

Chapter 7 Best Practice

7.1 Current regional Approaches

The current approach towards air quality issues in the Tyne and Wear has been very much focussed around monitoring through automatic analysers and receptor sites. Although existing monitoring initiatives have played a vital part in detecting and determining levels of the problem, and will need to be further expanded, they cannot affect the situation nor introduce improvement. This means that, whilst invaluable in detecting problematic areas, further monitoring is not the answer in itself.

The submitting of action plans is also part of the current approach and, although mandatory, these action plans do not necessarily reflect ownership of problems, budget allocation or approved operational actions, making further measures necessary.

There is nonetheless evidence of actions across Tyne and Wear put into place to improve Air Quality. These include:

- Newcastle- Gateshead QuayLink bus service
- Council in- house measures such as travel planning initiatives and updating of council fleets
- Council travel planning for other businesses in the region.
- Clear Zones in the City Centre

It is vital to stress the importance of well developed in- house measures, as these provide a framework for best practice and further city wide initiatives. There is a strong consensus that in-house measures are an appropriate starting place for improvement, and these must be further developed before tackling city wide initiatives. The following section provides an outline of current local authority measures in terms of travel planning initiatives and council fleets, followed by the best practice example of Newcastle City Council's organisation-wide travel office: providing and promoting sustainable travel modes.

7.2 Current local authority travel planning and council fleet measures

Newcastle City Council

- *Council Fleet*

The Newcastle operational fleet is moving away from LPG/ Petrol to Diesel. The diesel is bio- diesel at 5% content of bio (B5), and there is also an ongoing small pilot study of vehicles operating on B20.

The Newcastle City Council fleet has approximately 870 vehicles and within this number approximately 120 vehicles are LPG; the rest being diesel.

- *Business Travel*

Newcastle City Council has an operational Travel Office, providing an extensive alternative range of sustainable modes for business travel.

North Tyneside

- *Council Fleet*

All of North Tyneside's council vehicles are currently running on low sulphur diesel.

- *Business Travel*

North Tyneside does not provide any pool cars at this time, although some pool bikes are available. A more extensive travel plan is currently being developed, which will include measures such as:

- car sharing schemes,
- parking fees: and
- public transport ticketing discounts.

Sunderland

- *Council Fleet*

Sunderland City Council's fleet is approximately 600 vehicles ranging from light vans to 32 tonne Refuse Collection vehicles. They are almost exclusively powered by diesel engines and as the replacement programme is progressed will meet either Euro IV or Euro V emission limits. Of those vehicles not powered by diesel, the remainder are either petrol or electric powered. The fuel used to power the vehicles is a 95% / 5% mix bio diesel.

- *Business Travel*

Sunderland does not currently provide any pool vehicles, although Faber Maunsell produced a Council Travel Plan for Sunderland City Council in January 2006. This travel plan has however not yet been implemented, and has thus resulted in few actions to date. As a result, the Council Travel Plan is currently being gradually updated, and will eventually be completely re-written once the updating process is complete. Upon this, Sunderland aims to fully adopt this document by early to mid 2008. The plan will include all the council buildings, and have separate travel plans for each department as well as an overall document for the entire council. Sunderland further operate a car leasing scheme, whereby council employees can annually lease a low emissions car through the council at a favourable rate, taking into account issues such as NO² emissions, miles per gallon and vehicle duty rating.

South Tyneside

- *Council Fleet*

South Tyneside Council fleet is diesel powered, and a 5% mix of Bio Diesel is used for all fleet vehicles. Older vehicles are also fitted with exhaust emission reduction equipment to ensure they are as clean as possible. On new vehicles South Tyneside specify either Euro V engines, which is now the norm, or if possible Euro IV engines.

