

# Minutes of the Air Quality Forum Meeting: 10 April 2006

## List of attendees at Annexe A

### Summary of Action points from today's meeting:

1. DfT to report to the Forum on the possibility of encouraging air quality-related Transport Innovation Fund bids.
2. UKPIA and Defra to discuss details of the Strategy Review's shipping Measure N.
3. Defra to inform Forum of publication date for Air Quality Expert Group report on air quality and climate change.

### 1. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

- 1.1 The minutes of the Forum meeting of 9 December 2005 were agreed, with the following amendments: Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) asked that paragraph 3.1.6 be amended to show that they would like to see binding limit values as well as the proposed concentration cap. The Environment Agency (EA) asked that the wording of 3.2.3 be altered to make it clear that the deadline referred to was for applying for PPC permits rather than the issuing of permits.
- 1.2 In reference to the Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) discussed at paragraph 4.3.1 of the minutes, Passenger Transport Executive Group (PTEG) asked whether DfT could encourage local authorities to submit TIF bids aimed at improving air quality. Lalla Nott (DfT) said she would report on this point at the next meeting. **Action DfT**

### 2. Air Quality Strategy

#### 2.1 Review of Air Quality Strategy

- 2.1.1 Davide Minotti (Defra) summarised the Air Quality Strategy Review consultation document, published on 5 April. Defra and the devolved administration (DAs) press releases had stressed the progress had been made but that poor air quality was still a threat to public health and the environment. Defra and the DAs, together with National Society for Clean and Environmental Protection (NSCA), would hold a multi-stakeholder workshop during the consultation period (since fixed for 9 June) to enable further discussion ahead of formal response requested by 11 July 2006. Invitations would be sent to Forum members.
- 2.1.2 The Association of Electricity Producers (AEP) asked for clarification on Measure K1 (bringing forward implementation of selective catalytic reduction (SCR) on coal fired power stations >300MW). Measure K2, which assumed SCR on power stations, iron & steel works and petrol refineries by 2010, had been included in the 'keep in view' category, but K1 was not included or in the 'consider further' category. AEP asked if

this was an omission, or should K2 read as both measures under K? Defra replied that Measure K should be considered as a whole, as both K1 and K2 generate similar results. Consultees should respond on the assumption that this was the case.

- 2.1.3 Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) asked what measures had been included in the projections to 2020. Defra replied that the baseline in Chapter 2 included no additional measures, only those policies already in place or which were due to come in. The Net Present Value of each additional new measure was included. Certain measures (O, P and Q) had been packaged together, as had all 'Green' measures under the traffic light assessment – as requested by stakeholders at the Workshop in May 2005.
- 2.1.4 NSCA were pleased that the recently revised Committee on Medical Effects of Air Pollutants (COMEAP) risk factor of 6% had been reflected in the Review, but noted that the COMEAP recommendation on lag times did not seem to be reflected. Heather Walton (Health Protection Agency) explained that COMEAP had yet to provide definitive advice on the issue of lag times, and that this had been noted in the Review.
- 2.1.5 Environment Industries Commission (EIC) considered that the cost of technological progress could be assumed to fall in the future, and asked whether this had been generally assumed in the Review. Defra replied that economists had taken this into consideration but concluded there was insufficient evidence to include in the Review. Instead, current best estimates had been used, taking on board future predictions as much as possible. The Inter Departmental Group on Costs and Benefit's (IGCB) report accompanying the Review showed how costs would have to fall to move measures from Red/Amber to Green.
- 2.1.6 UK Petroleum Industries Association (UKPIA) asked for further clarification on how Measure N had been constructed. It was agreed this could be discussed bilaterally. **Action Defra/UKPIA**
- 2.1.7 Greater London Authority (GLA) considered that the final Review document should make it clear that the London Low Emission Zone (LEZ) was a local, rather than national measure, and that there were greater local benefits associated with the scheme than suggested by the "red" assessment in Table 3.2 of the Consultation Document. Defra replied that the assessment was on the basis of a London LEZ plus LEZ in 7 other urban areas as a national measure, but that the sections of the Review Document on local transport made it clear that LEZs were seen as the most cost-effective local option.
- 2.1.8 The Chair welcomed written comments on the Consultation Document by 11 July and requested that these should be sent to the contact points listed on page 12 of the Consultation Document's Executive Summary.

