

# Minutes of the Air Quality Forum Meeting: 30 November 2006

## List of attendees at Annexe A

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

- (i) **Defra** to give a presentation to the Forum on the Beacon Scheme awards
- (ii) **DoH** to arrange a presentation to the Forum by COMEAP on the report on long term effects of particles
- (iii) **SE** to produce note on indoor air pollution
- (iv) **Defra/DoH** to suggest an horizon scan by COMEAP of issues likely to arise over the next few years
- (v) **Defra** to ensure the Strategy reflects any COMEAP advice on health impact of different components of particles, when available
- (vi) **Forum** members to submit any further comments on papers 11/06 and 12/06 to Defra Secretariat by 20 December.
- (vii) **DfT** to check if development of their communications programme had considered the relative impacts on air quality and climate change, and report to the Forum.
- (viii) **Defra/DoH/HPA** to discuss disparity between UK objective/EU limit value for nitrogen dioxide and the air pollution banding "moderate" descriptor.

## 1. Introductions

1.1 Martin Williams (Chairman/Defra) introduced Sarah Dudgeon who had taken over responsibility for the national and local air quality policy branch in Defra from Davide Minotti.

1.2 The representative from the Association of London Government reported that the Association was now known as London Councils.

## 2. Minutes of Forum meeting 8 September 2006 and actions arising

2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed. The Chairman reported that the majority of actions had been completed. Defra would plan to give a presentation to the Forum on the Beacon Scheme at the Forum's meeting in March 2007. **Action Defra.** Department of Health (DoH) would arrange a presentation by the Committee on Medical Effects of Air Pollutants (COMEAP) on their report on long term effects of particles at next meeting.  
**Action DoH**

2.2 A note summarising activities and responsibilities for indoor air pollution was circulated for information. The Scottish Environment Protection

Agency (SEPA) suggested that the Scottish Executive (SE) should consider producing a similar note for activities in Scotland. **Action SE.** The Local Government Association (LGA) pointed out that local authorities were a major enforcer of health and safety legislation.

2.3 Leaflets were circulated for information advertising the Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM) conference on Indoor Air Quality and the National Society for Clean Air and Environment Protection (NSCA) conference on Climate Change on 24 and 25 January respectively.

### **3. Air Quality Strategy**

3.1 A report summarising the responses to the Air Quality Strategy consultation document had been circulated to the Forum for information. It presented a statistical overview of responses by the various sectors to the key questions in the consultation. A detailed response to comments received would be published to accompany the final version of the Strategy. The report was available on the Defra web and from the devolved administrations <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/airqualstrat-review/responses-summary.pdf>

#### **Outline of the new Air Quality Strategy**

3.2 Defra summarised paper AQF10/06. The aim was to publish the Strategy around the end of the current financial year. The proposed structure and contents of the new Strategy would comprise a fairly slim Volume I. It would include: the background, vision, review and scope; an explanation of standards and objectives, their impact in health and regulatory terms and changes from the 2000 Strategy. It would not cover indoor air pollution. The present objectives for particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>) were planned to be replaced by an exposure reduction approach to tackle PM<sub>2.5</sub>. Ammonia would be discussed in the new Strategy but action would form part of a separate wider document specifically on ammonia.

3.3 The Strategy would set out the links with the Government's other policies, particularly climate change, the importance of local authorities for delivery and address the better regulation agenda. The new measures to be taken forward would be included along with those to be kept under review and those where further work was needed.

3.4 The scientific and costs and benefit evidence directly supporting Volume I of the Strategy would be detailed in a separate Volume II. The baseline would include an update of the data used for the consultation document. The Inter-departmental Group on Cost and Benefits (IGCB) would publish additional supporting material on the costs and benefit assessment and methodologies in a separate report.

3.5 Environmental Industries Commission (EIC) asked if all the measures in the consultation document would feature in the new Strategy and if their cost and benefits would be considered in more detail. LGA asked how

implementation of measures would be monitored. UK Petroleum Industry Association (UKPIA) reiterated their comments made during the consultation that they considered only measures backed by EU legislation should be taken forward.

