



Subject:	UK Consultation on Draft plans to improve air quality
Date:	13 TH October 2015
Reporting Officer:	Siobhan Toland, Head of Environmental Health / Lead Operations Officer HESD
Contact Officer:	Stephen Leonard, Environmental Health Manager

Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	On 20 th February 2014 the European Commission launched legal proceedings against the UK for its failure to meet Limit Values for NO ₂ . Although the original deadline for meeting the limit values was 1 st January 2010, extensions were agreed with Member States which have a credible and workable plan for meeting air quality standards within five years of the original deadline, i.e. by January 2015.
1.2	The UK has now completed the draft air quality plan to be submitted to the European Commission. This consultation seeks views on the key elements from this plan and the UK's approach for meeting NO ₂ levels. It also includes copies of the draft plans for each of the 38 zones currently not in compliance.
1.3	The consultation closes on 6 th November 2015. DEFRA will submit the final plan to the European Commission in December 2015. A copy of the consultation documentation can be accessed via https://consult.defra.gov.uk/airquality/draft-aq-plans .
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	To consider and endorse the attached draft response to this consultation.

3.0	Key Issues
3.1	The UK is divided into 43 zones and agglomerations for air quality monitoring and reporting purposes. 38 of these zones, including Belfast, have been assessed as exceeding EU Limits for NO ₂ . Each of these zones has draft plans in place to improve NO ₂ levels.
3.2	Road transport is the dominant source of pollution in areas where the UK is exceeding NO ₂ limit levels.
3.3	Members will recall that the June meeting of the People & Communities Committee approved for consultation on a draft air quality action plan for the city. This included measures designed to ensure Belfast complied with EU limit values for NO ₂ by 2020 or before.
3.4	The measures listed in the draft air quality action plan for Belfast have been included in the proposed DEFRA plan for submission to the Commission in December.
3.5	The Department wrote to councils in March 2015 indicating cuts to the overall budget allocated to air quality management. The draft response highlights the need to ensure the monies allocated to councils remains sufficient to allow them to carry out all current legislative duties placed on them.
3.6	Responsibility for meeting air quality limit values in the UK is devolved to the national administrations in Scotland, Wales & Northern Ireland. The Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has responsibility for meeting limit values in England. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) co-ordinates assessment and air quality plans for the UK as a whole.
3.7	The Council's draft consultation response is attached as Appendix 1.
	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u>
3.8	Costs associated with the delivery of the Council's air quality duties have been estimated and provisions are accounted for within existing budget estimates.
	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u>

3.9	There are no relevant equality considerations associated with the delivery of the strategy.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
4.1	Appendix 1 – BCC Draft Consultation Response to DEFRA draft Plans to improve air quality in the UK.