## 2.2 Air Pollution and Health Effects Update (Paper AQF 1/06)

- 2.2.1 Heather Walton (Health Protection Agency) summarised paper AQF 1/06. The report on Cardiovascular disease and Air Pollution was now on the Department of Health's (DoH) website. Work by COMEAP on updating its 1998 quantification of the effects of air pollution on health was ongoing; an interim statement, which had been taken into account in the Air Quality Strategy Review, was published in January.
- 2.2.2 COMEAP's report on health implications of ozone in the UK would be published in two sections – a general review of latest information on health effects and the shape of the exposure response relationship.
- 2.2.3 The Committee on Carcinogenicity had carried out a review of the possible association between childhood leukaemia and people living near sources of traffic exhaust and petrol vapour. Their final statement was available on the DoH web site.

### **3. International Update and Developments**

#### **3.1 EC Thematic Strategy and proposals for new air quality directive (Paper AQF 2/06) and EC Regulatory Impact Assessments**

- 3.1.1 Michael Harriman (Defra) presented paper AQF 2/06. Discussions on European Commission's Thematic Strategy, proposal for a new Air Quality Directive and Impact Assessment had started in the Environment Working Group under the UK Presidency and continued under the current Austrian Presidency. The Environment Council adopted Council Conclusions on the Thematic Strategy in March. The Austrian Presidency hoped to reach political agreement on the proposed new Directive at the Environment Council of 26/27 June. The European Parliament was also considering the Thematic Strategy and Directive and would discuss in the Environment Committee on 24/25 April.
- 3.1.2 Paper AQF 2/06 set out progress with negotiations on the proposed new Air Quality Directive. The main issues currently being negotiated were where limit values applied, a proposal to allow Member States to disregard natural contributions, postponement of attainment deadlines for current limit values and the proposed provisions on PM<sub>2.5</sub>.
- 3.1.3 NSCA welcomed a move towards a mandatory target concentration cap and exposure reduction approach. However, they considered it should be stretching – not simply achievable under business as usual. NSCA inquired when Defra's Regulatory Impact Assessment on the Strategy and proposed Directive would be made public. Defra replied that it would be issued towards the end of April as the documents go to Parliament.
- 3.1.4 EIC recognised that reducing particulate levels was difficult and that it was important to have mandatory targets to help ensure investment to bring about the innovations needed to ensure improvements were made. The GLA welcomed the health protection benefits offered by the proposed directive and supported work to retain them.
- 3.1.5 The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) were concerned that some sectors, such as domestic wood burning and biomass, would not be able

to deliver the obligations proposed in the directive. Defra replied that these issues were being considered as part of a possible Small Combustion Plant Directive, still being discussed at EU level. If EU decided to take these forward, it seemed likely they would suggest product standards, but any proposals were unlikely in 2006.

- 3.1.6 Institute of Air Quality Managers (IAQM) considered that it might be wrong to allow Member States to disregard natural contributions, as it was recognised that reductions in particulate concentrations in general could lead to health benefits, regardless of absolute concentration levels. Defra agreed, but recognised the European Commission's (EC) opinion that controlling natural contributions were outside the powers of Member States. Defra added that Member States would still have targets to work towards. SMMT were concerned that the agreed definition of natural contributions would only exclude some sectors and that such an approach would not strengthen links between air quality and climate change.
- 3.1.7 AEP asked if more work was planned on the costs and benefits. Defra replied that the EC had carried out a Cost and Benefits Assessment on the proposals, and that the UK Government had also carried out its own work as part of the RIA and which included health and environmental impacts, but that the latter were difficult to quantify. The Chair reminded the Forum that a section on the cost and benefit assessment on the Review of the Air Quality Strategy was set out in detail in the Technical Annex in Volume 2 of the Consultation Document and in the accompanying IGCB report.
- 3.1.8 The Environment Agency (EA) supported the UK position on mandatory targets. They were keen to see the EU limit values applied where they would have health benefits and wanted to see strong rules in place for limit value attainment deadlines. However, they were concerned that alternative definitions of natural contributions could lead to problems.

