



House of Commons
Environmental Audit
Committee

**Action on Air Quality:
Government Response
to the Committee's
Sixth Report of Session
2014–15.**

**Twelfth Special Report of Session
2014–15**

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Environmental Audit Committee

The Environmental Audit Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to consider to what extent the policies and programmes of government departments and non-departmental public bodies contribute to environmental protection and sustainable development; to audit their performance against such targets as may be set for them by Her Majesty's Ministers; and to report thereon to the House.

All publications of the Committee (including press notices) and further details can be found on the Committee's web pages at www.parliament.uk/eacom.

Membership at the time of the report

[Joan Walley MP](#) (*Labour, Stoke-on-Trent North*) (Chair)

[Peter Aldous MP](#) (*Conservative, Waveney*)

[Neil Carmichael MP](#) (*Conservative, Stroud*)

[Martin Caton MP](#) (*Labour, Gower*)

[Katy Clark MP](#) (*Labour, North Ayrshire and Arran*)

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[Dr Matthew Offord MP](#) (*Conservative, Hendon*)

[Dan Rogerson MP](#) (*Liberal Democrat, North Cornwall*) [ex-officio]

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[Mr Mark Spencer MP](#) (*Conservative, Sherwood*)

[Dr Alan Whitehead MP](#) (*Labour, Southampton, Test*)

[Simon Wright MP](#) (*Liberal Democrat, Norwich South*)

The following members were also members of the committee during the parliament:

Richard Benyon MP (*Conservative, Newbury*) [ex-officio], Chris Evans MP (*Labour/Co-operative, Islwyn*), Ian Murray MP (*Labour, Edinburgh South*), Sheryl Murray MP (*Conservative, South East Cornwall*), Paul Uppal MP (*Conservative, Wolverhampton South West*)

Twelfth Special Report

The Environmental Audit Committee reported to the House on 8 December 2014 on *Action on Air Quality* (HC 212). On 16 December a prospective EU directive on air quality, which was discussed in our report, was dropped from the European Commission's *2015 Work Programme*, "to be modified as part of the legislative follow-up to the *2030 Energy & Climate Package*".¹ On 15 December, we had written to the President of the European Commission about this.² On 21 January we wrote to the Defra minister about air quality monitoring,³ which was also discussed in our report, and he responded on 31 January 2015.⁴ The Infrastructure Bill, which included provisions relating to the remit of the Strategic Highways Company (another issue covered in our report), was given Royal Assent on 12 February. The Government response to our Report was received on 20 February 2015, and is appended below.

Appendix—Government response

Introduction

The Environmental Audit Committee published its *Action on Air Quality* report on 8 December 2014. This examined progress in air pollution policy.

The Government has noted the Environmental Audit Committee's report and is grateful for its views. We are committed to improving air quality.

The Government recognises that clean air is vital for people's health. Air quality has improved significantly in recent decades as we have addressed emissions from transport, industry and other sources through negotiations at European and domestic levels.

Particulate Matter and nitrogen oxide emissions in the UK have more than halved up to 2012 via EU legislation; Average roadside concentrations of nitrogen dioxide levels have fallen 15% since 2010.

We are investing heavily in measures across government to continue this and have committed £2 billion since 2011 in green transport initiatives. We recently announced £100m funding dedicated to air quality improvements to the strategic road network as part of the delivery of the Road Investment Strategy. We have also invested heavily in our forecasting and monitoring to keep the public informed of air pollution levels.

¹ European Commission, [Communication from the Commission: Commission Work programme 2015: A new start, Annex](#) (16 December 2014)

² [Letter from the Committee to Jean-Claude Juncker](#) (15 December 2014)

³ [Letter from the Committee to Dan Rogerson MP](#) (21 January 2015)

⁴ [Letter to the Committee from Dan Rogerson MP](#) (31 January 2015)

We continue to support local authorities in identifying the best solutions for their area, sharing best practice and consulting on changes to reduce the administrative burden placed on councils. The Government further supports Local Authority efforts through various schemes including the Air Quality Grant Scheme and the Clean Vehicle Technology Fund.

We support the aim of the new National Emission Ceilings Directive proposal to reduce trans-boundary pollution and implement the Gothenburg Protocol. The Commission recently announced that the proposal will be modified to maximise synergies with the 2030 Climate and Energy Package. We will continue to work with the Commission, the European Parliament and other Member States to make sure that ceilings for 2030 are set at the right level of ambition based on evidence.