- *Business Travel*

There is a Work Place Travel Plan¹ in place for South Tyneside Council, which constitutes phase one of a rolling programme to produce travel plans for other council work locations (work has already commenced on the Middlefield's travel plan). As a result, the council provides one electric pool car and three electric vans to be used for business travel. Some new showers and cycle sheds have also come out of this plan, in order to encourage employees to walk and cycle to work. However, there is an absence of car sharing schemes and a lack of parking charges for council employees; phase 2 of the programme aims to implement these

¹ See South Tyneside Council, Travel Plan for South Shields Town Hall

measures. Employees currently get paid mileage for their business travels as outlined below. These statistics demonstrate that a large proportion of business travel happen through use of private cars as opposed to car sharing schemes or use of car pools. They also demonstrate the cost of paying out car mileage rates for the council instead of using more long terms cost effective measures like car sharing schemes, pool cars and public transport ticketing discounts etc (*like later demonstrated in section 7.3 (3)*).

Table 7.2 (1) Car Mileage Rates 2005/2006²

Engine	451 – 999 cc	1000 cc +
Essential User		
Lump sum per annum (Payable by instalments)	£690	£771
Mileage rates		
Up to 8500 miles	30.6p	32.9p
Over 8500 miles	11.7p	11.8p
Casual User		
Mileage rate		
Up to 8500 miles	38.7p	42.0p
Over 8500 miles	11.7p	11.8p

This shows that council staff travelled just over two million business miles in the year 04/05: a figure which South Tyneside Council aims to reduce by 5% by the end of 2008.

Although not presently in place, South Tyneside is considering the following measures to achieve their target:

- Car parking charges to reflect mode of transport with cheaper charges for sustainable modes to discourage the currently high levels of car users (see *table 7.2 (2)*)
- Implementation of a car sharing scheme
- Review the current car mileage expenses scheme
- Developing Bike4Work scheme.
- Marketing strategy for the travel plan.

² Source: South Tyneside Council, Travel Plan for South Shields Town Hall

Table 7.2 (2): Modes of transport used by council employees at South Tyneside Council³:

Method of Transport	Usual%
Walk	17%
Bicycle	3%
Motorcycle	1%
Metro	3%
Train	0
Bus	9%
Taxi	1%
Car Driver (alone)	63%
Car Share Driver	0
Car Share Passenger	4%
Other	0

Gateshead

- *Council fleet*

The fleet of vehicles operated by Gateshead Borough Council range from small car derived vans to refuse collection trucks and as such the engine size range is quite large. The majority of vehicles are however diesel and are powered by bio-diesel at a 5% blend with ULSD. The remaining vehicles are powered by LPG.

- *Business Travel*

Gateshead Borough Council has had an operational Travel Plan⁴ in place since 2004. In brief, this plan includes initiatives such as:

- Attractive ticket schemes (salary deduction schemes)
- Car share schemes
- Marketing and promotion campaigns
- Pool vehicle schemes (which will be using hybrid vehicles to balance the costs and environmental benefits)
- Bike Buddy scheme

Gateshead has a target of reducing the currently high percentage of car users and increase public transport (*see table 7.2 (3)*), by achieving a 15% reduction in single occupancy car trips and a 15% reduction in business mileage expenses.

³ Source: South Tyneside Council, Travel Plan for South Shields Town Hall

⁴ Source: Gateshead Council, A Travel Plan for Gateshead Council, Lorna Bell.

Table 7.2 (3): Modes of transport used by council employees at Gateshead Council⁵

Employees (% of base)		
	Usual Mode of Travel	Occasional mode
Car driver	69	6
Car passenger	11	9
Bus	12	9
Metro	10	8
Train	1	1
Cycle	1	3
Walk	6	3
Taxi	1	0
Motor Cycle	Under 1	Under 1

Nb: These percentages are not cumulative as more than one mode of travel may have been selected.

7.3 Regional Best Practice: Newcastle Travel Office – How does an organisation wide Travel Office work?

7.3 (1) Background

The Newcastle City Council Travel Office was established in September 2006, as a response to the recognition that congestion in the city is one of the biggest causes of poor air quality and involves great expense to the city as well as local business. As a response, the council has recognised that they must provide a best practice example by doing whatever possible to limit the environmental impact of business related travel. To reflect this purpose, the objective of the travel office is to reduce the number of inefficient car journeys and encourage other modes of sustainable travel, via the council's travel plan. This ensures that day to day business travel is cost effective and environmentally friendly: this is especially important in a time where car ownership is steadily increasing, congestion is spreading past peak hours and there is clear evidence of a modal shift away from public transport.

