Air quality policy and legislation – Scotland and UK

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Air Quality Strategy (I)

• Key requirement of 1995 Environment Act – central government to produce an Air Quality Strategy

• 1997 – 1st UK Air Quality Strategy published

• Initial attempt to provide an overview of air quality policy in the UK and Europe

• Further versions published in 2000 and 2007
Air quality objectives

• Strategy contains air quality objectives for nine pollutants of particular concern for human health

• Also sets dates by when objectives should be met

• Objectives derived from health based standards

• Most standards set by UK Government’s Expert Panel on Air Quality Standards (EPAQS) taking into account all available evidence

• These in turn generally derived from World Health Organisation recommendations
Objectives and legislation

- 2000 – Air Quality (Scotland) Regulations
- 2002 – Air Quality (Scotland) Amendment Regulations:
  Tighter objectives for benzene, carbon monoxide and fine particulate matter
- Scottish fine particulate matter objective (PM10) most stringent in UK
- 2016 – Air Quality (Scotland) Amendment Regulations – Scotland becomes first country in Europe to adopt WHO guideline value for PM2.5 fine particulate matter into legislation
Local Air Quality Management (I)

- 1995 Environment Act sets out requirements for Local Air Quality Management (LAQM)
- UK wide system where local authorities must regularly review and assess air quality in their areas against the objectives
- Scottish monitoring network is main information source for this purpose – currently contains > 90 monitoring sites
Local Air Quality Management (II)

• If any objective unlikely to be met by required date – local authority must declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)
• Must also produce an action plan outlining how issues will be addressed
• Currently 38 AQMAs in Scotland in 14 local authority areas – all but two declared for transport related emissions of nitrogen dioxide and/or PM10
Where we are now - Cleaner Air for Scotland

• ‘Cleaner Air for Scotland – The Road to a Healthier Future’ – Scotland’s first separate air quality strategy published November 2015
• Draws together cross Government policies impacting air quality into a single coordinated framework
• Sets out c. 40 actions intended to deliver further air pollution reductions
Key Achievements

• Major reductions in overall levels of key pollutants
• Adopting WHO guideline level for PM2.5
• Expansion of monitoring and public information
• Development of models for the major cities and texting of regional model
• Improved guidance
LEZs

- Introduction of Scotland’s first Low Emission Zone in Glasgow at the end of 2018
- Further LEZs in Aberdeen, Dundee and Edinburgh by 2020
- In all other AQMAs by 2023 where evidence supports such an approach
- Publication the National Low Emission Framework, which will form the basis of assessing the appropriateness of LEZs in all other Air Quality Management Areas outwith the four cities.
Challenges

• Continuing exceedance of NOx and particulate levels at specific sites
• Agriculture and domestic burning emissions
• Degree of integration between air quality, placemaking and climate change?
• Finalising air quality indicator work
• Coherence of delivery?