

Chapter 8 Actions

As outlined in the previous chapter, the current approach to air quality issues is very much based around monitoring and the creation of action plans. Although there is scope for expanding and perfecting both these ideals, there is also a clear need for additional measures. Monitoring helps to establish and determine the extent of a problem, and although it is believed that monitoring opportunities in the Tyne and Wear area are well developed, they cannot produce progress in themselves. Action plans submitted by local authorities face a similar problem, as it is only their submission that is mandatory, not the delivery of associated targets. Unfortunately this can result in failure to produce living documents and concrete actions. There is also the risk of inability to deliver actions due to indistinct targets, lack of identified budgets and unclear ownership of the problem.

It is therefore apparent that there is a clear need to influence the way in which air quality problems are addressed in Tyne and Wear through developing a range of area wide and location specific actions. These actions are presented in conjunction with indicators agreed by all the Tyne and Wear authorities, as well as through a closer look at the causes of authority specific problems (as presented in Chapter 4) It should be noted that some of the actions identified underneath may appear to only have a small impact on NO₂ emissions, but are important in the context of policy objectives and to encourage behavioural change.

8.1 Relationship between Air Quality and Development Control (see Indicator 1)

ACTIONS:

“The Council will require air quality assessments to be submitted alongside planning applications for the types of developments identified in the Air Quality Action Plan. Where a development is likely to result in unacceptable levels of pollutants under the objectives set out in the National Air Quality Strategy, the Council will require mitigating measures, or secure changes to the proposal that will make it acceptable, before granting planning permission.

Where a proposed development is acceptable in principle but will emit air pollution that may harm the environment, public health or amenity, the Council will require measures to control the emissions before granting planning permission.”¹

Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council's Air Quality and Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), from which the above quote is taken, recognises the pivotal relationship between development planning and

¹ Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council: local Development Framework: Air Quality and Development Supplementary Planning Document. June 2007.

air quality. This SPD addresses many of the concerns about the relationship between development control and air quality in Tyne and Wear, such as providing guidance on the definition of developments and sites requiring an air quality assessment, air quality assessment methods, mitigation methods and approaches to determining whether an air quality issue is significant enough to stop a development.

In conjunction with Indicator 1 and learning from Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council's Air Quality and Development SPD, the following actions are recommended to improve and clarify the relationship between Air Quality issues and Development Control:

ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance guidelines to ensure the following : <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assurance that Development Control are certain of what developments should be consulted on by Air Quality officers and Environmental Control. 2. Standardise the conditions and thresholds which have to be present to justify Environmental Health to comment upon a development. This includes standardisation of factors such as size, amount of employers/ residents, trips generated per day and resulting traffic levels. 3. Create a framework whereby Development Control is familiar with this guidance and accustomed to employing it. 	Planning policy at all Plan Partners, LTP Steering group and Planning Control Development	Expected completion of LDF process (expected 2010)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a framework whereby the developer must carry out real time monitoring (or fund this process) before the development goes ahead. 	Planning policy at all Plan Partners, LTP Steering group and Planning Control Development	Expected completion of LDF process (expected 2010)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that developers allocate part of their budget to mitigating measures, should Environmental Health have concerns about the impact of the development on air quality issues. 	Planning policy at all Plan Partners, LTP Steering group and Planning Control Development	Expected completion of LDF process (expected 2010)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve all the above through the operation of a mandatory Supplementary Planning Document – such as the Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council : Air Quality and Development SPD 	Planning policy at all Plan Partners, LTP Steering group and Planning Control Development	Expected completion of LDF process (expected 2010)

8.2 Number of Euro engine buses operating in AQMA/ future AQMAs in Tyne and Wear (see Indicator 2)

ACTIONS:

There are no current statutory bus quality partnerships in place between Tyne and Wear authorities and local bus operators, which can involve multiple operators in a single scheme and can be enforced by the relevant commissioner. Nor are there any existing bus quality contract schemes in Tyne and Wear, which involve suspending the deregulated market in a specific area. Under such schemes, the local transport authority lets exclusive contracts to operators through a competitive tendering process, to run the services specified by the scheme.

There are however some proficient non- statutory, voluntary partnership agreements (VPAs) in place between the Tyne and Wear authorities and individual bus operators, such as Superoutes. These agreements involve investment by the local authorities in improved facilities for the buses, and by the operator by providing better quality vehicles or services (i.e. Superoutes operate at a minimum 15 minute frequency)

The advantage of entering into a more official partnership agreement is that local authorities who make quality partnerships schemes can require participating operators to provide various standards of service. Such schemes can now under the New Local Transport Bill cover minimum frequencies, timing and maximum fare as appropriate, although maximum fares would require a process for agreeing the maximum fare with the operators. Such a scheme would also allow new facilities and standards in a quality partnership scheme to be phased in at pre- arranged intervals.

A recent partnership between Go North East, Nexus and Gateshead Council has recently been set up, pledging to deliver reliable, accessible buses, new bus priority measures, high standards of passenger information and bus shelter cleanliness and maintenance. The partnership has also pledged to keep routes and timetables stable. Fares will only increase if operating costs go up and any increase or changes to bus times will have to be discussed by all three partners.

Under the agreement, every bus provided in the area by Go North East will be accessible for wheelchairs and buggies and have on-board CCTV. