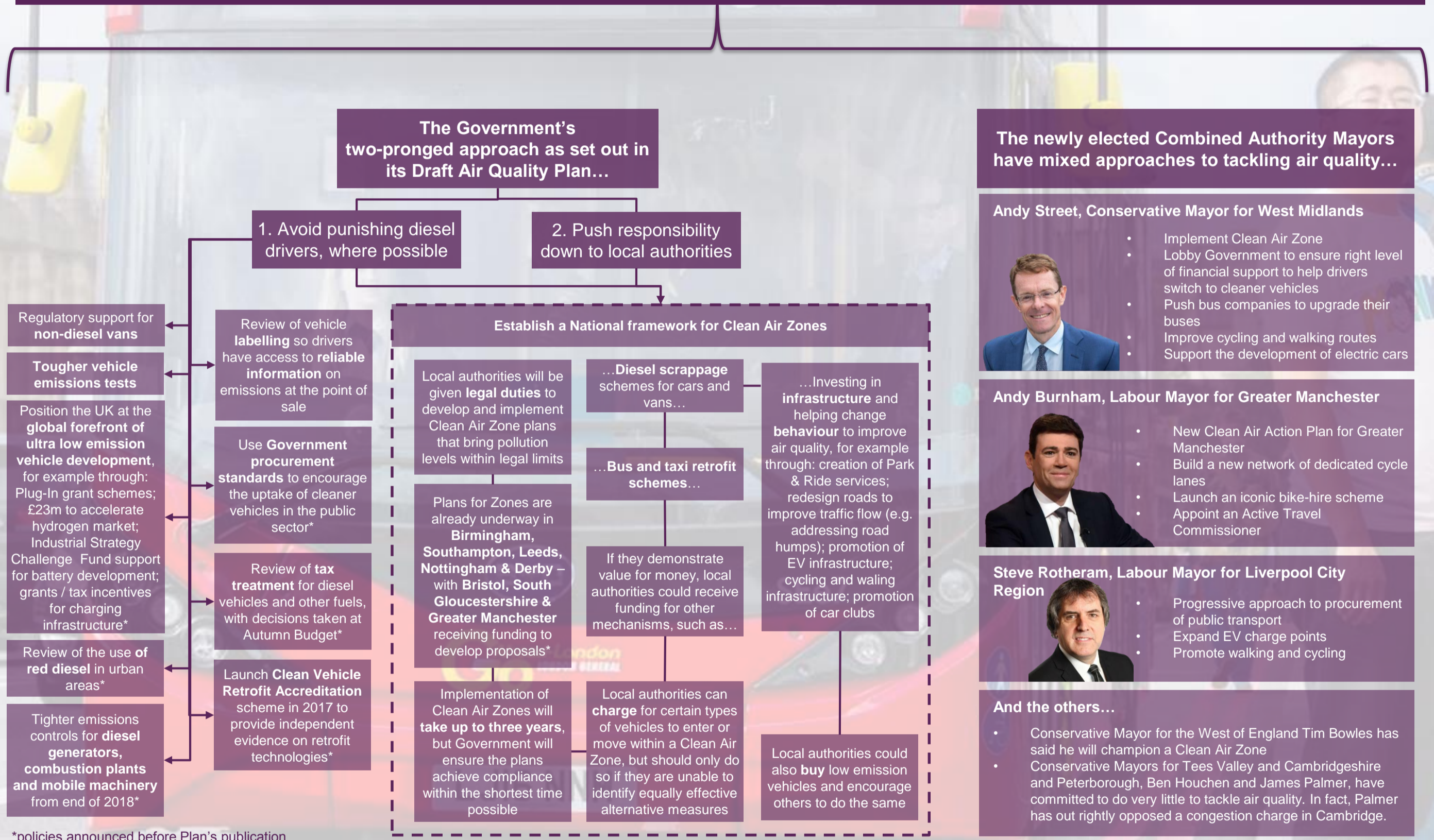
Bringing the UK in line with legal air pollution limits

An overview of the UK Government's and Mayoral plans to tackle nitrogen dioxide in towns and cities

Already, the UK air quality policymaking landscape is characterised by a lack of clarity about the roles and responsibilities of central, devolved and local government alongside varying views on how the UK should tackle the issue. This was further complicated by developments last week which saw the long-awaited publication of the Government's Draft Air Quality Plan which puts in writing the UK Government's approach for bringing the UK in line with legal EU nitrogen dioxide limits, as well as the election of six new Mayors with powers over transport – each with differing approaches towards air quality. Below we summarise the key outputs from both.

Political context

The publication of the Draft Air Quality Plan followed the recent High Court ruling forcing the Government's hand, despite its protests that election rules under purdah (the pre-election period) prevented the publication of Government policy documents. Following the decision, the Conservative Party has been clear that blame for the current air quality crisis should be attributed to the failure of European emissions regulations, coupled with the poor advice in promoting diesel cars from the previous Labour Government. Equally, in an effort to avoid potentially politically toxic policies aimed at motorists, the Government has set out proposals that a) avoid punishing "ordinary working families" who bought diesel vehicles under the advice of previous Governments and b) push the responsibility for meeting air pollution targets down to a devolved and local authority level.



So what next?

The Government's Draft Air Quality Plan is open for consultation until 15th June, just one week after the 8th June General Election. The Government will then need to finalise the Plan by 31st July, providing a very limited window for scrutiny in the new Parliament with Select Committees likely to be formed in mid-July, Parliament rising for Summer Recess on 21st July and debate likely to be dominated by Brexit. This may be further complicated if reports regarding Andrea Leadsom's departure from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs prove true. We'd love to help your organisation navigate this complex operating landscape and ensure that your voice is heard. To learn more, get in touch with James Nason at james.nason@instinctif.com or follow us @Instinctif_PP.