

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Minutes of the Air Quality Forum Meeting: 8 September 2006

List of attendees at Annexe A

Summary of Action points from today's meeting:

- i) Defra hold bilateral with UKPIA on AQ Strategy Review
- ii) Defra hold bilateral with LGA/LACORS on AQ Strategy Review
- iii) DoH/Defra consider feasibility of COMEAP presentation to Forum on their forthcoming report on long term effects of particles
- iv) DoH/Defra provide Forum with details of departmental responsibilities for indoor air pollution
- v) Defra to send the Forum Air Environment Quality Division contacts
- vi) Defra to send Forum copy of DfT Minister's announcement on new communications programmes
- vii) Defra consider a Beacon Scheme presentation to the Forum
- viii) Defra send LACORS details of air quality grant supported projects
- ix) Defra check with Scottish Executive on Falkirk Council AQMA
- x) Defra produce a list of dates for Forum meetings in 2007.

1. Introductions

1.1 Martin Williams (Chairman/Defra) welcomed Karen Lawrence representing the Local Authority Co-ordinating Office on Regulatory Services (LACORS), Philip Mulligan from National Society for Clean Air and Environmental Protection (NSCA) who had replaced Rob Pilling, and Victoria Waite representing the Department for Transport (DfT).

2. Minutes of meeting 10 April 2006 and matters arising

2.1 There was an action on DfT to report on the possibility of encouraging air quality-related Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) bids. DfT explained that the TIF programme was primarily focussed on encouraging productivity and tackling congestion and although air quality would not normally be a deciding factor bids would not be accepted if a project had a negative impact on air quality.

2.2 There was an action for Defra and UK Petroleum Industries Association (UKPIA) to meet to discuss the Air Quality Strategy Review's shipping measure. The Chairman said that this had not occurred but Bill Stow, Director General Environment in Defra, would meet Chris Hunt, Director General UKPIA, on 13 October to discuss this and other issues. Defra would arrange a follow up meeting with UKPIA. **Action Defra**

2.3 The final action was for Defra to let the Forum know when the Air Quality Expert Group (AQEG) report on air quality and climate change would be issued. The Chairman reported that the final version of the Climate Change report was expected around end of October. Consultation on AQEG's draft report on trends in primary NO₂ had been issued on 15 August with comments requested by 7 November.

3. Air Quality Strategy

Report of Air Quality Strategy Review Stakeholder Workshop

3.1 The Chairman summarised paper AQF 5/06. The June Workshop been widely regarded as a success. Key themes which had emerged were: more recognition needed of the role of local authorities, more work on some of the measures, general support for exposure reduction approach, mixed views on retaining current objectives and whether or not to align objectives and other proposals with EU obligations. A full report of the Workshop was on Defra's website: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/forum/meetings/>

Response to Consultation Document - initial summary

3.2 Defra summarised the responses to the consultation, described in paper AQF 6/06. Over 150 responses had been received by Defra and the devolved administrations.

3.3 Most participants had given general support for proposals to improve air quality but some considered the final Strategy document should be more strategic and linked more closely to other policy areas, such as climate change. Most participants agreed that the measures selected would improve air quality but a few questioned the scope of assessment/methodologies used and considered that certain measures, eg small combustion plant, selective catalytic reduction on industrial plants and shipping, might not be feasible.

3.4 A majority were in favour of retaining the current objectives and to introduce proposals for new objectives for ecosystems and vegetation protection, although industry sector were generally concerned that measures and objectives should not go beyond European Union (EU) obligations. A majority of participants thought the role and work by local authorities had not been sufficiently recognised and should be addressed in the final Strategy.

3.5 There was general support for the exposure reduction approach and for controls for PM_{2.5} as well as PM₁₀, although some were concerned about moving away from tackling hotspots and there were also mixed views on

whether to introduce anything ahead of EU and also at what level the exposure reduction system should apply.

3.6 A more detailed analysis of responses would be placed on the Defra and devolved administrations website shortly. Electronic copies of individual comments were available from the Forum's secretariat. A report of response to comments submitted would be issued once Ministers had agreed the shape and content of the new Strategy.

