

Mark Drakeford AM/AC
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyllid a Llywodraeth Leol
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Mark Reckless AM
Chair of the Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

6 March 2017

Dear Mark,

Thank you for your letter of 31 January in relation to action being taken to monitor the impact of my portfolio on air quality in Wales.

Your letter makes specific reference to the Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan. In determining our four year capital investment plans, approved by the National Assembly in January, the assessment process included consideration of the consequences of climate change and the carbon impact over the lifetime of the programmes proposed.

Environmental considerations have been built into our capital planning and form an integral part of the Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan, which in turn is aligned to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. An example of our commitment is demonstrated by the capital investment of over £145m in the Budget 2017-18 to develop and implement climate change policy, energy efficiency and Green Growth, which all play a part in air quality.

In respect of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, my role in the implementation of the Act gives rise to further opportunities to monitor air quality. The 46 Well-being of Future Generations National Indicators were published in March 2016. An air quality indicator has been agreed as one of those indicators which will, in future, measure progress towards the seven well-being goals set out in the Act. The technical document on the national indicators is available from:

<http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/future-generations-act/national-indicators/>

and sets out the actual indicator which is:

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Indicator 4: Levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) pollution in the air measured as Annual Average levels of nitrogen dioxide
(NO₂) pollution exposure measured in µg/m³

The technical document also references examples of contextual data to aid analysis. In the case of air quality these include:

- Public health outcomes framework

<http://gov.wales/docs/phhs/publications/160329frameworken.pdf>

- Air quality in Wales website

http://www.welshairquality.co.uk/index.php?t=&n_action=&lg=e

Local authorities have an important role to play in improving air quality. They have legal duties under the Environment Act 1995 to carry out reviews and assessments of air quality, and where there is non-compliance with national air quality objectives, must declare an 'air quality management area' and produce and implement a local air quality action plan in pursuance of those objectives. Local authorities also have a broader role in considering air quality impacts of developments in land use and transport planning, and preventing new problems from arising, as well as providing support to the air quality health agenda.

While responsibility for these policy areas sits within other Cabinet Secretaries' portfolios, I am committed to raising these matters with the local authorities where they are an issue. Air quality is one of the topics identified for my next round of meetings with local authority leaders.

Air quality data sources have also been included in the common data sets that the Public Services Boards (PSBs) have been using as a starting point for their assessments of local well-being and PSBs are also required to take into account the national indicators in assessing well-being. Early indications are that air quality is being expressly considered in the assessments being issued for consultation. Many carried out extensive community engagement last summer to gain a fuller understanding of the areas they are responsible for and gather people's perceptions of their area. It will be for each PSB to decide where to prioritise its attention, informed by the assessments. This may mean, but does not guarantee that, in some areas local air quality management will be identified as a priority for collective action.

Procurement is another area of responsibility which falls within my portfolio. The Welsh Procurement Policy statement seeks to drive positive procurement behaviour through key principles and associated actions. One of these requires that procurement activity is subject to the Sustainability Risk Assessment (SRA). The SRA is a tool developed by the Welsh Government's Value Wales division that seeks to enhance the environmental, economic and social delivery of our procurement activity. One key area concerns logistics and transportation, with the SRA suggesting positive ways that this can be minimised or delivered more effectively to lessen the impact on air quality.

The National Procurement Service for Wales (NPS) delivers collaborative procurement solutions across the Welsh public sector and has fully embedded the principles of the Welsh Procurement Policy statement, and also the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 throughout its activity.

The NPS Fleet Category is responsible for a wide range of fleet related procurement activity for the Welsh public sector. The Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is embedded across all of its activity through the strategic aims that seek to address air quality impact described below.

- *A Healthier Wales* - reducing the amount of CO2 emissions generated in each of the Fleet & Transport sub categories by improving the transport infrastructure and promoting reuse and recycling.
- *Globally Responsible Wales* - ensuring that Fleet operatives are trained to promote economical driving patterns, reducing the CO2 emissions being released into the environment. Exploring the potential to re-use or recycle where ever viable i.e. tyres, redundant vehicles, spares etc.

Putting these measures into practice, the NPS Fleet vehicle hire tender has included the following requirements within its specification:

- the NPS and Customers are committed to sustainability and reduction of emissions and have a target of 130g/km of CO2 as an average across the use of passenger cars. However, all suppliers are encouraged to make available vehicles within each class with maximum emissions of 100g/km of CO2.
- the Supplier shall provide regular information and calculation of CO2 emissions arising as a result of the provision of the Services for carbon reduction.
- the Supplier shall use all reasonable endeavours to assist the Client and Customers in seeking to reduce the CO2 emissions arising as a result of the provision of the services by recommending and providing environmentally friendly vehicles wherever feasible
- the Supplier will assist the Client to identify the Carbon Footprint Profile of the Customers hire vehicles and use this as the baseline for future fuel consumption and emissions output monitoring. The Supplier shall provide the Customer with a monthly table of exhaust emissions readings taken either during planned maintenance of the fleet, at the annual pre MOT inspection or during the annual MOT test.
- Management Information (MI) will also be collected in respect of CO2 emission status of vehicle and total CO2 for the journey.

In respect of European Funds, while they are not directly focused on mitigating the effects of poor air quality, we are supporting activities which support the green and low-carbon economy, particularly through our renewable energy and energy efficiency and research and innovation priorities. For example, schemes such as:

Deep Green in Anglesey - £10.5m of EU funds have supported this innovative scheme to design, manufacture and test a low velocity device to produce electricity for thousands of homes from tidal and ocean currents.

SPECIFIC (sustainable product engineering centre for innovation in functional coatings) led by Swansea University. £15m of EU funds have supported this scheme which will address the challenge of low carbon electricity and heat by enabling buildings to generate, store and release their own energy – using only energy from the sun.

Through our Structural Funds investments, we also ensure all schemes supported address environmental sustainability within their activities. So, for example, infrastructure

developments must adhere to BREAM standards and we encourage schemes to develop sustainable travel plans and initiatives, where relevant.

I am pleased that the Committee is taking a close interest in this important issue. Recent reports of poor air quality in parts of south east England show how quickly the situation can deteriorate and we must do all that we can to prevent a similar situation in Wales. I will continue to utilise all of the tools available to me to monitor and mitigate the effects of any actions within my portfolio which negatively impact air quality. However, overall responsibility for air quality in Wales does not fall within my portfolio, so any future requests for advice should more appropriately be addressed to the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Drakeford". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

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