A new test procedure for Euro 6 light duty vehicles scheduled to be introduced by the Commission by 2017 will improve type approval laboratory testing and a further new test will be added to assess vehicles under real world driving conditions. We will continue to work with the European Commission and other Member States to ensure the latest standards deliver the expected emission reductions under real world conditions.

Government's responses to the specific recommendations

The Government's responses to the Committee's recommendations on pages 41–43 of its report are set out below:

Recommendation 1: The Government should without any further delay introduce a national framework for Low Emission Zones, with common metrics and a national certification scheme for vehicles meeting particular air quality standards, to facilitate their widespread adoption. (Paragraph 21)

Currently, decisions on the introduction of low emissions zones are made at a local level by local authorities to suit their specific circumstances. Also, in 2010 the Government published 'Low Emission Strategies Good Practice Guidance' to establish ways in which the planning system may be used to reduce emissions from transport, in order to improve local air quality.

However, all measures are currently being investigated further to ensure an effective package of measures to tackle air pollution is developed. The Government is currently carrying out a review in order to update its air quality plans. The use of both individual low emission zones and a national approach will form part of the review. Following public consultation the UK Air Quality plans will be submitted to the Commission at the end of this year.

Recommendation 2: Defra and the Department for Transport should work urgently with the Treasury to establish long-term goals and timescales for a step by step re-balancing of fuel duty and Vehicle Excise Duty consistent with reducing not just CO2 emissions but also NO2 and particulate matter impacts. (Paragraph 30)

The Government's focus is on supporting cleaner vehicles and sustainable transport in order to reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality. The Government announced at Budget 2013 that it has no plans to make significant changes to the VED structure in this Parliament, and announced at Autumn Statement 2013 that fuel duty will be frozen for the remainder of this Parliament.

Since 2010, we have committed over £2bn for a wide variety of measures that support cleaner, greener transport and help reduce pollutant emissions. These measures have included support for ultra-low emission vehicles, low carbon public transport and sustainable transport including walking and cycling.

Recommendation 3: The Government should explore regulatory and enforcement options for ensuring that, once fitted, diesel particulate filters are not removed from vehicles, and where filters are fitted standards are enforced through thorough testing and monitoring. Having raised this with the Minister, we welcome his commitment to tackle this matter and expect an early statement on the actions planned. (Paragraph 31)

The Government is committed to preventing the removal of diesel particulate filters (DPF) from vehicles. It is an offence under the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations to use a vehicle which has been modified in such a way that it no longer complies with the air pollutant emissions standards it was designed to meet.

Removal of a DPF will almost invariably contravene these requirements, making the vehicle illegal for road use. The potential penalties for failing to comply are fines of up to £1,000 for a car or £2,500 for a light goods vehicle.

In February 2014 the Department for Transport introduced a change to the MoT test to require a visual inspection of the exhaust system of diesel vehicles to ensure that where a DPF was fitted to the vehicle from new, it is still in place. This brings the MoT inspection of diesel vehicle exhausts in line with the petrol inspection which requires a check for the presence of a catalytic converter. To date approximately 350 vehicles have failed their MoT as a result of this change. The Department of Transport will be working over the next 12 months to explore ways to strengthen its legislative framework to take action where emissions control equipment is deliberately tampered with in such a way that air quality will be adversely affected.

Recommendation 4: We recognise that the rationale for previous moves to promote diesel to reduce carbon emissions was sound at the time. In the light of increasing public health concerns, however, we need to change policy direction. The Government should consider the scope for subsidising diesel vehicle owners to retrofit their engines or a national diesel vehicle scrappage scheme on the basis of a full cost-benefit analysis that reflects the different circumstances, costs and benefits in urban and rural areas. (Paragraph 32)

The Government's goal is to support measures to encourage cleaner, more sustainable vehicles and transport systems. We have taken a fuel neutral approach to achieving this objective.

Since 2010, we have committed over £2bn for a wide variety of measures that support cleaner, greener transport and help reduce pollutant emissions. These measures have included support for ultra-low emission vehicles, low carbon public transport and sustainable transport including walking and cycling. There are no current plans for a national diesel scrappage or engine retrofit scheme. But as part of revising our national air quality plans by the end of 2015, all feasible measures including those recommended by the committee are currently being investigated further to ensure an effective package of measures is developed to deliver compliance in the shortest possible time.