Timetable and next steps

3.7 The Chairman reported that as well as analysing responses, further assessments and sensitivity work was underway on the proposed measure to take account of latest data, for example, latest energy projections, as well as developments on the proposed European air quality directive. Following Ministerial agreement on the new Strategy it was likely a final version would be ready for publication around the end of the current financial year.

3.8 The timetable would not allow for another Workshop before the Strategy was issued, but the Chairman offered to meet members of the Forum if they wished to discuss particular issues. The Local Government Association (LGA) and LACORS welcomed this opportunity and would contact the Chairman for suitable dates. **Action LGA/LACORS**

4: Update on Air Pollution and Health

4.1 Hilary Walker, Department of Health (DoH), summarised the paper AQF 7/06 and work by the Committee on Medical Effects of Air Pollution (COMEAP).

4.2 Malcolm Watson (UKPIA) inquired if COMEAP's update on the long-term effects of particles was similar to that done several years ago by the Quantification of the Effects of Air Pollution on Health (QUARK) sub group and if the new work would include numbers as well as quantification. He also asked if DoH could let Members know when the report was due to be issued to enable them to prepare for any questions which might be put to them.

4.3 Noel Olson, British Medical Association (BMA), asked if COMEAP would give the Forum a presentation on its report close to publication date.

4.4 DoH confirmed that COMEAP's current work was similar to the QUARK's and would put numbers against pollutants. DoH and Defra agreed to consider the BMA's request for a COMEAP presentation and whether this could coincide with the Forum's meeting on 30 November. **Action DoH/Defra**

4.5 Tim Everett (LGA) considered that indoor air pollution should also be investigated as well as the impact of individual pollutants and their synergistic effects, particular particulate matter, to assess the overall extent of the impact on health. BMA and Sarah Legge, Greater London Authority (GLA), were

concerned there was no clear lead Department responsible for indoor air quality.

4.6 The Chairman commented that there was currently not a great deal of evidence base on the impact of indoor air pollution on the external environment. Although the current work was not focussed specifically on synergistic effects, the possibility of 'double counting' and which pollutant was responsible for which effect was being investigated. The Chairman said that DoH were mainly in the lead on indoor air pollution but agreed to see if a clearer picture could be provided. **Action DoH/Defra**

4.7 Jim Story, Environment Agency (EA), reported that the Air Pollution Research in London (APRIL) group had recently established a working group looking at indoor air pollution as part of a Building Research Establishment project, and invited members of the Forum to contribute to the work.

4.8 EA, UKPIA and Huw Morgan, Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), questioned the status of the WHO's latest guidelines, particular their short-term standard for sulphur dioxide (SO₂).

4.9 The Chairman explained that the WHO figures were purely guidelines based on health assessments and did not take in technical or economic aspects. COMEAP's sub group were considering the impacts of SO₂ and sulphates but were unlikely to provide a quantification of the short-term effects of sulphur.

5. Update on European business

- 5.1 Defra summarised AQF paper 8/06. The European Parliament's Environment Committee had adopted a formal recommendation in June on the proposed air quality directive. The Council agreed a 'general approach' at June Environment Council and 'political agreement' was likely at the October Environment Council. The Council's 'common position' could be published later in 2006 and was likely to be adopted in summer 2007.

5.2 Until the position was finalised, the provisions were uncertain but there was a measure of agreement on a number of major points. In particular that the directive would maintain the numerical values and compliance dates for existing limit values, but would introduce a provision that would allow a Member State five more years to comply.

5.3 The proposed directive included new rules on where limit values apply. There were also new provisions on regulating fine particles (PM_{2.5}), including establishing an 'exposure reduction' approach for protecting people from particles. The provisions on PM_{2.5} would be subject to a review in around 2013 with a view to establishing a legally binding obligation for 'exposure reduction' to replace the directive's proposed non-mandatory provisions that required a 20% reduction between 2010 and 2020.

