

CAMPAIGN FOR CLEAN AIR IN LONDON

“The cross-party campaign to achieve urgently and sustainably at least World Health Organisation recommended standards of air quality throughout London”

Campaign website: www.cleanairinlondon.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: CAMPAIGN UPDATE: 19 April 2008

Clean Air in London hails Lord Coe’s Air Quality vision for London 2012

The Campaign for Clean Air in London (CAiL) has received a personal letter from Lord Coe, Chairman of the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG and London 2012), in response to its request to him to clarify LOCOG's stance on air quality issues for London 2012. The full text of Lord Coe's letter is published below. A copy of his letter and its attachment can also be downloaded from CAiL’s website.

Simon Birkett, Principal Contact for CAiL, said “Lord Coe is to be applauded for setting out a bold and positive vision for the role air quality will play as part of London 2012 and its legacy. In particular, Lord Coe has set the scene for a successful London 2012 by:

1. making clear that ‘We fully recognise the importance of air quality, both for athletic performance and for public health and environmental quality generally’;
2. highlighting the strict standards that the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) must meet in its construction works throughout the preparation phase for London 2012;
3. highlighting the crucial roles that other parties, such as Government and the Mayor of London*, have to play in ensuring that air quality laws are complied with sustainably in London; and
4. emphasising the crucial role that the Commission for a Sustainable London 2012 (CSL 2012) will have in assessing progress and highlighting issues that arise.”

Simon Birkett went on to say “The Campaign for Clean Air in London (CAiL) applauds Lord Coe for setting out this vision and responding to CAiL's concerns at an early stage in the preparations for London 2012.

“Three actions are needed if air quality is to become one of London 2012’s successes:

1. the Mayor of London* will have to produce a bold new Air Quality Strategy (MAQS) that is linked to other radical environmental policies. The MAQS must be backed by robust implementation that will trigger the large scale behavioural and technological change needed to tackle London's serious air pollution problems that remain outside the direct control of LOCOG. Of course, the ODA needs urgently a proper Air Quality Strategy of its own to support more specifically Lord Coe's vision;
2. comprehensive and effective monitoring of the Olympic sites and related construction traffic activities must be put in place quickly to ensure that the environmental impact of London 2012, in respect of itself and for the whole of London, is minimised and its legacy benefits are maximised. CSL 2012 must have ‘teeth’ in its oversight role and be seen to use them; and
3. the Government, in particular the Prime Minister after four successive senior Ministers have declined to do so, must insist that the United Kingdom (UK) will comply fully with air quality laws given that it is the Government that is responsible ultimately for the UK’s compliance with air quality laws in London. Without such a commitment and the actions that must inevitably follow, LOCOG's determined efforts will be in vain.

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“The good news for Londoners and all others wanting London 2012 to be a success is that the European Union finally adopted on 14 April 2008 a new Directive on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe. Just one its many obligations will require the UK to achieve air quality standards for particulate matter throughout London, by mid-2011 at the latest, that were breached, in London, in each of 2005, 2006 and 2007. In the very broadest terms, air pollution near London’s busiest roads must be halved before the events of London 2012 take place. Failure to comply with these new laws, which will bite in each of the next four years, will result surely in prompt and robust action against the UK by the European Commission in order to defend the latter’s international credibility not just on air quality but also on air pollution related issues generally (which include climate change).

“Under Lord Coe's leadership, there is every chance that air quality will be seen as one of the greatest achievements of London 2012 and its legacy. Let's make London 2012 ‘the best Games ever - for athletes, for sustainability and the environment, for lovers of sport in the UK and beyond’ exactly as the International Olympic Committee was told to expect in London's bid in a letter from the Mayor of London dated 29 October 2004.”

* The Mayor of London election takes places on 1 May 2008.

See CAiL’s campaign website for contact details

Notes for Editors:

1. New European Union Directive on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe

Europe's Council of Ministers adopted on Monday 14 April 2008 the new EU Directive on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe. It will enter into force in May 2008 on the day it is published in the EU's Official Journal.

The European Commission’s press release about the new Directive appears below:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/08/570&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

The Campaign for Clean Air in London published its analysis of the new Directive on 12 December 2007. The outcome now is exactly as CAiL anticipated in December 2007. See:

http://www.cleanairinlondon.org/blog/_archives/2008/3/29/3609593.html

2. Olympic Delivery Authority Code of Construction Practice (December 2007):

<http://www.london2012.com/documents/oda-health-and-safety/code-of-construction-practice-final-low-res.pdf>

The Olympic Park Code of Construction Practice mentioned by Lord Coe is still expected.

3. Details of infringement action that can be taken under EU law (including fines):

http://ec.europa.eu/community_law/infringements/infringements_228_en.htm

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FULL TEXT OF LETTER RECEIVED ON LOCOG LETTERHEAD

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20th March 2008

Dear Mr Birkett

Thank you for your letter on behalf of the Campaign for Clean Air in London and apologies for the delay in writing to you.

As you are aware, LOCOG (London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games) is responsible for the planning and staging of the Games in 2012. We fully recognise the importance of air quality, both for athletic performance and for public health and environmental quality generally and are working with our partners on a number of areas, which we believe will contribute to a healthier environment during the Games.

We will operate the Olympic Park as a Low Emission Zone covering all vehicle categories entering the site. Our official vehicle fleet and fuel supplies will comply with low emission specifications and we will implement driver training and fleet logistics planning to optimise vehicle usage and fuel efficiency.

It is also our aim that London 2012 will be the ‘Public Transport Games’ and all spectators and workforce will travel to and from venues by public transport, walking and cycling. We will encourage walking and cycling through an Active Spectator Programme and more than 5,000 bicycle parking spaces are planned for the Olympic Park.

We will also pay particular attention to the use of healthy materials in venue overlay and fit-out and provide a utility infrastructure of sufficient capacity as to minimise the use of temporary generators. Venue Environment Management Plans will include measures to optimise efficient use of energy and appliances, minimise dust and avoid the use of volatile organic compounds.

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I hope that this helps to give you an idea of the range of measures that we as an organising committee are able to influence in relation to direct Games activities. Additionally, through our partnership with both central and London government we follow with interest the development and implementation of wider air quality policies. Further information is contained within our Sustainability Plan; *Towards a One Planet 2012*.

Further to this, during the development of our Olympic facilities, all works will be carried out in accordance with the *Olympic Park Code of Construction Practice*. This will be published on the London 2012 website shortly and sets out a series of measures the ODA (Olympic Delivery Authority) will apply throughout the construction and legacy transformation phases to control and minimise dust and emissions from construction activities. This includes ensuring works are carried out in accordance with the GLA's best practice guidance: *The Control of Dust and Emissions from Construction & Demolition*.

In addition, the ODA has prepared a Dust Monitoring Scheme in consultation with the Olympic Park host boroughs. This details the monitoring for dust and particulate matter that will be undertaken during the construction phase and I have attached a copy for your information.

As you are aware, the Commission for a Sustainable London 2012 (www.cs london.org) also provides a comprehensive function of independently assuring the London 2012 sustainability programme. They will be issuing regular reports on our progress with regard to both general and specific sustainability topics.

I hope that this helps to answer your questions and thank you very much for writing.

With best wishes.

Signed

Sebastian Coe KBE
Chairman

CAiL note: Lord Coe's letter, with its attachment, can be downloaded from CAiL's website