

Dear Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs,

We are writing to you as a group of local leaders who are committed to ensuring that our local communities can breathe clean air, but we need national policy to support us in delivering this.

As such, this letter responds to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs '*consultation on environmental targets*', and pledges our collective commitment as Local and Combined Authorities to meet the WHO-10 guideline for PM2.5 by 2030 in partnership with the UK Government.¹

We welcome the introduction of the Environment Act and commitment to introduce strong long-term targets as part of the government's response to the clear scientific case, and growing public demand, for a step-change in environmental protection. All signatories to this letter are taking ambitious action to tackle air pollution and are keen to do more, in partnership with the UK Government and with local and regional stakeholders.

Evidence that we have collated tells us that with small additional support from the UK Government, achieving WHO-10 for PM2.5 is feasible by 2030. Modelling by Imperial College for The Clean Air Fund's 2022 report '*The Pathway to Healthy Air in the UK*' found that 99% of the UK is likely to comply with WHO-10 by 2030 as a result of existing Government policies and plans.² This means that with a small increase in ambition, meeting WHO-10 across the whole of the UK is entirely feasible by 2030. We know from work undertaken by the CBI that this will deliver a significant economic dividend for the UK – a £1.6 billion economic benefit and three million working days gained by reducing sickness absence.³

The Mayor of London has pledged to meet the WHO-10 guideline for PM2.5 by 2030. He outlined how this could be achieved in a 2019 report '*PM2.5 in London: Roadmap to meeting World Health Organisation guidelines by 2030*', (all of which are included in the Governments "Clean Air Strategy 2019"), which found that with certain additional measures from the UK

¹ In this letter "WHO-10 guideline" means an annual mean concentration of 10 µg/m³, which was the World Health Organization's guideline for PM2.5 prior to the latest revision. The WHO now recommends an annual mean concentration of 5 µg/m³, with 10 µg/m³ set as the fourth interim target.

² <https://www.cleanairfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/The-Pathway-to-Healthy-Air-in-the-UK.pdf>

³ <https://www.cbi.org.uk/media/5539/2020-09-cbi-economics-caf-report.pdf>

Government, achieving WHO-10 for PM2.5 is feasible by 2030 in the most polluted city in the country.⁴

The limitations of local authority powers, sources of pollution sometimes being outside of local authority control (i.e agriculture, the Strategic Road Network), and the transboundary movement of PM2.5 across local authority boundaries and internationally, means that national policy from DEFRA which addresses all of the different sources of PM2.5 is needed. National policy should include action on specific sources, such as agriculture, and funding measures, such as a national vehicle scrappage scheme. Local authorities need additional resources for higher levels of PM2.5 monitoring, to develop robust action plans for reducing PM2.5.

As priorities we urge the Government to:

- bring forward the PM2.5 target of 10 ug/m³ to 2030 in line with the WHO's interim guideline, and to provide local leaders with the powers and funding to meet this target.
- put in place a longer term target to meet the WHO's updated guideline for PM2.5 of 5 ug/m³. Many areas across the country already meet the PM2.5 guideline of 10 ug/m³. This is still not considered to be a safe level by the WHO, and so it is important that a 35% population exposure reduction target is put in place for areas already meeting 10 ug/m³.
- Establish a national public awareness campaign around the health impacts of air pollution and its causes. Domestic combustion from burning wood and coal is one of the largest contributors to PM2.5 pollution, yet many people are unaware that their heating choices are producing toxic emissions.

As local leaders we want to do much more and need your support. Setting WHO-10 as the UK target for PM2.5 in 2022, and meeting it by 2030, is necessary, beneficial and achievable. It will set us on a pathway to clean air across the UK and deliver continuous improvements for health, the economy and the climate.

⁴ https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/pm2.5_in_london_october19.pdf

We look forward to working constructively and in partnership with the UK Government to urgently drive forward the activity needed that will tackle the nation's growing air pollution public health crisis.

Yours sincerely,

Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London

Tracy Brabin, Mayor of West Yorkshire

Oliver Coppard, Mayor of South Yorkshire

Steve Rotherham, Mayor of Liverpool City Region

Marvin Rees, Mayor of Bristol

CLlr Richard Clewer, Leader of Wiltshire Council and Chair of the Countryside Climate Network

CLlr Liz Leffman, Leader of Oxfordshire County Council

CLlr Keith Aspden, Leader of City of York Council

CLlr Adam Clarke, Deputy City Mayor and Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transportation at Leicester City Council

CLlr Susan Brown, Leader of Oxford City Council

CLlr Anna Smith, Leader of Cambridge City Council

CLlr Kevin Guy, Leader of Bath and NE Somerset Council



Cllr Sally Longford, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder
Energy, Environment and Waste Services at Nottingham City Council



Cllr Mike Baldock, Leader of Swale Borough Council



Cllr Phélim Mac Cafferty, Leader of Brighton & Hove Council



Cllr Caroline Jackson, Leader of Lancaster City Council



Cllr Morris Bright, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for
Public Health at Hertfordshire County Council



Cllr Lucy Nethsingha, Leader of Cambridgeshire County
Council



Cllr Nick Kemp, Leader of Newcastle City Council



Cllr James Lewis, Leader of Leeds City Council



Cllr Linda Taylor, Leader of Cornwall Council