5.4 The European Commission (EC) had started to review the National Emission Ceilings Directive (NECD). The review would be taken forward

through a Steering Group of Member States and other interested parties and work had already started on the analysis to underpin any recommendations. Papers were available on the CIRCA website

<http://forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc/env/Home/main>

5.5 The Commission had just replied to the UK with their comments on the UK's national plan for implementing the Large Combustion Plant Directive. Details of the EC's response would be available shortly.

5.6 Alice Hume, Confederation of British Industry (CBI), asked when a firm date for the review of the new air quality directive would be known so industry could plan ahead. The Chairman replied that the picture should be clearer next summer when details of the directive should be finalised but that the EC might not be bound by a published timetable. Ashley Bridgen (HMT) emphasised that the proposed 2013 review would not automatically bring in mandatory limit values for PM_{2.5} and any changes would be subject to negotiation and agreement by Member States.

5.7 Malcolm Watson (UKPIA) asked how the EC would take account in its review of the NECD of complimentary work underway by UNECE. The Chairman said the EC recognised there was a handling issue for the different processes involved. EC did not want to wait to see if different numbers emerged from UNECE, as the EC work was further advanced, but there was the potential to share and discuss the analysis with UNECE.

5.8 Andy Limbrick, Association of Electricity Producers (AIP), asked if there was any further information on the EC's proposals for a small combustion plant directive and also requested a current list of Defra air quality contacts.

5.9 The Chairman said the EC's Thematic Strategy, published in 2005, had mentioned the possibility of looking at measures to deal with emissions from small combustion plant, but nothing further had emerged. The current review of the IPPC Directive was discussing extending controls to smaller plant and UK were closely involved in the process. Defra would send the Forum a list of key contacts in Air Environment Quality Division. **Action Defra**

5.10 Noel Olson (BMA) considered action on PM_{2.5} should begin ahead of the proposed 2013 review of the new directive, particularly as more health evidence emerged. BMA suggested that chief medical officers in each Member State should help to influence this in the finalisation of the directive and suggested that the BMA might lobby the DoH to increase leverage.

5.11 The Chairman explained that there were practical reasons for the directives proposed timetable for PM_{2.5}. The EC recognised Member States would need more tools to meet the current limit values before introducing further ones. While the first air quality daughter directive had required Member States to measure PM_{2.5}, the database in most countries was still quite small and Member States were not prepared to agree a mandatory limit value at this stage. However, the Chairman considered that it had been a significant achievement for exposure reduction to be included and confirmed that DoH's views were included in the UK's negotiating lines.

5.12 Jim Storey (EA), inquired if the recent consultation on the implementation of the 4th Air Quality Daughter Directive and consolidation of existing UK limit value regulations included additional legislation.

5.13 Robert Falk, Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), explained that as well as transposing the requirements of the 4th Daughter Directive for targets and monitoring requirements for arsenic, cadmium, nickel and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, the consultation proposed to include these in one set of regulations along with the existing regulations which had transposed the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Daughter Directives into UK law. DTI pointed out that the 4th Daughter Directive made it clear that industry was not required to go beyond BAT to comply with its requirements.

6. Update on transport and air quality

6.1 Victoria Waite, Department for Transport (DfT), summarised the position on Euro 5, Energy Saving Trust grant programmes and the London Low Emission Zone.

6.2 The **Euro 5** proposal introduced emissions standards for new cars to help meet air quality objectives. Initial progress in Council Working Group has slowed pending the European Parliament (EP) delivering their views. The EP Environment Committee would vote on its report on 14 September. Its members had tabled 197 Amendments. Rapporteurs were working on a compromise package of amendments which was likely to include strict Euro 6 diesel NOx limits and some form of derogation for certain heavy passenger cars.

6.3 The latest proposal would remove an allowance for heavy cars to approve to Light Goods Vehicle limits, currently used by diesel off-road vehicles, motor homes, London taxis and large diesel passenger vehicles. This would require adoption of advanced deNOx technology and was likely to impact on manufacturers such as Land Rover and London taxis.