3.6 Defra confirmed that all the potential new measures in the consultation document would be included in the new Strategy. These would either be for taking forward, kept under review or to be considered later. The supporting volumes would provide cost and benefit assessments, including results of any further assessment work. Progress on implementation of the Strategy and new measures would be reported in the Sustainable Development publications, in Defra's annual and autumn performance reports and reports by the devolved administrations. Progress would also be monitored by the Forum and discussed at their meetings.

3.7 EIC recognised that going beyond EU controls presented problems for some UK industries, but would be welcomed by other industry sectors. The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) agreed that the impact of tighter controls could differ between sectors. For example, there were different permitting levels for small scale industries, which might be considered as "gold plating". However, WLGA considered that if there were strong evidence of adverse impact on health from a particular source the public would not be interested in other countries political or economic issues with abatement costs.

3.8 The British medical Association (BMA) considered that COMEAP should be asked to look at the likely changes and trends in health and air pollution over the next five years or so to identify areas where a precautionary approach would be needed. BMA were concerned about the long term impact on health from the increase in carbon monoxide emissions which could have a major impact. Also, evidence of the need for new measures and objectives was often based on current scientific knowledge and a judgement of the likely implications which did not always adopt the precautionary approach.

3.9 The Chairman replied that prioritisation of work on health advice was via DoH, the Health Protection Agency (HPA) and COMEAP. It was expected that work would mainly concentrate on impact pathways and impact in numerical terms and the cost and benefits for a quantitative evidence based approach to inform policy. However, an horizon scan by COMEAP would be useful and could be put forward as a suggestion. **Action Defra/DoH**

3.10 The National Farmers Union asked if the new Strategy would include the evidence base for ammonia in view of the fact that there were still uncertainties on the emission factors. Defra confirmed ammonia would be included but not embedded in the new Strategy. Further work was needed and action on ammonia needed to be addressed across Defra in a separate strategy document.

3.11 The Association of Electricity Producers asked if the Strategy would address the health impact effect of different components of particles, as new

measures would only be cost effective if targeted correctly. The Chairman replied that currently there was not much evidence to make distinctions between components but programmes were underway in many countries looking into the toxicity of secondary particles. COMEAP were also looking at the issue and if more evidence became available in time, it was hoped to include this in the Strategy. **Action Defra**

3.12 NSCA wished to know if the additional measures intended for the “under review” list were subsequently found to be cost effective, how would these be included in the Strategy and taken forward. Defra replied that any individual measure taken forward would be subject to a full regulatory impact assessment at the time. However, action on new measures and implementation was not dependent on inclusion in a new Strategy and could be developed and introduced in between publications.

3.13 The Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT) were concerned that fitting particle traps to older vehicles could lead to increase in emissions of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and retrofit and other abatement equipment needed to be fully proven to be reliable before adoption by the industry on a wide scale.

3.14 EIC reported that some modern diesel engines appeared to emit more NO<sub>x</sub> as NO<sub>2</sub> and that some particle traps used NO<sub>2</sub> in their working. EIC considered that selective catalyst reduction (SCR) traps and other technologies could help address the problem although this might result in some higher costs.

3.15 Defra said it was recognised that pre Euro standard vehicles appeared to emit around 5% of NO<sub>x</sub> as NO<sub>2</sub>, Euro IV emitted between 30 – 60% NO<sub>2</sub> and retrofitting also increased emission of direct NO<sub>2</sub>. The priority pollutant in terms of health effects, however, was particulate matter. In the longer term Euro 6 for light duty diesel vehicles and potentially future emission standards for heavy duty diesel vehicles, may involve advanced NO<sub>x</sub> reduction technologies, such as SCR.

3.16 The Greater London Authority (GLA) inquired if the Strategy would be subject to wider discussion before it was published and if it was planned to hold a workshop similar to the event earlier this year. The Chairman replied that the tight production timetable did not allow for a workshop but the Forum would be updated at the next meeting in March 2007 on details of the final Strategy. In the meantime, if Forum members who wished to discuss particular issues, they could contact the Chairman for bilateral discussions.