Recommendation 5: The Government should continue to work with the European Commission to develop Euro VI/6 standards and the vehicle emission tests to reflect realistic driving conditions. It should maintain pressure on the Commission to deliver that testing regime in 2017, as planned. (Paragraph 36)

The Government has sought to reduce the public health impact of road transport emissions, especially emissions of particulate matter (a contributing factor to cardiovascular mortality), and has worked actively with the European Commission and Member States to deliver significant improvements in new vehicle emissions.

The Government has been engaged throughout EU discussions to ensure that future standards deliver the intended improvements in air quality. A new test procedure scheduled to be introduced by the Commission by 2017 will improve type approval laboratory testing and a further new test is being added that will assess vehicles under real world driving conditions on the road. We will continue to work with the European Commission and other Member States to ensure the latest standards deliver the expected emission reductions under real world conditions.

Recommendation 6: The Office for Low Emission Vehicles should work with departments, including DECC, to bring a step change in reducing air pollution and carbon emissions. The Government should consider the scope for financial incentives for a range of alternatively fuelled cars, including gas-fuelled cars, while taking care not to reduce the momentum now emerging for expanding electric vehicle usage or to cause doubts about the Government's commitment to the electric vehicle technology. Such financial support, however, should be based on a strategic assessment of the relative benefits of the different options for using limited available funds, mindful for example that financial support might also be used to support local authorities in introducing low emission zones. (Paragraph 40)

Part of the over £2bn invested in delivering a greener transport system is to support a range of alternative fuels such as gas and electric vehicle technology.

In April 2014 the Office for Low Emission Vehicles announced the initial funding allocations for their £500m package of support for Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles (ULEV) for the period 2015–2020. This included:

- A new **£35m Cities Scheme** competition, which will provide support to a small number of cities seeking to implement specific ULEV-centric policies to drive a step-change in ULEV adoption.
- **£20 million** to encourage a new generation of ultra-low emission **taxis** on our local roads.
- **£30 million** boost to the **ULEV bus** market, building on the successful Green Bus Fund.
- At least **£200 million** on the continuation of the Plug in Grant, which provides grants of up to 75% towards the installation of home and on-street charging, rapid chargers in key locations and chargers at train stations and the wider public estate. The grant will remain at £5,000 until 50,000 grants or 2017.
- **£31 million** grant support for other ULEV sectors, including vans.
- At least **£32 million** on new infrastructure including £20 million to extend the number of rapid chargers on our roads.
- **£4 million** to support the early deployment of ‘open access’ (i.e. publicly accessible) **gas refuelling stations** for heavy goods vehicles (HGVs). This support will enable operators who tend to refuel at base to extend their operational routing of gas HGVs resulting in the ability for longer trip distances and increased payloads.
- **£7.5 million** of funding to support the establishment of 15 hydrogen refuelling stations and support for the deployment of hydrogen fuel cell vehicles in the public fleet.

Also, the Department for Transport is currently undertaking a research programme on a range of gaseous fuels (including compressed natural gas and liquefied natural gas), to determine their feasibility in contributing to improvements in the UK’s air quality as well as our renewable energy and greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets. It expects to produce initial outputs from this research by early 2015.

Recommendation 7: The Government should identify best practice in managing bus fleet pollution and provide local transport authorities with advice on how this issue can be addressed when putting out bus route tenders for contract. The Government should also put an emphasis on tackling pollutants as well as carbon emissions in its Green Bus Fund and the Clean Vehicle Technology Fund when helping to meet the costs of upgrading vehicles. (Paragraph 47)

Since the last EAC report, the Government has made great strides in supporting low emission buses. Since 2009, we have provided £89m of grants through the Green Bus Fund, which has helped bus operators and local authorities in England purchase around 1200 new low emission buses. In April 2014, we announced as part of our £500m Ultra Low Emission Vehicles package, a £30million boost to the ULEV bus market.

The Government is also supporting local authorities to reduce emissions from their older, more polluting buses by funding national retrofit schemes. In 2013, the Government committed £7.3m to help local authorities outside London upgrade older buses operating in congested areas with nitrogen oxides emission reducing technologies, through the Clean Bus Technology Fund. In 2014 we built on this ambition by providing up to £9m funding through the Clean Vehicle Technology Fund to support the retrofit of over 1000 vehicles, including buses, taxis, ambulances and fire engines.