6.4 DfT Minister's had announced that four of the seven existing green transport programmes, funded by DfT and managed by the **Energy Saving Trust**, would not be implemented. These included the Air Quality Retrofit and Enhanced Environmental Vehicle grant programmes on the grounds that, if implemented, they would not achieve market transformation or provide value for money. The aim was to move away from technology specific programmes where EU state aid rules meant grant levels could be no more than 30%.

6.5 Existing budgets would remain allocated for green transport initiatives. A replacement communication programme had been announced at the same time focussing on climate change and air quality benefits. The programme would include promoting eco-friendly driver behaviour, travel planning, accreditation for companies, best practice, advice for bus fleet operators. Details of the new programme were currently being developed.

6.6 David Lemon, Environmental Industries Commission (EIC), was disappointed by the announcement and considered that even a limited amount of funding would help market transformation by acting as an incentive

to others. Removing the grant took away the incentive for anyone to switch to using cleaner fuels or vehicles.

6.7 Colin Copeland, Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT), supported the EIC's views and added that the transport trade had lost some trust in Government because of the withdrawal of funds. Geoff Day, Freight Transport Association (FTA), supported the CPT's comments and called for more details of the new programme. Steve Franklin, Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT), supported these views and suggested more consistency in Government support programmes was needed to allow the industry to plan ahead. The Chairman agreed to circulate copies of DfT Minister's announcement in July with details of the proposed new programme.

Action Defra

6.8 DfT reported that the Mayor had announced the next steps in his plans to implement a **Low Emission Zone (LEZ)** across London in 2008. The scheme would initially cover goods vehicles, buses and coaches. There would be staged introduction for different categories of vehicles for meeting the Euro III standard for particulate matter. The Mayor now planned to extend the scheme to the heaviest, more polluting, light goods vehicles (LGVs) and mini buses (between 1.2 and 3.5 tonnes) from October 2010. There would be no NOx standard in the initial scheme but the position would be kept under review. DfT had some concerns that operators of LGVs might not be able to retrofit and have to replace vehicles at significant costs. It was hoped that the Mayor's consultation on the detailed Order for the scheme, due to start in November, would include a cost and benefit assessment for LGVs.

6.9 EIC considered that if the scheme was to be extended to include more vehicles, such as LGVs, a larger market was likely to lead to lower costs for replacement/retrofit and alternative technologies.

6.10 FTA were concerned that the specific categories of vehicles to be included in the scheme were not yet clear and that the Mayor's phased implementation was too complex with different dates for different vehicle types, some based on emission standards and other on 8 or so year rolling age for the vehicle. FTA wished to see a simpler programme which the industry could understand and work towards.

6.11 Sarah Legge (GLA), replied that Transport for London were currently working on the details of the scheme, including clear definitions of which vehicles would be covered, possible by reference to European classification standards, and details would be included in the next stage of the consultation process.

6.12 EIC asked that if the LEZ were to include controls on NOx emissions, DfT, DVLA and VOSA involve the transport industry and manufacturers at an early stage to help roll out the programme. CPT supported EIC's comments and added that if NOx abatement equipment was required sufficient time would be needed to prove the equipment and put it into operation.

6.13 GLA explained that Mayor had decided not to include controls for NO_x in the LEZ because at the moment there were no accreditation systems available to enforce it. The Mayor would keep the situation under review, although it seemed unlikely it would be introduced in the near future.

6.14 BMA considered that the Air Quality Strategy Review cost and benefit analysis for the LEZ measure should have taken into account the benefits that could come from the encouragement and example that local authorities with LEZs would give to others to introduce similar schemes.

7. Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) Update

7.1 Defra summarised paper AQF 9/06. Defra had helped DfT to assess the air quality aspects of local authorities Local Transport Plans (LTPs); final appraisals were due to be sent to local authorities later this year. Defra were assessing applications to the “Delivering Cleaner Air” theme under the Beacon Scheme and would be making follow up visits to local authorities in the next phase of the selection process early next year. The number of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) had continued to increase over the last few months with the majority being declared for NO₂ objective. The third round of reviews and assessments was now underway. Defra had issued £2.3m in grant between 88 local authorities mainly to support monitoring and action plan projects.

