



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Dr Thérèse Coffey MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

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Councillor Fran Wilson
Leader, Maidstone Borough Council
Cc. Alison Broom
Helen Grant MP

14 November 2016

Dear Councillor Fran Wilson,

Tackling air pollution is a priority for this Government which I expect we both want to achieve. We have committed £2billion since 2011 on transport measures to reduce emissions. Alongside national action, local authorities have a vital role to play as we work together to improve air quality across the country as quickly as possible, which is good for the residents we all represent.

You may know that we are updating our national air quality plans, with the intention of producing new plans next year. These will take into account the updated COPERT factors used to forecast car emissions, which we pressed for following the revelations about Volkswagen emissions.

Under the Local Air Quality Management system local authorities can designate air quality management areas (AQMA) where national objectives are not being met. I see that your local authority has had one or more AQMA declared for some time now and is in a group which Defra's 2015 analysis identifies as having current nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) exceedances, and as possibly still having NO₂ levels over 35 µg/m³ on some road links in 2020. You can find more details on this in the report on Air Pollution in the UK at: <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/library/annualreport/index>.

I appreciate the significant role vehicle emissions play in pollution levels, but I would be interested to hear whether there are specific local challenges that are proving hard to resolve. I would like to receive an update on your plan to reduce pollutants in your AQMA(s) to compliant levels.

I would like to remind you that local authorities already have powers to establish Clean Air Zones on a voluntary basis. I would welcome your views on the Government's Clean Air Zone Framework consultation (details here: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/airquality/implementation-of-cazs>).

We have also recently launched a new round of Air Quality Grants. There is still time to apply (details here: <http://laqm.defra.gov.uk/laqm-faqs/faq137.html>). All local authorities in England are eligible to bid and those with current or forecast air quality exceedances will be given priority.

My team would be very happy to discuss any of this with you. Please get in touch via air.quality@defra.gsi.gov.uk. I am writing in similar terms to Directors of Public Health.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

DR THERESE COFFEY MP