All local authorities are able to introduce 'Quality Partnership Schemes where they can, for example, invest in new bus lanes or other facilities and require buses using those facilities to meet certain environmental standards. These can include air quality standards. Guidance on Quality Partnership Schemes can be found here <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20090607112847/http://www.dft.gov.uk/adobepdf/165237/299192/qps.pdf>

Local authorities, outside London, are also able to input into local bus service registrations in their area. Bus operators must register their local bus services with the relevant Traffic Commissioner. Local traffic authorities can request to a Traffic Commissioner to impose traffic regulation conditions regulating the operation of local bus services in defined areas where they are causing particular concern. Traffic regulation conditions can regulate routes, the stopping places of services, the emission levels of vehicles used, the noise pollution levels that may result from the operation and limit the number of vehicles used.

Recommendation 8: The Government should issue NPPF guidance which makes clearer the great importance of protecting good air quality including protecting green spaces in development planning. Specifically, the NPPF should make it impossible to build new schools, care homes or health clinics near existing air pollution hotspots, and any redevelopment of such existing buildings should only be approved if they reduce pollution exposure for their users. Building regulations should provide for existing schools sited near pollution hotspots to be fitted with air filtration systems. (Paragraph 60)

The Government recognises that clean air is vital for people's good health and this concern is reflected in the National Planning Policy Framework which sets out the highest level of protections on the matters raised by the Committee. The Framework is clear that new development should be appropriate for its location, taking proper account of the effects of pollution on people's health. There are also strict tests in place to protect open space and the Framework introduced a new Local Green Space designation which enables communities to designate land of particular importance to them for special protection.

Local plans, prepared by local councils working with their local communities are at the heart of the planning system and key to delivering sustainable development. They inform individual decisions on the location of new development, including new schools, care homes and health clinics. Local planning authorities are therefore well placed to judge planning applications taking account of local circumstances and whether what is proposed is sustainable development, in line with the framework and supporting guidance. In doing

so, they will also take into account local action to improve air quality and mitigation measures proposed as part of the development in question.

The Building Regulations include requirements to provide adequate means of ventilation and apply when ‘building work’ is carried out. The regulations are however not retrospective and do not require work to be carried out to existing buildings. For buildings in urban areas guidance is provided to minimise ingress of external pollution through appropriate location and control of ventilation intakes and exhaust outlets. For school buildings, reference is made to “Building Bulletin 101 Ventilation of School Buildings” which recognises that filters are often fitted to mechanical ventilation systems and can provide cleaner air but are only effective at dealing with the pollutants they are designed for and need to be replaced and/or cleaned regularly. For this reason effective location of ventilation intakes is a preferable strategy.

The Government does not consider at this time, that there is a need for additional planning guidance or Building Regulations given the current level of protection, but we will keep this matter under review.

Recommendation 9: We welcome the Minister’s commitment to ensure that the Strategic Highways Company (transforming the Highways Agency to a company) will have a remit which includes environmental performance. The Government should give it a legal duty to protect air quality and introduce a specific clause to that effect in the Infrastructure Bill. (Paragraph 61)

Dealing with environmental challenges, including air quality, remains a high priority for this Government. Essential environmental protections related to the management and mitigation of the environmental impacts of roads are already enshrined in existing legislation. These will also apply to the new company (Highways England) as they currently do to the Highways Agency.

The Infrastructure Bill requires that the Secretary of State for Transport has regard to safety and the environment when setting the Road Investment Strategy. The Bill also places a general duty on Highways England to consider the impact of its operations on the environment. The impact of its operations on air quality will be part of this general duty. Individual major roads schemes will go through a thorough environmental assessment including a detailed consideration of their air quality impacts and a robust decision-making process under either the Highways Act 1980 or the Planning Act 2008.

The Government’s recently published Road Investment Strategy (RIS) represents a major commitment to the environment. Its measures include more than £1bn in environmental mitigation, including the biggest-ever dedicated funds for applying environmental standards to the existing road network (£300m general environment; £100m air quality; £100m cycling).

Recommendation 10: The Government should add an explicit air quality objective to the Airports Commission Appraisal Framework. (Paragraph 63)

The Government has asked Sir Howard Davies to chair the independent Airports Commission. The Commission will publish a final report by the summer of 2015 for consideration by the Government and opposition parties. The Commission published its appraisal framework in April 2014 and this includes an air quality objective. The final report to Government will consider fully the environmental impact of the proposals.

