

Environment Sub-Committee

8 February 2017

Present: Councillor B Burdis (Chair)
Councillors G Bell, L Bell, P Brooks, P Earley, E Hodson,
M Huscroft, G Madden and D McMeekan.

E35/02/17 Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors D Drummond, F Lott, W Lott and M Thirlaway.

E36/02/17 Substitute Members

In accordance with the Council's Constitution the following substitute members were reported:

Councillor P Earley for Councillor F Lott
Councillor D McMeekan for Councillor W Lott

E37/02/17 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.

E38/02/17 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2017 be confirmed.

E39/02/17 Air Quality Review in North Tyneside

Consideration was given to a report and presentation which provided an outline of the air quality monitoring carried out in North Tyneside. It was explained that, under the Environment Act 1995, Local Air Quality Management Systems had been established which required local authorities to regularly review and assess air quality in their area against a set of national objectives. A number of the pollutants, including carbon monoxide, benzene, lead and sulphur dioxide, which were included within the objectives were not an issue in North Tyneside primarily due to the introduction of smoke control areas and the lack of large industrial plants in the area. The pollutants of concern in North Tyneside were nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulates.

According to a World Health Organisation estimate in 2012 around 1 in 8 deaths were as a result of air pollution. Particulates had been identified by Public Health England as a contributing factor in a number of premature deaths. According to estimates PM_{2.5} particulates could be linked to 4.8% of premature deaths in North Tyneside although it was noted that this was below the average of 5.6% for the whole of England.

It was explained that the authority carried out monitoring of nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter. As they were mainly generated as a result of emissions from traffic it had therefore been decided to carry out monitoring near to busy roads. The Authority operated two real time monitoring stations which measured short and long term emission levels for particulates and nitrogen dioxide, one located near the A19 Tyne Tunnel and the second near the roadside on High Street East, Wallsend.

A new duty had been imposed on local authorities to tackle particulates, especially fine particulates of less than 2.5µm in diameter. It was explained that the fine particulates were of particular concern as they could be inhaled deeper into the respiratory system and were therefore considered to be more harmful.

In addition the authority monitored nitrogen dioxide levels via a system of diffusion tubes located at 28 locations near to busy roads.

The Local Plan, expected to be adopted in 2017, would incorporate air quality guidance to ensure that all future development in the borough would take into account air quality impacts and incorporate appropriate mitigation to minimise those impacts.

In addition an Air Quality Working Group would be established to identify measures which would improve air quality in the borough. Such measures would include:

- The promotion of air quality to enable the public to make informed choices on measures they could take to reduce pollution;
- The introduction of systems to regulate and control pollution;
- The addition of a requirement to consider air quality as part of planning policy to mitigate emissions from new building and incorporate energy efficiency measures into older developments
- The reduction of emissions from road transport by encouraging alternatives to the car, reducing emissions from vehicles on the road and encouraging alternative low emission vehicles; and
- The promotion of alternative modes of travel including public transport, cycling and the introduction of green travel plans.

Reference was also made to the works ongoing to develop an Air Quality Policy for the borough. It was suggested that a draft of the proposed policy be presented to members prior to its adoption later in the year.

Members sought clarification on the following issues:

- Emissions from household wood burning stoves were not measured but legislation was in place measure emissions from industrial units.
- National targets for reduction in deaths from particulates in the environment. It was noted that there were no safe levels of fine particulates but the authority was aiming to keep the levels as low as possible.
- The chemical composition of particulates was not measured just the size of the particulate, particularly PM_{2.5}.
- Any refusal of planning permissions on the grounds of concerns relating to air quality issues would need to be backed up with appropriate evidence.
- Availability of funding for the installation of charging points for electric vehicles. It was explained that the steering group was looking at the production of

planning guidance to increase the number of charging points in housing developments and in business parks.

Members also questioned whether there was evidence available which demonstrated that there was an increase in cases of dementia in people who lived beside busy roads and whether this could be attributed to increased levels of air pollution.

It was noted that air quality data was reported to the Department for the Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and was, after analysis and checking, published on its website. It was suggested that this information be provided to Members when it has been sent to DEFRA.

The Chair thanked the officers for their report.

It was **AGREED** that (1) the report be noted;
(2) the draft Air Quality Policy be presented to a future meeting of the Sub-committee;
and
(3) the air quality data reported to DEFRA on an annual basis be provided to Members of the Sub-committee, when available.