

Len Duvall AM, Chair of the EU Exit Working Group

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Clive Betts MP

Chair
Housing, Communities and Local Government
Committee
House of Commons

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(Sent via email)

Dear Mr Betts,

Brexit and local government inquiry – evidence session, 19 March 2018

Thank you for the opportunity to give evidence to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee's Brexit and local government inquiry. The session in Manchester on 19 March 2018 was a welcome opportunity to ensure the voices of city regions and mayors are fed into the negotiations. Following the meeting, there are two additional issues I would like to raise to further inform the Committee's work on Brexit and local government.

Air quality

We did not have time to discuss which areas of EU law might need to be retained, repealed or amended. The London Assembly's main concern is with the implications of Brexit for air quality. As you know, London is the most severely polluted part of the UK.¹

We do not want to see any weakening of air quality standards after Brexit. The UK should have a new Clean Air Act ensuring citizens have a legally-enforceable right to clean air. Pending this, the EU Air Quality Directive should be retained in UK law after Brexit. There also needs to be reform of Vehicle Excise Duty and other incentives that continue to encourage the purchase of diesel cars.

Further to this, regional and local government needs powers to better regulate all sources of emissions. The Mayor of London is particularly seeking powers to regulate emissions from construction sites and machinery, and from waterway traffic, and powers to better regulate Private Hire Vehicles. Emissions from wood burning should also be regulated. We are also calling for a diesel scrappage scheme, so that ultra-low emission zones, such as that in London, and other incentives can drive a switch to cleaner vehicles and to help people who bought diesel cars on advice that they were better for the environment. Any further pressure from the Committee on these issues would be welcome to ensure a continuing focus on air quality after Brexit.

¹Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs and Department for Transport, [UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations](#), July 2017

On Brexit and Security

Security arrangements following Brexit is an issue that has concerned the London Assembly since the referendum. The Assembly has raised the issue a number of times – including latterly via our third Brexit Directive to the Mayor - ‘Security after Brexit’.²

Provisions such as Europol, the European Arrest Warrant, the Schengen Information System II, EU passenger name records, Prüm arrangements and the European Criminal Records Information System provide a helpful legal framework for the Met and other forces. This framework enhances the capability of the police to respond to threat, risk and harm. The Met has a specific role in protecting the UK from terrorism: our police force is therefore more vulnerable to changes in arrangement post-Brexit. We are pleased to say that the Mayor shares our views and has set out his six ‘red lines’ on security.³

We also welcome the Government’s objective to maintain current policing and security capabilities. But we are concerned that there is still little certainty about what can and will be achievable. We know from security arrangements between the EU and other countries, that coming to a bi-lateral deal on any one of the provisions is not a quick process. We ask that you join us in emphasising the importance of current policing and security arrangements for London and the UK, and push for the Government to make progress as soon as possible, on future arrangements.

Thank you again for inviting the London Assembly to contribute to your inquiry.

Yours sincerely,



Len Duvall AM
Chair of the EU Exit Working Group

² [London Assembly Brexit Directive III – Security after Brexit](#), 7 December 2017

³ [Mayor calls on ministers to ensure Brexit does not compromise safety](#), 19 October 2017