### **Sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) 15 minute objective**

3.17 Defra summarised paper AQF 11/06, which set out work in progress on assessment of the Strategy’s current SO<sub>2</sub> 15 minute objective. Defra explained that the work was to help address concerns raised through the consultation process, particularly from some industry sectors, that the objective was more stringent than European limit values and could effect UK industries competitiveness. The paper set out approach, assumptions on

modelling various scenarios and next steps. The aim was to quantify the incremental costs and benefits of retaining/removing the objective and the impact on emissions from power stations and refineries under different energy scenarios and base years.

3.18 GLA considered that the conservative factors being used in the assessment could under estimate the health benefits of retaining the objective and that more realistic figures and uncertainty analysis should be included.

3.19 LGA pointed out that the health effects from short term exposure to SO<sub>2</sub> had not changed since the Expert Panel on Air Quality Standards (EPAQS) recommendation and it was an important safeguard for asthmatics and other sensitive groups. This view was supported by WLGA, BMA and NSCA. The WLGA considered objective setting should mainly be driven by health advice and that the WHO review of more recent evidence had resulted in a tightening of their guidelines and studies in Hong Kong and US also confirmed the importance of keeping SO<sub>2</sub> levels as low as possible.

3.20 EIC recognised there were presentational problems in relaxing the objective and thought that the assessment should include more on the application of technology, such as fitting of flue gas desulphurisation.

3.21 UKPIA were concerned that the paper gave more weight to EPAQS recommendations than the WHO guidelines. They questioned whether assessing the 15 minute objective against all SO<sub>2</sub> emissions for the whole UK was correct and if the 1.5 factor for emission assumptions for the refinery sector and the 100 year cost and benefits used by IGCB were appropriate. They considered a more appropriate measure than the 15 minute objective was needed to control SO<sub>2</sub>. AEP agreed that there should be other means to deal with the long term health impacts from sulphate exposure.

3.22 The BMA suggested that COMEAP should put into context the current limitations of evidence based health advice. UKPIA considered COMEAP should look at the EPAQS recommendations and WHO guidelines to give their medical judgement and advice.

3.23 DoH emphasised that relaxing objectives should not be considered where this led to peoples health being put at risk .

3.24 The Chairman would arrange for another electronic copy of the paper to be sent to the Forum and invited members to submit any further comments on the paper by return of email to Defra by 20 December. **Action Forum**

### **Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAH) objective**

3.24 Defra tabled paper AQF 12/06, which set out work in progress on assessing the Strategy's current objective for PAH. It set out the background, approach and inputs into the modelling, provided updated results, projections and contributions from the various sectors from those in the Consultation document. It also provided details and maps showing areas of exceedances

of the non mandatory EU target value in the 4<sup>th</sup> Daughter Directive, population exposed to the Strategy's objective and EU target value and source apportionment.

3.25 The Chairman would arrange for an electronic copy of the paper to be sent to the Forum and invited Members to submit any further comments on the paper by return of email to Defra by 20 December **Action Forum**

#### **4. Health and Air Pollution**

4.1 DoH summarised paper AQF 13/06. Work by COMEAP's sub group was continuing on updating earlier work on the long term effects of particles. DoH would arrange for a member of COMEAP to make a presentation to the Forum on this work at the next meeting of the Forum on 22 March 2007.

##### **Action DoH**

4.2 COMEAP would be discussing indoor air issues concerning swimming pools and asthma at their meeting in February next year. DoH were involved in the cross government Ministerial and official discussions looking at carbon monoxide poisoning.

#### **5. European and international issues**

5.1 The Chairman presented paper AQF 14/06. This included updates on the proposed EU air quality directive, review of the National Emission Ceilings Directive, transposition and implementation of several EU directives and revised Large Combustion Plant Directive.

5.2 The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders asked if the EC's Clean Air For Europe (CAFÉ) had reviewed their baseline to take account of latest figures on power generation and Euro 5 vehicle emission proposals. The Chairman replied that CAFÉ had used Member States' own figures and projections. They had also taken account of Euro 5 but it was not clear which actual numbers had been used.