7.3 (2) Initiatives

In order to achieve these objectives and encourage staff to choose alternatives to single occupancy cars, Newcastle City Council has spent a large part of its £2.3m annual travel budget on operating the Travel Office. Some of the most successful initiatives implemented by the Travel Office include⁶:

Pool Cars

The Newcastle City Council pool vehicle fleet consists of seven semi- automatic SMART cars and seven Bio Diesel Citroen C3 cars. Monitoring evidence reports that there has been a steady increase in the number of days when all the pool cars are simultaneously occupied, suggesting an increase in popularity. Focus groups and surveys propose that the plus points related to this project are the availability at short

⁵ Source: Gateshead Council, A Travel Plan for Gateshead Council, Lorna Bell

⁶ Source: Newcastle City Council, The Travel Office, Volume 1, Issue 1, September 2007.

notice, as well as the easy maintenance of SMART cars. The average consumption to date for the Citroen Diesel is 42.71 mpg and 42.47 mpg for the SMART.

In order to maintain and expand the popularity of this service, the Travel Office offers test drives to employees interested in familiarising themselves with SMART cars. There are also ongoing discussions about extending the current three hour limit and extending the service to out based locations owned by the council to encourage further use.

One Day free Travel Passes / Discounted Annual Public Transport Passes

Reports conclude that 1094 one day public transport passes were used during the first nine operational months of the Travel Office; these were used for travelling to over 100 different destinations within the region. In order to further improve the range of this service, the Travel Office is in discussions about the possibility of extending this service to out based locations.

Annual public transport passes are also available at a discounted price to council employees, the price being directly deducted annually or monthly from the employee's salary: both schemes are also operated by several of the other Tyne and Wear authorities.

The service of a free Shuttle Vehicle for transport between key sites

This free seven seater shuttle vehicle operates between the key sites of The Civic Centre, Allendale Road, Springfield Centre and Cypress Avenue during office hours. Feedback on this service suggests that, although the service is reliable, the time tables are slightly unsuitable and there is a lack of awareness that this service exists. The Travel Office is currently looking into extending the locations and increasing the awareness of this service.

Car sharing schemes / Limited Parking

Newcastle City Council employees must apply for a parking pass in order to obtain a parking space in the Civic Centre car park; this system is being used as an incentive to use private cars less frequently. Parking permits are given based on priority and personal circumstances; although people participating in a car sharing scheme (three or more people sharing) are given priority. Participants in this scheme are also eligible for discounted parking permits, at an annual rate of £50. There has however been an anecdotal problem with this scheme, as many staff upon terminating employment with the council opt to pass their passes on to colleagues, culminating in inefficient distribution. This problem is being tackled by officers as part of the forthcoming Council Travel Plan

Bike to work scheme

In addition to these measures, the Travel Office has also introduced the 'Bike to Work' scheme, allowing employees to lease a bicycle on a one year basis, without any tax, VAT or national insurance fees. Linked to this initiative higher priority is being given to cyclists at the Council, through construction of new cycle sheds. Employees also have the opportunity to buy the bike at the end of the year for a nominal sum.

7.3 (3) Bookings and Expenditure

13069 booking have been made through the Travel Office in its first operational year, as demonstrated in Table 7.3 (4)

Table 7.3 (4): Travel Office Bookings September 2006- August 2007⁷

	Public Transport	Shuttle Vehicle	Pool Vehicle	Taxi	Short Stay Bay	One Day Pass	Total
September	113	104	157	157	188	16	735
October	130	82	265	206	284	22	989
November	115	96	281	200	305	31	1028
December	86	76	222	202	231	33	850
January	107	73	292	223	344	33	1072
February	104	50	312	200	285	36	987
March	176	110	362	300	362	79	1388
April	112	48	297	209	254	37	956
May	112	118	391	332	323	80	1336
June	154	84	383	324	341	44	1330
July	133	97	379	341	334	86	1370
August	83	64	353	195	256	77	1028
Total	1425	1002	3694	2888	3507	553	13069

The popularity of the Travel Office has made this a cost effective initiative and has had a positive effect on the environment, demonstrating a Best Practice example. Figures from previous years show that in 2004/ 05 over £1m was spent with over seven different taxi companies, and over £1m spent to pay 2,309 claimants mileage costs. With the introduction of the Travel Office travel plan initiative, expenses have decreased, as demonstrated in Table 7.3 (5) showing the 2007/08 Projection of Travel Office expenditure.

