



Institute for Air Quality Management
Suite 1, 38 Ebury Street
London SW1 0LU
0207730 5516 www.iaqm.uk
membership@iaqm.co.uk

Mr B Johnson
Mayor of London, City Hall, The Queen's Walk,
More London, LONDON SE1 2AA

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Dear Mayor Johnson

The Mayor's Draft Air Quality Strategy

The Institute for Air Quality Management is the professional body for scientists involved in undertaking assessments of air quality. Air quality management was introduced by the last Conservative Government in the 1995 Environment Act. The Act requires local authorities to periodically review and assess air quality in their areas to determine whether the national Air Quality Objectives are met. Since 1995 this has led to widespread activities, mainly in local authorities around the country, supported by research and development at a national level on methods and guidance. The Act was also instrumental to the formation of the Institute.

The Institute's principal aim is to promote the professional competence of its members. Air quality management involves the three key elements of (1) measurements, (2) emissions, (3) modelling, leading to the review of existing air quality and then the assessment of future air quality. An essential part is the modelling of actions, or measures, to reduce emissions to see which activities would be most effective. The Mayor's draft Strategy contains a number of policy options, but as yet has not systematically applied air quality management principles to quantify the effectiveness of these policy measures. The process should also contain periodic reviews of the success of the Strategy measures.

The Institute urges the Mayor to undertake this analysis so that the best decisions on London's air quality are made. Given that the decision is about London one expects the highest standards of assessment. It is accepted that further studies are under way and to carry out the air quality management process for soft measures, which rely on behavioural change, is challenging. Evidence in support of further measures should nevertheless be critically evaluated in the light of current knowledge and the Institute would be willing to act as a forum for dissemination and discussion of air quality management techniques.

Yours sincerely

Professor Bernard Fisher, Chairman of the IAQM