## **3.2 International Developments**

- 3.2.1 Michael Harryman summarised paper AQF 3/06. The Sulphur Content of Marine Fuels Directive and 4<sup>th</sup> Air Quality Daughter Directive had been published and UK transposition process had started. The Solvents Directive, which would reduce solvents in household paints and varnishes and vehicle re-spraying products, had been transposed.
- 3.2.2 Protocols had come into force on Persistent Organic Compounds, Heavy metals and the Gothenburg Protocol on the abatement of Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone.
- 3.2.3 Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) inquired whether details were available about the proposed consultation on the derogation to the solvents directive to exclude paints used for historic buildings and vehicles. Defra replied that work was ongoing on the consultation, and that intra-government discussion would take place prior to the launch.

## **4. Air Quality & Transport: Update and Developments**

### **4.1 New Euro Vehicle Emission Standards**

- 4.1.1 Davide Minotti summarised progress on the European Commission's proposals for Euro V vehicle emission standards, issued at end of 2005. Discussions had started in the Working Group and Ministers had also discussed these at March Environment Council. The proposals include an 80% reduction in particles emissions and a more modest NO<sub>x</sub> reduction for diesel vehicles. The proposals also include a removal of the current derogation for heavy passenger vehicles, with an application date of 1.5-3 years from final agreement.
- 4.1.2 The UK position on the proposals was generally supportive, although the Government believes more could be done on NO<sub>x</sub>, subject to agreement on a suitable timetable for industry to achieve the required reductions. The timetable for removal of the derogation for heavy passenger vehicles was considered too demanding. The UK Government was asking for the derogation to be postponed until a second stage. On the basis of discussions to date, a majority of Member States were supportive of the UK's proposed second stage approach, whilst a minority support retaining the derogation.
- 4.1.3 Paul Greening (DfT) updated the group on Euro VI proposals for heavy duty vehicles. Work on Euro VI has been delayed while the Commission focuses on Euro V. Proposals were not expected until first or second quarter of 2007. One of the reasons for the delay was that certain technical issues were being dealt with by UNECE, which were due to be finalised late 2006. At present, it looked as if the proposals were likely to focus on PM and NO<sub>x</sub> reductions of towards 50% over and above that of Euro V.
- 4.1.4 Following up an action point from the Forum's previous meeting, Paul Greening updated the group on "cycle-beating". Cycle-beating was currently prohibited, but manufacturers have found ways round the prohibition. Discussions were underway to reach agreement on a global technical regulation on off-cycle emissions. The US was chairing the discussions, and appeared to be pushing in the direction of proposed US legislation on the issue, which has caused concern for some other parties. The Commission was likely to look at this issue in Euro VI proposals. On the issue of "hot-chipping" (the illegal use of electronic engine management chips containing a revised engine calibration to maximise power output), DfT plan to launch research into it later in the year, before raising the issue at EU level.
- 4.1.5 SMMT asked about Reduced Pollution Certificates post-Oct 2006. Becky Wood (DfT) replied that DfT were working with Transport for London on Reduced Pollution Certification in the context of the London low emission zone. PTEG noted that most buses outside of London were 15-20 years old, and that the Certification scheme was the only incentive available to encourage retro-fitting. Defra explained that the budget had given some

certainty for the future of the Certification scheme for retro-fitting older vehicles.

## **4.2 Other Transport Issues**

4.2.1 Lalla Nott (DfT) reported that local authorities had submitted their final 2<sup>nd</sup> round of local transport plans (LTPs) at the end of March, and these were now being assessed with Defra leading on the air quality assessment. Authorities also submitted a delivery report on the first 5 years of LTP. Further guidance on the Transport Innovation Fund was released to authorities at the end of January. Technical reports from the Project for the Sustainable Development of Heathrow were recently concluded, although publication has been delayed due to the English local election purdah. Ministerial decisions on the future of Heathrow were due by the end of 2006.

