

EXETER CITY COUNCIL
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY
3 JUNE 2008

EXECUTIVE
17 JUNE 2008

LOCAL AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT:
AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Members on the Council's duties relating to local air quality management and the outcome of the consultation exercise for the proposed Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP).
- 1.2 To seek approval of the Air Quality Action Plan for Exeter.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Environment Act 1995 requires local authorities to carry out periodic reviews of air quality in their areas, and to assess present and predicted future air quality against the objectives within the Air Quality Regulations 2000 and (Amendment) Regulations 2002. Where an exceedence of any objective is identified, the local authority must declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and produce an AQAP. The Action Plan should contain measures intended to reduce pollutant concentrations, and should work towards achieving compliance with the air quality objective. The AQAP must be submitted to Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) for their assessment and approval. A copy of the AQAP is available in the Members' room.
- 2.2 In Exeter, five separate AQMAs were declared in 2005 as a result of high levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) along busy roads, in particular the five arterial routes into the city. These were replaced in 2007 by a larger, single AQMA covering the majority of the main routes in the city, a copy of a plan showing the single AQMA will be displayed at the meeting or can be viewed on the Council's website <http://www.exeter.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=4291> . Further reports for these AQMAs have been undertaken, which have reached the same conclusions; that the exceedences of the NO₂ objective are the result of high levels of traffic emissions, caused by high vehicle flow and low average speeds. Emissions from Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) and Public Service Vehicles (PSVs) were also identified as contributing significantly to overall concentrations in some locations. Both these reports have been scrutinised by DEFRA and accepted without amendment.
- 2.3 Consultation has been undertaken with transportation planning officers within the Environment Directorate of Devon County Council at every stage leading up to and including the declaration of the AQMAs and the drafting of the AQAP.
- 2.4 The Government guidance for the production of both AQAPs and Second Round Local Transport Plans states that 'local authorities responsible for local air quality management should integrate AQAPs, where transport is the primary factor, into the Local Transport Plan (LTP) covering their area. Government strongly recommends this approach, because this integration should enable air quality problems to be dealt with in a more corporate and multi-disciplinary way.' In drafting the AQAP, officers have

had close regard to the LTP, and in particular included those measures to reduce air pollution in Exeter.

2.5 In Exeter the main sources of NO₂ pollution are traffic related therefore many of the most significant mitigation measures in the Action Plan come from the LTP. Other actions have been drawn from the Environment Strategy for Exeter, or from Exeter's Climate Change and Air Quality Strategies. This Air Quality Action Plan brings together all of these measures that will reduce NO₂ concentrations, and includes some additional measures that the City Council could implement that may also have a beneficial effect, such as:

- Encourage reduced engine idling in stationary vehicles
- Roadside emissions testing
- Lobby government to encourage the development and uptake of cleaner vehicles

2.6 The Action Plan contains an assessment of the cost-effectiveness of each measure, in terms of the air quality improvements that they will provide. It also discusses the other benefits or dis-benefits that may arise from the implementation of the measures, such as health benefits from increased cycling, or road safety problems from increased traffic speeds.

2.7 As the majority of the measures in this Action Plan are included in other plans and strategies, many have already been programmed for implementation. This package is predicted to work towards achieving the objective level for NO₂ by 2012. Those measures that are new within this Action Plan have been prioritised, based on their cost-effectiveness. These additional measures will be considered for implementation at each annual review, should further air quality benefits be required, beyond those delivered by the package of existing measures.

2.8 Progress with the implementation of this plan, and any consequent improvements in air quality, will be monitored against a series of targets, and reported on annually in an AQAP Progress Report. Given that the majority of the measures are drawn from the LTP this will require input from Devon County Council (DCC). The guidance on LTP Progress Reports, which have to be submitted by the County Council, recommends the following:

'That all authorities with local transport-related AQMAs take the opportunity offered by the 2008 Progress Reports to have an Air Quality Action Plan integrated within their LTP2 and report on their progress of this plan and, if relevant, its implementation.'

Therefore, discussions are underway with DCC to ensure the integration of the Action Plan into future LTP Progress Reports.

3. CONSULTATION PROCESS

3.1 The majority of identified measures in the AQAP are included in other plans and strategies, which have already been subject to a consultation process, involving the public, various agencies and statutory bodies. Therefore, consultation on the draft AQAP was confined to the statutory consultees for comment, namely:

- Devon County Council – Environment Directorate
- East Devon District Council
- Mid Devon District Council

- Teignbridge District Council
- Environment Agency
- Highways Agency
- Health Protection Agency

3.2 The responses to the comments received are detailed in Appendix I, with recommended amendments identified.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The City Council has been actively monitoring air quality for a number of years through continuous air quality monitoring at two sites in the city, RAMM and Alphington Street and a network of 59 passive diffusion tubes throughout the city. No additional resources are therefore needed for this work to be continued.

4.2 The majority of the identified mitigation measures will be funded by DCC via the LTP process.

5. RECOMMENDED that:

- 1) Scrutiny Committee - Community support and Executive approve Exeter's Air Quality Action Plan 2008-11.

HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

S:PA/LP/ Committee/608SCC11
20.5.08

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling the report:-

Exeter Local Air Quality Review, incorporated Detailed Assessment and Further Assessment – 2006

Detailed Assessment for New North Road (between Longbrook Street and the railway bridge), Holloway Street, North Street, Queen Street, Magdalen Street, South Street, Church Road (Alphington) and Pinhoe Road – 2006

Exeter Air Quality Source Apportionment Assessment for Eleven Locations in Exeter and Further Assessment of Air Quality - 2007

Air Quality Strategy for England – Defra

Air Quality Regulations 2000 and (Amendment) Regulations 2002

LAQM.PG(03) Policy Guidance for Local Air Quality Management – 2003

LAQM.PGA(05) Addendum to Local Air Quality Management Guidance – 2005

LAQM.TG(03) Technical Guidance for Local Air Quality Management (as amended) - 2003