⁷ Source: Newcastle City Council, the Travel Office, Volume 1, Issue 1, September 2007.

Table 7.3 (5): Travel Office Expenditure

Expenditure/ Income Head	2007- 08 Projection
Expenditure	
Salaries	69,350
Vehicle Hire (Shuttle) and Running Costs	33,250
Vehicle Borrowing Repayments	31,350
New Cycle Sheds	15,000
Office Running Costs	30,000
Vehicle Tracking System (Installation and Running costs)	15,000
Proposed purchase of further vehicles	20,000
'Rent' for Car Park	551,000
Total	759,950
Income	(250,000)
Directorate Claw back	
Car Park Passes Recharge	(529,490)
Total	(779,490)
Surplus/ Deficit	(15,540)

7.3 (6) Why the Travel Office provides Best Practice

The strength of the Travel Office is that it seeks to achieve a reduction in inefficient journeys. It does so by providing a package of practical measures to reduce staff commuter journeys and to provide a more sustainable choice for travel whilst at work. The reduction in staff commuter journeys has, however, also been advanced by introducing parking restraints, further removing the incentive for using single occupancy private cars. Department for Transport (DfT) estimate that a 'basic' travel plan can deliver reductions of 3 -5% in the numbers of employees travelling by car, but that a plan with 'restraint' can deliver between 15- 30% reductions. Newcastle City Council has set a 24% reduction target over the next three years.

Furthermore, the cost efficiency of the Travel Office is believed to be advanced through investment in management information systems, such as vehicle tracking. This has been developed to enable a full analysis of travel office related journeys to build information and inform future initiatives.

Various surveys and focus groups led by the Travel Office have also helped identify areas



Newcastle Council Travel Office

of improvement and provided supportive feedback on existing initiatives. These have resulted in small in-house awareness campaigns such as information stands in the Civic Centre reception and further developments to the web site, ensuring that employees are aware of the services provided by the Travel Office and how these work. The wide range of services offered and the ease with which the Travel Office can be accessed have also been identified as key components of its success.

7.4 National Best Practice Summaries

In 2007 the London boroughs of Croydon and Greenwich along with Sheffield City Council and Sefton Borough Council were awarded Beacon Status for delivering cleaner air. Beacons are leaders of their local communities by taking effective action to protect and improve air quality, not least by minimising their own impacts, but also through engaging local industries, businesses, community groups and residents to do likewise. Beacons have developed innovative ways of raising the profile of air quality policy and demonstrate full commitment and enthusiasm for going beyond statutory duties. The Beacon Scheme was established to disseminate best practice in service delivery across local government. Beacons are leaders in their field, who can set an example to others and help them deliver excellent, value for money public services.

7.4 (1) Sheffield City Council

Sheffield City Council has mainly been awarded with Beacon status due to their lead on successful air quality awareness campaigns and communication strategies. This scheme has been named 'Care4Air', and consists of a partnership between the four South Yorkshire local authorities (Sheffield, Doncaster, Rotherham, and Barnsley) and South Yorkshire Travelwise.

Care4Air aims to highlight what is happening in the region on air quality issues, and it in particular aims to provide individuals, organisations, school and businesses with information that will enable them to do their bit for air quality.

Sheffield City Council has also implemented a range of other innovative initiatives aimed at delivering cleaner air, working in partnership within the council, with other organisations and agencies, and with local communities. The council's Air Quality Action Plan was developed by the Sheffield Clean Air Partnership (SCAP) – a wide and comprehensive range of stakeholders including private sector organisations, NGOs, Government agencies, trade and industry organisations, and local community representatives.

