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**CONFLICT AND CONSENSUS IN SPATIAL AND TEMPORAL DESIGNATIONS
OF AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREAS (AQMAS) TO SECURE AIR QUALITY
OBJECTIVES IN GREAT BRITAIN**

ABSTRACT

The first United Kingdom Air Quality Strategy was published in 1997. This required local government to undertake a scientific assessment of air quality in their areas and make future air quality predictions. Where such predictions identified potential problems, with regard to the achievement of specific national air quality objectives, local government has been required to declare air quality management areas (AQMAS), as a statutory duty.

Whilst a scientific decision-making process has determined where such AQMAS are required, consultation on the scientific findings and a political decision-making process is required before such AQMAS are officially declared. As a result of this, there is conflict at all levels of decision-making. First, where to draw AQMA boundaries, given the scientific information with which to base this decision upon. Second, politicians have exercised, to varying degrees, their aspirations, wishes and opinions on the declaration process.

An examination of the various scientific methods of determining the extent of AQMAS and their boundaries and the influence of the political decision-making process following the scientific determination of AQMAS has identified considerable variation. Variation has been found in the scientific decision-making process and to a lesser extent in the local political decision-making processes with respect to declaring AQMAS. AQMAS were found to be determined and modified by science rather than by political decision-making processes. The need for a more consistent process of decision-making within local government is evaluated. How this may best be achieved in future rounds of local air quality management is critically considered.

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