



Environmental Audit Committee

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Local air quality monitoring

In our Committee's report last year on *Action on Air Quality*, we urged the Government to set out a clear picture of the demarcations between central and local government on the management of air quality, to bring greater consistency to that relationship. We noted your 2013 consultation on changes to the Local Air Quality Monitoring (LAQM) regime, and recommended that the Government's "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."

We look forward to the Government Response to our report, but in the meantime we wish to raise our concerns about Defra's further consultation on LAQM, which was initiated since our report. Allowing local authorities to rationalise their progress reporting on air quality in a new single 'Annual Improvement Report' must not be allowed to dilute the obligation on local authorities to comprehensively monitor their air quality and report the results. Good quality guidance will of course have a role to play, but that will be no substitute for ensuring rigorous action on the ground, particularly with funding constraints putting pressure on how authorities allocate resources to priority areas.

We welcome the plan to introduce a statutory duty for local authorities to work to reduce PM_{2.5}. This is a significant risk for human health, as our report made clear. There will need to be comprehensive guidance on actions to tackle these particulates, and indeed also for remedial action on other sources of air pollution. That guidance should clarify local authorities' role on air quality — a key message from our report.

Joan Walley MP
Chair, Environmental Audit Committee