Air Quality Management

An approach to improving efficiency

Presentation to Sustainable Development Panel
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Air quality monitoring

- Councils are obliged to review and assess air quality (Environment Act 1995)
- The council monitors air quality for four pollutants: CO, NO_2, SO_2 and particles (PM_{10} & $PM_{2.5}$)
- Ozone is also monitored but trans boundary in nature and therefore not included in regulations
- The main problem in Norwich is NO_2 pollution associated with traffic. In developing its plans the council works closely with the County Council who provide funding for action plans through the Local Transport Plan

Air quality in Norwich

- In light of the monitoring and modelling work the council declared three Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) in 2005
- These are Grapes Hill, Castle and St Augustines Street where limit values for NO_2 were likely to be exceeded
- Further monitoring led the council to declare an AQMA for part of Riverside Road in 2009 also because of high levels of NO_2
- The most recent analysis shows a need to declare AQMAs for parts of King Street and Bull Close Road

Progress

- For each AQMA a separate management plan is required which seeks to improve air quality
- At Grapes Hill changes to the roundabout appear to have led to an improvement in air quality on a sustained basis which would allow the AQMA to be revoked
- Introduction of a low emission zone in Castle Meadow has produced encouraging results although limit values are yet to be met on a sustained basis; the zone only went fully live in 2010
- It is predicted that the St Augustines Gyratory scheme will greatly improve air quality through the reduction in traffic using the street

A different approach

- The council, working in partnership with the county council, has identified pollution hot-spots in the city and to develop individual action plans accordingly.
- However many authorities have approached air quality management on an area wide basis.
- They have declared a single AQMA within which there may be several hot-spots where the objective for the particular pollutant is exceeded.

Advantages

- The process of declaring individual AQMAs follows a time consuming and costly process, including:
  - initial screening;
  - detailed assessment;
  - further assessment following declaration
  - development of action plans; and
  - liaison with DEFRA
- By declaring an area wide AQMA it would help save on the above costs
- An area wide AQMA would enable a greater range of transport interventions to be used in tackling air quality: such as those which are not geographically specific such as parking control

Conclusion

- City and county officers believe that an area wide approach to AQMAs presents both efficiency and transport planning advantages
- The suggested extent of such an area wide AQMA would contain all of the existing ‘hot-spots’
- DEFRA have been consulted and are supportive of such an approach
- In the absence of an area wide AQMA there would need to be separate declarations and action plans, etc., developed for the King Street and Bull Close Road sites