



**All Party Parliamentary
Light Rail Group**
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA
Light Rail & Trams, Affordable & Sustainable Transport



"The past we inherit, the future we build ourselves"

Four Committees relaunch a joint inquiry on air quality

09 October 2017

Four Committees team up to scrutinise the Government's plans to reduce the harmful effects of air pollution on public health and the environment.

Inquiry: Improving air quality
Environmental Audit Committee
Environment Food and Rural Affairs Committee
Health Committee
Transport Committee

The Environment Food and Rural Affairs, Environmental Audit, Health, and Transport Committees have re-launched their joint inquiry into improving air quality.

In July 2017, after UK courts twice ruled that the Government's plans to cut air pollution were inadequate, the Government released a new air quality plan. The cross-party inquiry will examine whether this new plan goes far enough, fast enough to both meet legal limits and to deliver the maximum environmental and health benefits.

Dr Sarah Wollaston MP, Chair of the Health Committee, said:

"There is an increasing amount of evidence showing the impact of nitrogen dioxide and invisible particulates on human health. Many people are aware of their impact on our lungs and hearts, but new evidence suggests that they could also contribute to diseases as disparate as dementia and diabetes."

Local authorities play a central role in delivering plans on the ground. Leaders from a number of councils across England wrote to Ministers criticising the latest plans.

Mary Creagh MP, Chair of the Environmental Audit Committee, said:

"The Government are on their third attempt to meet legal air quality standards. Local authorities have said the Government's plan for air pollution does not go far enough to help the millions of people living with illegally high levels of air pollution today. Ministers will now face unprecedented scrutiny in Parliament to ensure they are doing everything necessary to protect people from filthy air."

With several Government departments having a role in managing air pollution, the inquiry will explore how effectively departments work together across Whitehall to tackle air pollution.

These meetings are by invitation only, where MPs, Stakeholders etc., within the Light Rail industry and invited members of the Public will have a chance to discuss debate and raise questions concerning Light Rail

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Neil Parish MP, Chair of the Environment Food and Rural Affairs Committee, said:

"When the leaders of Liverpool, Leeds, Southampton, Oxford, Leicester and Birmingham say that the Government's plans to reduce pollution will not allow them to meet legal pollution limits, it is a cause for concern. Our joint inquiry allows MPs to hold to account Ministers from key Departments on how effectively the Government is joining up work to clean up the UK's air."

Road transport is a key contributor to air pollution. The Government's plan includes proposals for 'clean air zones' to limit polluting vehicles from driving in high pollution areas and an end to the sale of petrol and diesel vehicles by 2040.

Lilian Greenwood MP, Chair of the Transport Select Committee, said:

"The Department for Transport needs to harness the potential of schemes such as electric vehicles, clean buses and diesel scrappage which all demonstrate that the transport sector is capable of coming up with solutions to tackle poor air quality. Real change is possible if Government leads from the front to coordinate an effective response to one of the biggest issues of our time."

Terms of reference

The Committee invites written submissions on the following key questions:

How effectively do Government policies take into account the health and environmental impacts of poor air quality?

Do these plans set out effective and proportionate measures to achieve necessary emissions reductions as quickly as possible?

Are other nations or cities taking more effective action that the UK can learn from?

Is there enough cross-government collaboration to set in place the right fiscal and policy incentives?

How can those charged with delivering national plans at local level be best supported and challenged?

Deadline for submissions

Written evidence should be submitted through the Improving air quality inquiry page by 5 pm on Thursday 9 November 2017.

The Committees value diversity and seek to ensure this where possible.

We encourage members of underrepresented groups to submit written evidence.

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