

## **TRAFFIC, ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY PANEL**

MINUTES OF A MEETING of the Traffic, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel held on Tuesday 25 September 2012 at 4pm in Conference Room B, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, The Civic Offices, Portsmouth.

(NB These minutes should be read in conjunction with the agenda for the meeting which can be found at [www.portsmouth.gov.uk](http://www.portsmouth.gov.uk)).

### **Present**

Councillor Caroline Scott (Chair)  
Phil Smith (from 4:20pm).  
Les Stevens  
Sandra Stockdale (Vice Chair)  
Luke Stubbs  
Neill Young

### **Officers**

Richard Lee, Environmental Health Manager  
Redouan Sadak, Environmental Protection Officer

#### **19 Apologies for Absence (AI 1).**

No apologies were received.

#### **20 Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2).**

No declarations were made.

#### **21 Minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2012 (AI 3).**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Traffic, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel held on 10 July 2012 be confirmed as a correct record.

#### **22 Air Quality in Portsmouth (AI 4).**

**RESOLVED** that the draft scoping document be agreed.

Mr Lee, Environmental Health Manager and Mr Sadak, Environment Protection Officer gave an overview of the review and explained the following points:

Mr Sadak, Environment Protection Officer is responsible for monitoring air quality and annual reporting to the Department for the Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). The council has collective responsibility for lowering pollution levels and continuously striving to deliver cleaner air.

Poor health, smoking, poor nutrition, alcohol consumption and poverty have a detrimental affect on health. Air pollution exacerbates existing health problems. Poor air quality also impacts negatively on soil, water and vegetation.

The 1995 Environment Act required the government to publish a national Air Quality Strategy (AQS) and to establish the system of Local Air Quality Management (LAQM). As a result, Local Authorities reviewed and assessed air quality locally, and where necessary declared Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) and published relevant Air Quality Action Plans (AQAP) in improve poor air quality in these areas.

The government may decide to penalise local authorities which do not meet the NAQOs.

The first draft AQAP was produced in 2007 and, although not formally adopted, many of the proposed actions were implemented as part of the Local Transport Plan (LTP). The 2010 revised AQAP sets out the following steps:

- Identify and assess measures implemented since 2007.
- Model the impact of air pollution throughout the city.
- Report when the Nitrogen Dioxide levels are exceeded or are likely to be exceeded and take steps to improve them.
- Seek to improve continuously (even in non AQMAs).

The main source of air pollution in Portsmouth is road traffic emissions. Nitrogen Dioxide is the pollutant of greatest concern.

The 2011 progress report on local air quality management measures carried out over the last decade was circulated to members and is attached to these minutes as appendix one.

(Councillor Young entered the meeting).

In response to questions from the panel, officers clarified the following points:

Nationally, air quality improved until 2010 and then worsened.

As Portsmouth is an island, traffic does not flow through the city easily and therefore there is a significant congestion problem. Certain cross boundary pollutants also affect local air quality.

The manner in which AQMAs are determined is not prescribed. Portsmouth City Council decided to confine the AQMAs where air pollution failed to meet the National Air Quality Objective; whereas some other Local Authorities declared the whole of their cities as AQMAs.

Following the 2009 Further Assessment, it was evident that the quality of air in Portsmouth had improved sufficiently to enable 8 of the 13 declared AQMAs to be revoked. A map showing the location of all 13 AQMAs in Portsmouth (revoked and retained) was circulated to the panel and is attached as *appendix two*. The revoked eight AQMAs are shown in black.

DEFRA also prescribes the manner in which the council reports on air quality.

Within the procedure adopted by Portsmouth City Council, if the front of the façade of a sensitive receptor exceeds the maximum Nitrogen Dioxide levels set out in the NAQO, the entire property is deemed to be part of the AQMA. Residential dwellings, schools, nursing homes are all considered as sensitive receptors.

The number of roads, average traffic speed and car makes are taken into account when the emission factor is calculated. This factor is used to model the dispersion of air pollution.

Nationally the number of cars on the road, the number of miles travelled by cars has decreased and emissions produced by cars and shipping have also reduced. However, air quality has deteriorated since 2010.

Portsmouth City Council needs to develop new ways to reduce the number of vehicles on the road.

The monitoring levels are reported annually to DEFRA. However, monitoring data can be observed hourly/ weekly peaks.

Measures to tackle air quality could have an impact on the city's tourism and care must be taken that air pollution is not displaced/ moved sideways to another part of the city.

The Traffic Management Unit and Environment Health Service are working on a project in order to identify means to maximise the use of traffic management at certain number of junctions to improve the fluidity of road traffic across the city.

Air pollution dispersion is governed by numerous factors such as meteorological conditions as well as the surface roughness (the size and distribution of buildings on the side of the road as well as its location).

Residents' support is essential when introducing measures to tackle air quality pollution, for example turning off their car engines when stationary or using public transport.

The Highways Agency is responsible for the M275 and other motorways. There are no longer any AQMAs in these areas.

The AQAP sets out the roles of the council's partners. Many of the actions remain the responsibility of the Traffic department, including school travel plans, the promotion of cycling and walking and public transport.

The environmental impact of planning applications is submitted as a part of the planning application process if required. This is considered by the Planning Officer and passed on to the Environmental Protection Officer according to a protocol between the two departments, to seek their expert advice.

The environmental protection officer appraising the air quality impact assessment can suggest measures to minimise the impact on health for residents of the proposed new housing. These measures can include setting the development back from the kerbside of the road by a few metres, or having non-opening front windows with mechanical ventilation drawing air from a clean location.

As there are many variables involved in air pollution dispersion, it is very difficult single out and assess the impact of any given measure. However, the predicted air quality improvement of project such as Park & Ride can be estimated based on the number of parking spaces allocated and their frequency of occupancy. From these parameters we can identify the emissions reduction achieved can be determined.

Poor air quality can have, singly or collectively with other environmental factors or social habits, a negative impact on Portsmouth's residents' health; improving it would help improve life expectancy.

The following air pollutants are covered in the government's LAQM:

- Benzene
- 1.3 Butadiene
- Carbon Monoxide
- Lead
- Nitrogen Dioxide
- Particles (PM10)
- Sulphur Dioxide.

Nitrogen Dioxide is the main pollutant, so the council focuses on that.

The panel commented that it might be appropriate for the council's housing allocation policy to take into account applicants' health conditions should the housing allocation is within existing AQMAs.

This year the council received the maximum funding from DEFRA (£60,000) to set up a project to look into the feasibility of maximising use of existing road traffic management system and looking the feasibility of improving traffic fluidity in the non signalised junction.

The meeting concluded at 5:15pm.