



Department
for Transport



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Cllr Gavin Callaghan
The Basildon Centre
St Martin's Square
Basildon
Essex
SS14 1DL

Cllr David Finch
County Hall
Chelmsford
Essex
CM1 1QH

14 July 2020

Dear Councillor Callaghan and Councillor Finch,

At the outset of the Covid-19 crisis, we made a statement that we would agree to delay Clean Air Zone go live dates but that we would keep any delay as short as possible.

Since then, we have been working with local authorities to review the impacts of Covid-19 on their delivery plans and NO2 levels. Based on these conversations, the data you have supplied to us and our internal review of evidence, we are now in a position to confirm next steps.

As you are aware, air pollution is a public health risk and has significant health impacts which can shorten lives. The Government also has a legal obligation to deliver compliance with air quality limits in the shortest possible time. We are continually assessing the evidence and, although NO2 levels have fallen across the UK during lockdown, there is no national level evidence to suggest that we will not see the same exceedances return. Our overall approach is therefore to expect local authorities to continue work as planned unless there is specific local evidence to show an alternative plan would be as effective.

We recognise that there may be a need for further evidence to confirm your approach, given the changes to behaviours and traffic in the first half of 2020. To allow us to assess whether a charging CAZ is required, we will be asking you to perform a light touch analysis using your transport models to investigate the impact of fleet turnover and traffic levels in light of Covid-19.

This analysis will be used to define our level of confidence as to whether a CAZ could still bring about compliance in the shortest possible time. A communication explaining this analysis in more detail will follow and our technical officials will be available to discuss this with you.

Should the data show that there is a lower level of confidence that a CAZ is required, we may ask you to investigate the impact in more detail. We request that this analysis is completed and that a discussion of next steps takes place between local authority officials and Joint Air Quality Unit officials by the end of August.

We must be clear that until there is clear evidence to show that a CAZ would not accelerate compliance in the shortest possible time, you must continue to develop your options, including a CAZ benchmark, as planned.

Yours sincerely,



RACHEL MACLEAN

**PARLIAMENTARY UNDER
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR
TRANSPORT**



REBECCA POW

**PARLIAMENTARY UNDER
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR
ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL
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