Recommendation 11: The Government should set out a clear picture of the demarcations within central government and between central and local government on the management of air quality, bringing greater consistency to that relationship. The Government should work with the most polluting cities to identify what, if any, of the powers held by London might be replicated elsewhere to improve air quality. It should explain how far localism should operate in this policy field. The Government should ensure, however, that its desire to reduce red tape will not be allowed to undermine robust air quality monitoring across the country, which must be a responsibility that central government cannot absolve itself from. (Paragraph 74)

Recommendation 12: Clarity about the extent of local government responsibility for air quality would help to present a clearer perspective for Health & Well-being Boards on the priority they need to give to this critical health challenge. Public Health England should engage with the Boards to ensure that they are discharging that responsibility, and raise with Government any evidence that local authority governance arrangements are preventing appropriate action. (Paragraph 75)

As part of the review of Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) in England, on which we recently held a second consultation, we set out our intention to further clarify in policy guidance the various roles and responsibilities for tackling air quality. The Government assesses air quality in the UK through a combination of monitoring and modelling. The Government reviews the arrangements every 5 years as set out in the EU Air Quality Directive. Local Authorities also undertake monitoring separately for the purposes of Local Air Quality Management.

Health and Wellbeing Boards are responsible for developing an analysis of the current and future health and care needs of the local population and a strategy (a shared set of priorities) to address these. In March 2013, the Department of Health published statutory guidance to support health and wellbeing boards undertake Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies. The Guidance focuses on the methodology for producing comprehensive and high quality assessments and strategies, and emphasises the importance of understanding and addressing the needs of the local population but it does not specify what areas Boards should prioritise, as this is for local determination.

Recommendation 13: The Government should work more closely with the Met Office, BBC and other broadcasters to ensure that high air pollution forecasts are disseminated widely via mainstream media in the same way pollen and UV forecasts are broadcast now, together with advice on what action should be taken. The Government should ensure that local authorities are aware of where to find this

information. Schools and care homes should be identified and presented with air pollution advice so that they know what to do during air pollution events. (Paragraph 80)

The Government make available daily UK air pollution forecasts (covering five pollutants) to inform the public what pollution levels are predicted to be over the next 5 days. The forecasts are provided to allow people to plan ahead and take action not just to reduce their exposure but also to reduce their contribution to local air pollution. The information is available on the Government's website, UK-Air, and via a range of channels including a free automated telephone service, automated twitter feeds and e-mail bulletins.

The Government will continue to work closely with all the relevant stakeholders to ensure that information is accessible to the general public and other relevant organisations. Utilising our improved forecasting capabilities, we are exploring further options for disseminating information more widely. This includes working more closely with health charities, to develop communications approaches and use their targeted networks to effectively reach the people most at risk.

Recommendation 14: We welcome the Transport Minister's commitment to us for a "new marketing plan" on air quality, which should be introduced as quickly as possible. (Paragraph 85)

The Government will continue to raise public awareness and develop a programme of communications to support the Road Investment Strategy's £100 million funding for mitigating air pollution. This could include media relations, stakeholder engagement, use of social media and marketing.

Recommendation 15: The Government should ensure that air quality data are widely available to the general public, including drivers, along with advice on measures to reduce air pollution and how they can reduce their own pollution exposure. The Government should encourage active travel such as walking and cycling—the ultimate low emission options. (Paragraph 86)

The Government recognises that as well as meeting legislative requirements, there is a need to inform people about environmental and human health risks from poor air quality and to provide public information services. Defra makes freely available measurement, modelling and emissions data on its websites as well as research reports and tools for accessing and analysing air quality data under Open Government Licence. Improving air quality through decreased emissions or reducing human exposure to air pollution requires behavioural change and this can be supported and driven by knowledge and information.

As part of the Government's £2bn investment in green transport initiatives, measures include over £1bn in local sustainable travel projects, which includes 'bikeability' funding. £278 million is for cycling and walking initiatives supported by a further £85 million of local match funding.

Local authorities implement a range of measures to improve air quality. Measures include: improvement to public transport infrastructure to encourage behavioural change;

pollution mitigation and awareness measures to assist and inform vulnerable people; measures to reduce emissions and promote cleaner vehicle standards.

The Government is strongly supportive of efforts to encourage active travel and is working to ensure that this is embedded in all Departmental policies.

