Dear Roseanna,

Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee inquiry into air quality in Scotland

I am writing to advise you of the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee inquiry into air quality in Scotland and to request information on the implementation of the Clean Air for Scotland Strategy “Cleaner Air for Scotland: the road to a healthier future”.

The Committee held an evidence session with experts and stakeholders on 2 May 2017 to consider the scale of the issue of air quality in Scotland and the robustness of Scottish plans to tackle this. On 6 June the Committee agreed to undertake an inquiry on air quality in Scotland and on 27 June the Committee agreed its approach to this work.

The inquiry is focused on assessing the effectiveness of the Clean Air for Scotland Strategy (CAFS) and associated delivery mechanisms in addressing air quality issues in Scotland. The Committee will also look at the interaction of the Scottish and UK/EU policies and action in light of the recent High Court judgement.

The call for evidence was launched this morning and a note on this is attached as an annexe to this letter. In advance of the close of the call for evidence the Committee is seeking a detailed update on progress, from the Scottish Government, on the specific actions set out in the CAFS.

The Committee is aware of the Scottish Government's recently published progress report. However, we are seeking specific information on:

- progress in achieving the individual actions set out in the “list of actions” on page 84 and the impact of that action.
- progress in reaching agreement on, and monitoring and reporting of, the key performance indicators

- the Scottish Government’s response to the recent High Court judgement and what work it has done to ensure that it’s approach is compliant with the relevant EU directives.

The Committee would be grateful for a response to these queries by Friday 11 August 2017.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Graeme Dey MSP
Convener
Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee
Annexe A

Call for views

Air Quality in Scotland

Background

The Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee, wants to hear from you on the Government’s strategy to tackle air quality in Scotland.

Why is air quality important and what is the Government’s strategy?

Air quality represents the greatest environmental threat to human health and currently commands significant domestic and international interest. Elevated pollution levels, usually located in urban areas with high volumes of road traffic, have been associated with a number of health issues, including heart disease and lung cancer. Air pollution can also have damaging effects on the environment and crop productivity. The sources of air pollution are distributed across many sectors, including transport, agriculture and energy industries.

The Scottish Government published a strategy for tackling air pollution in Scotland in 2015 – “Cleaner Air for Scotland: the road to a healthier future” which sets targets for Scotland. Since the strategy was launched the EU has introduced a new directive to reduce air pollution and there has been a High Court judgement in relation to the adequacy of the UK response. The Scottish Government published the 2016 CAFS Progress Report http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0052/00521031.pdf on 15 June.

How to respond

The Committee would like to hear your views on the following questions:

- Does Scotland have the right polices (Clean Air for Scotland Strategy), support and incentives in place to adequately tackle air pollution?
- Are the policies sufficiently ambitious?
- Are the policies and delivery mechanisms (support and incentives) being effectively implemented and successful in addressing the issues?
- Are there conflicts in policies or barriers to successful delivery of the air quality objectives?

Specifically:

- How does the Scottish policy fit with the UK and EU policy on air quality?
- Are the powers and resources of Local Authorities and SEPA to address air pollution adequate?
- Is Scotland on target to have a pilot low emission zone (LEZ) in place by 2018 and should there be more than one LEZ pilot?
- How should the improvement of air quality be prioritised in areas where there have been persistent breaches of NO₂ limit values?
• Is adequate consideration given to air pollution from agriculture?

Before responding, please read our policy (Parliament’s policy on handling information received in response to calls for evidence) and note the following—

• please keep your written response as concise as possible – ideally no more than 4 sides of A4;
• the written response should be provided electronically in MS Word format (please do not send PDFs or confirmatory hard copies). It would therefore be helpful if you could use the attached template as the base of your response.
• Please send responses to: airquality@parliament.scot
• The Committee welcomes written evidence in English, Gaelic or any other language
• Owing to the timescale required to process and analyse evidence, late submissions will only be accepted with the advance agreement of the Committee Convener.

If you wish to make a hard copy submission, please address it to—

Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee
Room T3.40
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

The deadline for responses is Friday 25 August 2017.

What happens next?

The Committee will take oral evidence on the inquiry at Committee meetings in the autumn of 2017.

The Committee will then publish a report of its views on the inquiry to the Scottish Parliament before the end of the year.

On behalf of the Committee, thank you for your assistance.

Contact

Andy Proudfoot
Senior Assistant Clerk
Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee

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