



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Dr Therese Coffey MP
From the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

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Cllr Christopher Hammond
Southampton City Council
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10 September 2018

Dear Cllr Hammond

Your local authority received a Ministerial Direction requiring you to provide by 15 September 2018 a Full Business Case for your local plans to deliver compliance with statutory nitrogen dioxide concentration limits in the shortest possible time. I wrote to Cllr Letts on 16 April regarding Southampton and New Forest's local plan urging you to take action to meet this deadline

I understand you are likely to miss the September deadline. You have signified that you are unable to shorten your timeline and it will take until late 2018 for the Full Business Case to be submitted. This needs to be accelerated. Improving air quality and the associated effects of poor air quality has on public health is a government priority. I am very clear that local authorities must deliver plans so that nitrogen dioxide compliance is achieved as quickly as possible.

I understand that Associated British Ports have expressed concern about your council's engagement with them. I welcome the work you are currently doing with them, especially given that the port is clearly a key stakeholder when it comes to the quality of Southampton's air as well as a major regional employer. But it is disappointing this work is still ongoing so late in the development of your plans.

I understand the consultation on your proposal is due to complete on 13 September. I urge you to provide the Full Business Case as soon as possible. I request that you provide by 15 September an assessment of the impact that this potential slippage has and confirmation that it will not delay delivering nitrogen dioxide compliance. If there are further delays in providing the Full Business Case beyond the 30 November 2018, you will also wish to consider the risks of missing the legal deadline and the serious associated consequences.

I have advised my officials that I wish to be kept closely informed of the progress of your project. I am concerned we have not yet seen a final Outline Business Case and I look forward to receiving this with full supporting evidence.

Given the public interest in improving air quality, I will be publishing this letter on gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,

DR THERESE COFFEY