



What the UK Government is doing about getting information from their sources regarding Air Pollution

The Department of Environment for Rural Agriculture (Defra) State that they provide the best information for the general public regarding air quality.

They inform that there is a Government UK- website, which provides the daily air quality forecast. It provides post code search system of up to date information on air pollution at local level.

The assessment of UK air quality is based on using monitors that have type approval through the Monitoring certificate scheme (MCERTS) complying with the European Standards EN ISO/IEC 17065. In parallel to this there is a pollution climate mapping model, which is combined with processing data from a national network of approved monitors as described above.

Defra requires monitors, which measures Particulate Matter too. This process follows the guidelines of Ambient Air Quality Directive (AQD). Some monitoring sites run by the local authorities in the UK, which are affiliated into the Government national monitoring sites called Auto Urban and rural network (AURN). This can only work where there is a



requirement for measurement as set by AQD to check the compliance.

In Coventry there are 2 monitoring stations and both monitor Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), Particulate Matter PM_{2.5}, PM₁₀ and Ozone.

Defra in 2019 published our Clean Air strategy introducing targets, such as particulate matter PM_{2.5} and safeguard the against the public exposure and hence the Environment bill, with an extension to cover an additional long term air quality target.

The Government state that they seek advice from the experts, for example World Heath Organisation (WHO) about air quality guidelines. With this, Defra consider that although these targets, which are based on realistic outcomes, they are to be ambitious and achievable.

Defra informs that it has a help desk technical guidance supporting the local authorities Local Air Quality Management (LAQM). It is claimed that the monitoring Nitrogen Dioxide, for example via data collection from the diffusion tubes in hot spot stations is the most cost effective way for the local Authorities.

The process of taking action for managing and improving air quality was largely done by the European Union (EU). It is important to find out what will be the post Brexit's impact on the air quality in UK.



Post Brexit Environment

On March 29, the UK is due to leave the European Union. Many people are asking what will be the outcome of this divorce with respect to economy, health service, jobs market, environment and air quality in UK.

The Government announced on the clean air programme, that they are allocating 3.5 billion pounds investment in tackling traffic emissions. But the question is how effective the Government policies will be to achieve targets after Brexit.

According to Katie Nield a lawyer from Client Earth, there is an overarching piece of EU legislation, which set legal limits on pollution levels, will stay with or without the deal, as this legislation is already set in our law. She says that although the Government has to adhere to EU air pollution laws, but there is a risk that future Government could relax EU laws.

Nield adds that EU is at present reviewing the air quality standards and this could be followed by stricter air quality improvements. She compares the UK present air quality standards as set against those by World Health Organisation (WHO) and warns that they are not strong enough to protect human health. Therefore, she calls for Government to commit to stricter standards in tackling air pollution. She states "Our new clean air strategy in a generation, aims to half the harm to human health from air pollution in the UK by



2030 and WHO describes this as an example for the rest of the world to follow.

We must now ensure that the power is there when we need it to enforce environmental laws after Brexit (reference: Evening Standards).

In conclusion the author reiterates on above statement by Nield from Client Earth regarding the overarching EU legislation, which set legal limits on air pollution levels staying in our law comes as a contradiction to the following piece of information from Air Quality news publication in January 2020, which states “ UK retains EU environmental laws after Brexit, but there will be a clause that has been added to section 26 agreement bill, which means that UK is able to overrule case Law from the court of Justice of the EU.”

This could create a huge uncertainty and put our right to clean air at risk.

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