## **5. Local Air Quality Management**

### **5.1 LAQM Progress Update (Paper AQF 4/06)**

5.1.1 Davide Minotti summarised paper AQF 4/06. Feedback received by Defra from local authorities on the integration of air quality action plans into LTPs had been largely positive, with an emphasis on the improved corporate working between environmental health specialists and transport planners. A number of local authorities had formed a group to discuss and share information and practice on low emission zones. Defra was supporting the process, and TfL and the GLA had attended meetings to share their expertise.

5.1.2 UKPIA encouraged Defra to use their influence to ensure that a single standard was applied across all potential low emission zones. Defra replied that they have encouraged such an approach.

## **6. AOB**

### **6.1 Budget 2006**

6.1.1 Ashleigh Bridgen (HMT) summarised the environmental measures announced by the Chancellor in the Budget. The current duty differential for biofuels will be retained until at least 2008/9. Vehicle Excise Duty will remain at zero for the cleanest vehicles. A new higher VED was announced for the most polluting vehicles. Energy efficiency measures included raising the Climate Change Levy in line with inflation from next year, and more support for alternative energy generation and household energy efficiency measures, including more support for local authorities. A National Institute for Energy Technologies will also be created.

6.1.2 EIC asked whether the Budget included any measures to incentivise uptake of low- or sulphur-free fuels. HMT responded that it had linked to deregulatory changes to the Hydrocarbon Oil Duties Act.

- 6.1.3 GLA asked when the final version of Air Quality Expert Group's Report on air quality and climate change would be published. Defra replied that no firm date had been set for publication but Forum members would be updated once this was available. **Action Defra**
- 6.1.4 The Chair confirmed that the Air Quality Strategy Review Workshop on the Consultation Document would constitute the next Air Quality Forum meeting. The Workshop has since been fixed for 9 June 2006 at the Institute of Physics in London. NSCA will issue details in May of the event and how delegates can apply.

**Secretariat  
Air Quality Forum  
May 2006**

## Air Quality Forum 10 April 2006

### Attendees:

Martin Williams (Chair)	Defra
Sarah Legge	Greater London Authority
Huw Morgan	Welsh Local Government Association
David Acres	Association of Electricity Producers
Simon Barnes	Society of Motor Manufacturers & Traders
Malcolm Watson	UK Petroleum Industries Association
Rob Pilling	National Society for Clean Air & Env. Protection
John Murlis	Environmental Industries Commission
Alice Hume	Confederation of British Industry
Peter Black	Passenger Transport Executive Group
David Muir	Institute of Air Quality Managers
Brian Payne	Transport for London
Davide Minotti	Defra
Michael Harryman	Defra
Colin McMullen	Defra
Stephen Parkinson	Defra
James Davey	Defra
Alex Wallis	Defra
Andrew Taylor	Scottish Executive
Paul Greening	DfT
Lalla Nott	DfT
Becky Wood	DfT
Robert Falk	DTI
David Williams	DTI
Preetum Domah	DTI
Heather Walton	Health Protection Agency
Inga Mills	“ “ “
Hilary Walker	Dept of Health
Ashleigh Brigden	HM Treasury
Ronald Dickens	Cabinet Office
Jim Storey	Environment Agency
Anna Douglas	Scottish Environment Protection Agency

### Apologies:

Colin Copelin	CPT
Diane Mitchell	NRU
Noel Olsen	BMA
Geoff Day	FTA
David Wallace	Scottish Executive
Ken Ledgerwood	DoENI
Ivan Gregg	DoENI
Dan Kennedy	DoENI
Vicky Elliott	CO
Mark Davis	ODPM
Tim Everett	LGA
Claire Whitfield	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
Zoe Masters	Joint Nature Conservation Committee