5.3 UKPIA reported that the Sulphur Content of Marine Fuel Directive categorised gas oil and kerosene as separate fuels, which could present logistical problem for industry if these had to be treated as separate products.

5.4 EIC considered it was important to keep open the options for technical measures to allow continued use of bunker fuels, now that control of implementation and monitoring of the Directive had passed to the Marine Coastguard Agency.

#### **6. Transport and air quality**

6.1 Department for Transport (DfT) reported that it was hoped a first reading deal on the **Euro 5 vehicle emission standards** proposals would be achieved at European Parliament plenary session later this month. There were small differences between the European Council and the Parliament's

text but the Presidency hoped to reach a deal on a compromise package. The key areas were Euro 6 on NOX, + derogation for heavy passenger cars. The NOX issue concerned tighter petrol or aligned petrol/diesel NOx limits.

6.2 The European Parliament's proposed derogation for heavy passenger vehicles covered special purpose vehicles, eg, ambulances, motor homes and vehicles with 7 seats or more and off road vehicles. The Council's proposal was similar but did not include off road vehicles. The UK had concerns on the directive's text on fiscal incentives and impact on tax reserve matters. The position on the proposals would be clearer in the next few weeks.

6.3 DfT updated the Forum on the **communications programme** which, among other things, had replaced the Energy Saving Trust grant programmes. The programme would focus on climate change but air quality benefits would be included. An eco driving campaign would be launched at the end of January next year and would include advice on purchasing choices for new cars and on eco driving. Advice on work plan travels should emerge later in 2007. A feasibility study was underway looking at the benefits of the existing green transport accreditation programme. A contract had also been let to look at the feasibility of a bus fleet advice programme.

6.4 The Scottish Executive reported they intended to introduce a new grant scheme to replace the discontinued CleanUp programme previously operated by the Trust. The scheme would focus on improving emissions from local authority vehicle fleets. Technical support would be provided by the Trust and it was hoped to launch the scheme either before Christmas or early in 2007. The scheme will operate initially as a pilot for two years, after which its effectiveness would be reviewed.

6.5 GLA reminded the Forum that the Consultation on the review of the Air Quality Strategy had looked at the Trust grant programme as a potential means of delivering an increase in the uptake of cleaner vehicles. GLA hoped that Government departments would continue to take this proposed measure forward, and in particular, to give encouragement to the use of smaller cars for benefits over the longer term.

6.6 CPT considered that better traffic planning by local authorities, workplace plans and economic incentives to encourage shift from cars to public transport would give better results than an eco driving campaign.

6.7 NSCA were supportive of providing advice to consumers to show levels of emissions from different models for climate change and air quality benefits but considered the advice should include an analysis of vehicle life cycles to give the wider impacts of buying and using particular models.

6.8 BMA considered that encouraging behavioural change was not generally achieved by campaigns and that structural changes and measures would be necessary if the new programme was to succeed. The Environment Agency mentioned that the Netherlands's driving test included a section on eco driving.

6.9 SEPA inquired whether DfT's research and the focus groups used to develop the programme had looked at the relative impacts on air quality and climate change. DfT agreed to check and report back to the Forum. **Action DfT**

6.10 DfT reported that the **Transport Innovation Fund (TIF)** was primarily targeted at projects on productivity and congestion, such as demand management and road pricing. Projects by local authorities would not be considered which had a negative impact on air quality and the environment. It was planned to issue details of schemes selected for first round funding before the end of the year. TIF funding was limited to schemes in England. The fund is part of the long term budget for DfT and would be reflected in the funding allocations for Scotland and Wales through the Barnett Formula.

6.11 Transport for London (TfL) had issued a consultation on 13 November with details for implementation of the Mayor's **London Low Emission Zone** together with an updated cost and benefit assessment. Consultation would run to February 2007. DfT and its agencies were continuing to discuss with TfL details of the support services for the scheme. Links to the consultation document were on TfL's web site <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/press-centre/press-releases/press-releases-content.asp?prID=931>

## **7. Local Air Quality Management (LAQM)**

7.1 Defra presented paper AQF 15/06. This provided an update on the integration of local authorities air quality action plans and local transport plans, which DfT aimed to issue final appraisals by the end of the year. Eight applications by local authorities for Beacon Scheme status were currently being assessed and final awards were expected to be made in March 2007.