Recommendation 16: We welcome increasing examples of ‘citizen science’ and other local projects that raise public awareness of air quality issues, which central and local government should actively support. Local Health & Wellbeing Boards and clinicians should be taking a lead in promoting public awareness and active travel. (Paragraph 87)

Citizen science projects can have a valuable role in collecting additional local data and raising public awareness of air quality and its associated health impacts. A number of projects are supported by Local Authorities and academic institutes. Such projects generally provide a local snapshot of air quality. Any evidence needs to be considered within the wider context of air quality over longer periods of time as provided by our national air quality monitoring which has to meet very specific requirements, as set out in EU Directives.

The “Under the Weather” resource on climate change adaptation for Health and Wellbeing Boards, developed by the Sustainable Development Unit draws attention to the impacts of poor air quality and suggests actions that Boards could consider taking, including improving active travel. While it is for local Health and Wellbeing Boards to decide priorities there is guidance provided to highlight the opportunities to promote active travel for its health benefits as well as the potential benefits for other policy areas such as air quality.

Public Health England’s Business Plan for 2014–15 commits it to developing a programme of work in support of national and local government, to reduce mortality attributable to air pollution. The intention is to focus on actions that PHE can take to encourage measures to reduce the health effects of air pollution at local, national and international levels, particularly those which have co-benefits for other public health priorities. PHE publishes estimates of the fraction of mortality attributable to long-term exposure to particulate air pollution in each local authority area annually as one of the indicators in the Public Health Outcomes Framework.

A referral has been made by the Secretary of State for Health to the National Institute for Health Care and Excellence (NICE) for the development of public health guidance on outdoor air pollution to start in 2015.

Recommendation 17: In the absence now of an independent body responsible for air quality, the time has come for decisive action and we therefore support calls for an independent public inquiry to look at the required urgent action on air pollution. (Paragraph 93)

The Government does not support the request for an independent public inquiry to look at air pollution. We are working, and will continue to work, with all the relevant organisations to ensure a consistent approach to air pollution.

Recommendation 18: The Government should update its ‘Air Quality Strategy’ of 2007, clearly spelling out the responsibilities of each Government department and identifying cross-Government actions needed to tackle air pollution. An updated Strategy should set out detailed plans and responsibilities for addressing the 16 air quality zones that are subject to potential EU infraction fines. The Strategy should clearly delineate the respective roles and responsibilities of central and local government. The Government should rationalise air quality funding schemes and provide a clear rationale for what local authority actions will be funded by central government and what by local authorities themselves. This would help bring forward the needed debate about the appropriate extent of localism in this policy area. (Paragraph 94)

The Government is currently reviewing air quality plans to bring all zones in the UK into compliance in the shortest possible time, not just focussing on the 16 zones covered by the infraction.

The current focus, therefore, is on how to deliver reductions of nitrogen dioxide on the ground through local, national and international action. We will consider how best to embed this work into a National Air Quality strategy following submission of the new Air Quality Plans at the end of this year.

The Government is also in the process of rationalising Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) across England, with the Greater London Authority pursuing a similar programme for the Capital. We recognise that adopting a partnership approach at EU, national and local level is the best way to forge policies and funding schemes that can have co-benefits for carbon reduction, cleaner transport and sustainable planning.

There is already a strong link between the Government’s annual air quality grant programme and the Mayor of London’s Air Quality Fund, where an agreed policy of match-funding between the two schemes has greatly invigorated the scope of air quality projects across London boroughs. Ownership of the various schemes sit with different government departments and can include support for projects that might not always be specific to air quality (such as improving road surfaces) but will have a knock-on benefit. Therefore, rationalisation is not always possible or desirable. As part of the ongoing LAQM review to improve delivery of air quality, we will be revising current policy and technical guidance to ensure better link-up and knowledge of the various funding sources available.

Recommendation 19: To demonstrate its commitment to tackling air pollution, and a required new comprehensive Air Quality Strategy, the Government should work with the European Commission and the Council of Ministers to make the proposed new EU air quality directives effective and robust. (Paragraph 98)

We support work to reduce air pollution across Europe and are working closely with the Commission, the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament to negotiate proposals which are both effective and proportionate.

The Commission announced on 16 December 2014 that it will be modifying the National Emission Ceilings Directive as part of the legislative follow up to the 2030 Climate and

Energy Package. The Government will continue to work with the Commission, the European Parliament and other Member States to discuss the modifications of the proposal and ensure they are realistic and evidence-based.

An agreement between Member States on the Medium Combustion Plant Directive was reached at Environment Council on 17 December. The Government will continue to work with the Commission and Parliament to ensure the objectives of the proposal are met in a way that is proportionate and achievable.