

Competent Air Quality Expert for Environmental Impact Assessments

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The IAQM issues Position Statements on matters that could affect the way in which Members carry out their professional tasks and on air quality topics and issues where the IAQM can provide a unique perspective from which to give a professional opinion.

Background

 The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 came into force on 16 May 2017. The 2017 Regulations consolidate with amendments the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 and subsequent amending instruments. They also implement amendments to Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment which were made by Directive 2014/52/EU.

The 2017 Regulations, applying in relation to England only, introduce a requirement that an environmental statement is prepared by a competent expert. Specifically, Part 5 of the 2017 Regulations, entitled 'Publicity and procedures on submission of environmental statements and decision making' states that:

"In order to ensure the completeness and quality of the environmental statement—

(a) the developer must ensure that the environmental statement is prepared by competent experts; and

(b) the environmental statement must be accompanied by a statement from the developer outlining the relevant expertise or qualifications of such experts."

IAQM's position on this issue

Neither the 2017 Regulations nor the Planning Practice Guidance define 'competent' and this is currently an area of the Regulations that is open to interpretation. For the avoidance of doubt, the Institute of Air Quality Management considers that the following definition should apply.

In this context, a competent expert is an individual with a high level of skill and experience in assessing and/or advising on air quality impacts in the key area of relevance for the proposed development; the individual should also be at least a full Member of the Institute of Air Quality Management at the time of preparing the Environmental Statement..

About the Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM)

The IAQM aims to be the authoritative voice for air quality by maintaining, enhancing and promoting the highest standards of working practices in the field and for the professional development of those who undertake this work. Membership of the IAQM is mainly drawn from practising air quality professionals working within the fields of air quality science, air quality assessment and air quality management.

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