Websites for both SCAP and Care4Air were rated the best air quality websites by Air Quality Management magazine. Sheffield Air Map is an interactive website designed to record and disseminate air quality and related information. Other initiatives have a more direct impact on air quality. The development of Travel Plans, and the establishment of a low emission car club (initially in the City Centre) are examples of such actions which fall within the framework of the Air Quality Action Plan. Another innovative project involves the monitoring of air quality by local communities and schools using diffusion tubes – engaging and empowering local communities in air quality management, and gathering useful air quality data at minimal cost.

For more information, please see www.care4air.org

7.4 (2) London borough of Croydon

Croydon has developed new and innovative solutions to air pollution using all available skills and resources to make Croydon a better and healthier place for everyone. Their commitment to air quality issues stems from Croydon's Community Strategy, and is the foundation of their air quality policy.

Croydon is a beacon council in the following ways:

- They were the first Council to set up the airTEXT service. This is designed to support people who are badly affected by air pollution and provides air quality alerts and health advice on how to manage symptoms;
- Croydon was first to implement regular idling vehicles enforcement patrols to help improve the local air quality;
- A pioneer of using the latest technology by purchasing a hydrogen fuel cell to generate power.

Croydon has used their community leadership role to increase the profile of air pollution and raise awareness within local communities, and have tried to assure the involvement of local people in air quality policy development. London Borough of Croydon is a key influencer within air quality groups and has developed excellent links with other agencies including the Greater London Authority (GLA), Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Environment Agency. Membership of groups such as the IPLC gives the Council the opportunity to influence policy direction and cascade policy and best practice to other boroughs.

Over the coming months the Council will also be undertaking a dissemination program to share best practices with other authorities.

This would include;

- Working with government departments to champion policy in this area.
- Producing a range of case studies.
- Organising various events such as open days, seminars/conferences and workshops.
- Setting up a mentoring program.

- Setting up a Beacon website to disseminate information on best practice and case studies.

For further information, please see:

<http://www.croydon.gov.uk/democracy/performance/beaconawards/airquality>

7.4 (3) London Borough of Greenwich

London Borough of Greenwich has recently pioneered the innovative use of the land-use planning system (Section 106 legal agreement) to both finance air quality management work and implement schemes and strategies - mitigating against the impact of large-scale development, and raising awareness of pollution issues.

The successful implementation of the first Low Emission Zone in the UK on the Greenwich Peninsula has in turn influenced proposals to designate the London Olympic site and environs as a No Emission Zone/Low Emission Zone. London Borough of Greenwich has continued to build on these achievements, incorporating carbon reduction measures alongside measures to control both on and off-road vehicle emissions.

More recently London Borough of Greenwich has fought for the implementation of a Low Emission Strategy as part of the Thames Gateway Bridge scheme - the first Low Emission Strategy on a public highway in the UK. London Borough of Greenwich has taken a lead in a forum developing air quality and planning policies and assists many local authorities across the UK and Europe in looking at issues in a new light and in implementing innovative schemes.

For further information, please see www.greenwich.gov.uk

7.4 (4) Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council

Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council has an innovative and efficient air quality management service that meets the statutory requirements of Government, responds to the needs of the community, is highly technically competent and is cost effective. The council's Airwatch programme focuses on monitoring and modelling (with years of experience and data); public information (the council hosts 'Breathingspace', a website operated jointly by the Council's Environmental Protection Department, Strategic Transport Policy Unit and the Primary Care Trust); and community involvement. Despite not having established an Air Quality Management Area, Sefton has a long history of high profile schemes – in particular driving improvements in air quality in the polluted docks.

Since 1996 Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council has operated 'Community Airwatch' a programme in which residents are supplied with diffusion tubes to monitor nitrogen dioxide levels at their properties. Hands-on activities are used to promote the air quality message – for example, testing exhaust emissions of councillors' cars. The air quality service works in partnership with the PCT to disseminate air quality messages and basic health advice to local media, schools, GP's, Respiratory Health Nurses and Councillors via pre agreed fax. The council has also worked closely with Liverpool University, in particular the Centre for Intelligent Measurement Systems.



For further information, please see www.sefton.gov.uk

