

Sussex Air/Defra Seminar

New Approaches to air quality delivery

Key drivers for change



- Original LAQM review said the current system was good at diagnosis but less so on delivery of solutions
- Significant challenge to meet limit values – esp. NO₂ but also for PM_{2.5} in the future – continued health and environmental impacts
- Local authorities key to delivery of air quality on the ground
- Coalition aim to reduce central direction and checking and shift power to local communities /citizens to strengthen focus of local action) – how do we maintain focus on improving air quality
- Poor alignment of national and local priorities for AQ – provide right framework for LAs to deliver improvements and to support delivery of EU obligations but also flexibility to respond to local circumstances

Align Local and national action to improve quality



- UK Gov has priority to meet EU limit values and report on progress against these; LA's work towards AQS objectives
- National assessment of air quality and local assessment not always consistent
- Role local authorities play in meeting limit values not transparent but they are key in local delivery where national measures are too blunt or not sufficient.
- Local accountability for air quality improvement needs to be clearer
- Need better line of sight between limit values and what LAs do to improve AQ – will help in raising profile of air quality locally

Possible changes

- Consolidate EU and national objectives so that nationally and locally we are working towards a single set of objectives and local authorities work is recognised as contributing towards achieving limit values
- Share information on compliance assessment with local authorities and other delivery partners to inform action planning;
- LA action to improve air quality is so far as possible is taken into account in UK air quality plans;
- local authorities continue to screen for local hotspots not identified by national assessment where necessary

Simplify reporting requirements

- Current reporting cycle heavy and prescriptive
- Emphasis on assessment/diagnosis of hotspots rather than improvement of air quality.
- Number of stages USA – DA – AQMA – FA Action Plan preparation
- Might be several years before action plans are developed and then implemented
- Not clear what impact measures are having – evaluation of impacts is difficult and inconsistent

Possible changes

- Proportionate screening and reporting requirements allow greater flexibility, combined reporting etc
- Do all LAs need to report every year
- Simplify assessment process
 - Make national assessment data available to help to identify priorities for action and to help in monitoring progress
- Change focus to
 - action planning and implementation
 - Reporting on progress with measures implemented and their effectiveness in reducing emissions

Communications and Engagement



- Good Air Quality Management relies on transport, environment climate change and development working together
- Air Quality officers complain about not been heard or being ignored by transport, planning or other agencies because other priorities are more pressing or popular
- Air Quality officers have expertise and skills which can be used to support development and environmental improvements
- Private sector and public don't have good understanding of what they can do to improve air quality and how transport choices can make a difference to air quality

Possible changes

- Communicate the benefits of integrating air quality into other policy areas such as transport, local environmental quality, development and climate change
- Engage on a win/win basis
- Promote behaviour change and engage with private sector and public on benefits of improved air quality.
- What messages would influence decision makers and behaviour effectively?
- What resources and information is needed to help with this?

Tools to improve air quality



Review highlighted need to

- Better communicate health impacts of poor air quality
- Recast LAQM practice guidance, particularly on economic appraisal, in more realistic and down-to-earth terms,
- Provide evidence about the typical AQ impacts, and cost-effectiveness, of commonly-used measures,
- Commission further study or research to fill the gaps.
 - cover measures aimed at air quality improvement, such as low emission zones,
 - instruments with other main aims, such as reducing congestion and smoothing traffic flows.

Proposals for improvement



- Map out current guidance available
- Sample local authority views on Defra guidance
- Identify gaps in provision and how they could be filled
- Collate examples of best practice and share widely
- Provide simple quantified examples of improvements and how these can be implemented
- Promote clear messages on health impacts and importance of improving air quality
- Use IT and web-based resources to improve access and sharing of tools etc

Interested in views on



Aligning EU limits and LAQM

- benefits on working towards limit values compared to objectives
- taking account of national assessment in action planning
- local assessment and hotspots
- Role of other players HA, EA etc

Reporting

- What screening and assessment is necessary to support air quality improvement
- How best we combine local and national information to support measures?
- What information does Defra need to meet EU reporting obligations and local accountability?
- Could more LAs work together on action planning and reporting?
- Can we do more to automate reporting make it more flexible/responsive

Tools and resources

- current guidance and gaps etc
- options and examples on sharing best practice etc
- Information to support better communications of health impacts

Workshops



- Three workshops proposed on
 - Tools and resources for better air quality delivery
 - Engaging decision makers and private sector
 - Evaluating effectiveness of air quality measures
- Organisation
 - Leader presents a short overview of questions
 - Discussion around the theme
 - Report on key points and possible options
- Logistics
 - 45 minutes to 1 hour allowed
 - Coffee break between 15:00 and 15:15
 - Feedback and discussion from 15:15