

## Discussion points from IAPSC conference on 21<sup>st</sup> Jun 2011:

### Morning Session

The morning session covered “Transport”, and the speakers were as follows:

- Freight Consolidation Centres and their Potential Role in Air Quality Management – Donald Chalker, Transport & Travel Research Ltd
- The Work of the Low Emission Strategy Partnership – Gary Mahoney, Sefton MBC
- Sustainable Travel Towns – Carey Newson, Transport for Quality of Life
- Sustainable transport procurement by Local Authorities: Greening the Fleet – Poppy Lyle, London Borough of Camden

Issues discussed in the subsequent panel discussion session (chaired by Dr Tim Chatterton of the University of the West of England) were as follows:

1. Is sufficient effort put into evaluating studies and initiatives? Is too much effort/resource put into ‘doing it’ and too little in evaluating it? What needs to be done – better methodology on setting collecting comparable before/after data?
2. What are the relative benefits of mandatory as opposed to voluntary actions?
3. Are we over reliant on modelled outcomes rather than empirical verification?
4. Is sufficient weight given to behavioural as well as technological ‘fixes’? Are the two married up sufficiently? (Vis the anecdote of the driver of the dual fuelled vehicle who uses petrol in town and gas in his country driving).
5. Could better use be made of the S106 agreements – only one mention was made at the conference – the fitting, as standard, of electric vehicle charging points to houses. Is it effective who knows electric vehicles are not in widespread use (yet?).
6. Who is driving Low Emissions Strategies? Air Quality, Climate Change or (increasingly) procurement. Will it happen without the “pump priming” enjoyed, for instance, by the Beacon authorities?
7. Can better procurement really achieve sustainable AQ improvements??
8. Are LEZs an end in themselves or a temporary fix that should only be used very carefully?

### Afternoon Session

The afternoon session covered “Local Authority Case Studies on Practical Actions to Improve Air Quality” and the three case studies presented were as follows:

- Guidelines for Air Quality in Greater Manchester for Demolition and Construction Sites – John Dinsdale, Oldham Council
- Air Quality Management via the Local Transport Plan – Ian Evans, West Sussex County Council
- Cambridge Bus Emission Reduction Commitment – Jo Dicks, Cambridge CC

Issues discussed in the subsequent panel discussion session (chaired by Dr Tim Chatterton of the University of the West of England) were as follows:

1. Was 2010 really a bad year for pollution? The Air Quality Indicator parameters are mostly based on short-term parameters, and don't necessarily reflect performance against the more problematic AQS objectives, e.g. the NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean.
2. Should a Local Authority be forced to do a Detailed Assessment on the basis of one high year of monitoring data, (in a series of years that are otherwise well below the objective)? Tim Chatterton's answer was that in his experience it would generally require some further investigation and keeping a "weather eye" on early results from the following year's monitoring data (as the high year would have been a calendar year to December, appraisal would only be likely to occur in May and therefore several months new data would be available by the time of appraisal). So in many cases it may be clear by the time of the appraisal whether a Detailed Assessment would be necessary. The key phrase is that AQMAs need to be declared where an exceedence is considered likely (and therefore exceedences would need to be expected at least 2 out of the past 3 years for declaration).
3. Links (and potential duplication) between the Greater Manchester work on construction sites and work by the Institute of Air Quality Management, who are currently investigating the effects on air quality of construction sites, and the distance over which such effects are apparent. However, the Greater Manchester work addresses the specific local situation so there is room for both to co-exist.
4. Buses: it is easier for larger operators to make changes in response to the demands of AQ Action Plans. They have national resources they can call upon, and can (for example) swap newer, cleaner buses onto routes in areas with air quality issues. Smaller bus operators don't have that flexibility.
5. Given cutbacks to funding for things like Local Transport Plans, will LAs still be able to progress the air quality side of this in future, or is there a risk that this will fall victim to cuts?

*What has been your experience? Let us know.*