7.2 Defra and the devolved administrations were carrying out an evaluation of the LAQM review and assessment process and action planning and website/helpdesk support services. A questionnaire had been issued to local authorities, regional co-ordinators and available on the Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS) website. Evaluation Reports would be published in early 2007 and responses taken into account in the revision of the local authority guidance due in 2007/08.

7.3 Scottish Executive updated figures in the papers and reported that 11 local authorities had declared air quality management areas.

## **8. AOB**

8.1 The Chairman presented paper AQF 16/06 which set out dates in 2007 for the Forum's meetings - March 22, June 28, September 27 and December 6. Members and other attendees were asked to note the dates for their diaries. Agendas and papers would be sent closer to the events.

8.2 The Institute for Air Quality Management presented a discussion paper on the disparity between the UK air quality objective and the EU limit value for nitrogen dioxide and the public information service's Air Pollution Banding "moderate" descriptor.

8.3 IAQM explained that this was based on work by Bristol City Council which found that it was possible for the hourly average UK objective for nitrogen dioxide (and consequently the EU limit value when it comes into effect) to be breached without there being a single case of the "moderate" threshold used in the information banding system being exceeded. The discussion paper suggested there should either be a comprehensive review of the bandings for nitrogen dioxide or retain the other thresholds but widen bands 4 to 6 to accommodate a "moderate" threshold of  $200 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ .

8.4 The Chairman replied that the present banding systems had been introduced after considerable work by COMEAP and EPAQS on the reductions in health effects of the pollutants concerned and the need to provide advice which the public could understand. However, he recognised this was an anomaly and agreed to discuss this with DoH and HPA and report back to the Forum in due course. **Action Defra/DoH/HPA**

8.5 GLA announced that the Mayor of London and London Councils had published a Best Practice Guidance on reducing emissions and dust from construction sites in London on 21 November. It provided, for the first time, advice for developers, local authorities and other organisations involved in construction on reducing dust and air pollution from construction and demolition sites in the capital.

8.6 GLA added that in 2005 it was estimated there were approximately 1000 accelerated deaths and 1000 extra respiratory hospital admissions because of pollution from particulates (PM10) in London, making cutting these emissions crucial to improve both the health of Londoners as well as the environment. This was particularly important with the construction for the 2012 Olympics and regeneration throughout the Thames Gateway. Further details and copies of the guidance are available from - [www.london.gov.uk/mayor/environment/air\\_quality/construction-dust.jsp](http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/environment/air_quality/construction-dust.jsp)

Air Quality Forum Secretariat  
December 2006

Attendee	Representing
Martin Williams Chairman	Defra
John Murlis	Environmental Industries Association
Noel Olsen	British Medical Association
Tim Everett	Local Government Association
Diane Mitchell	National Farmers Union
Severine Trouillet	LACORS
Alice Hume	CBI
Jared Boow	London Councils
Colin Copelin	Confederation of Passenger Transport
Sarah Legge	GLA
Huw Morgan	Welsh Local Government Association
Simon Barnes	Society of Manufacturers & Traders
Malcolm Watson	UK Petroleum Industries Association
Philip Mulligan	National Society for Clean Air
David Acres	Association of Electricity Producers
David Muir	Institute of Air Quality Management
Robert Falk	Dept of Trade & Industry
Trevor Clarkson	Dept of Trade & Industry
Victoria Waite	Dept for Transport
Oliver Mulvey	Dept for Transport
Rachel Ward	Dept for Transport
Jenny Laber	Dept for Transport
Ashleigh Brigden	HM Treasury
Stephen Kerr	DOE Northern Ireland
Joanna Warner	Cabinet Office
Aneen Blackmore	Cabinet Office
Louise Newport	Dept of Health
Jim Story	Environment Agency
Andrew Taylor	Scottish Executive
Anna Douglas	SEPA
Sarah Dudgeon	Defra
Tim Williamson	Defra
Colin McMullen	Defra