7.2 Defra and the devolved administrations were undertaking an evaluation of the LAQM process and action planning and other website support services. A questionnaire was about to be sent to all local authorities, regional co-ordinators and placed on LACORS’s website. It sought views on the current process and level of support provided. Responses would be taken into account in the revision of the local authority guidance next year.

7.3 Huw Morgan, Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) said that as a response to the LAQM questionnaire exercise it would be useful for local authorities to have a more open dialogue with the auditors and to move away from just helplines to a more constructive two way process which provided more localised support.

7.4 Tim Everett (LGA) considered it would be helpful if Defra would give a presentation to the Forum on the Beacon Scheme. Defra agreed to consider this request. **Action Defra.** LGA added that it would be helpful to know the emerging situation in two tier authorities in taking forward the LTP process and air quality elements. LGA also offered to help encourage late local authorities to submit their updating screening assessments.

7.5 Karen Lawrence (LACORS) added their help to chase later submission under LAQM. LACORS recognised there were difficulties in putting together guidance to draw the two tiers together and much would depend on the quality of the LTP and how well these had integrated air quality and transport planning. LACORS were also keen to see further details of the action plan

projects supported by the air quality grant. Defra agreed to send LACORS a list of different types of projects supported. **Action Defra**

7.6 Bernard Fisher, Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM), was concerned that if the new Air Quality Strategy did not include initiatives and work of local authorities under the LAQM system, it would lessen the importance of their role and make it difficult for local authorities to make the case to their elected members for resources and agree action. The Chairman replied that the aim was to include more on LAQM in the new Strategy and welcomed suggestions from IAQM for suitable text. **Action IAQM**

7.7 Robert Falk (DTI) requested an update with regard to the AQMA declared by Falkirk Council in Scotland. Defra agreed to contact the Scottish Executive and report back. **Action Defra/SE**

8. AOB

8.1 Jim Storey (EA) reported that Air Pollution Research in London (APRIL) group had put forward a proposals to the Lottery Changing Spaces fund for a national air laboratory in England which had been accepted to go forward to the next stage of the bidding process. EA also reported that the NSCA's revised guidance on air quality and development control was due to be published in October.

8.2 EA also asked what impact on air quality work the Department's recent budget cuts might have. The Chairman replied that the key activities and research programmes would be maintained.

8.3 Colin Copelin (CPT) asked the Chairman if it was possible to fix dates for all the meeting of the Forum in 2007 before the year started to help Member's diary commitments. The Chairman agreed to produce a schedule of dates for 2007 for consideration at the next meeting of the Forum on 30 November 2006. **Action Defra**

Secretariat
Air Quality Forum
September 2006

Attendee	Representing
Martin Williams Chairman	Defra
David Lemon	Environmental Industries Association
Noel Olson	British Medical Association
Vanessa McQueen	“ “ “ (guest)
Tim Everett	Local Government Association
Diane Mitchell	National Farmers Union
Karen Lawrence	LACORS
Alice Hume	CBI
Jared Boow	Association of London Government
Colin Copelin	Confederation of Passenger Transport
Sarah Legge	GLA
Huw Morgan	Welsh Local Government Association
Geoff Day	Freight Transport Association
Steve Franklin	Society of Manufacturers & Traders
Malcolm Watson	UK Petroleum Industries Association
Philip Mulligan	National Society for Clean Air
Phil Gervat	“ “ “ “
Andy Limbrick	Association of Electricity Producers
Bernard Fisher	Institute of Air Quality Management
Robert Falk	Dept of Trade & Industry
Victoria Waite	Dept for Transport
Ashleigh Brigden	HM Treasury
Dan Kennedy	DOE Northern Ireland
Hilary Walker	Dept of Health
Jim Story	Environment Agency
Karl Nsiah	Defra
Carol Tidmarsh	“
Alex Wallis	“
Colin McMullen	“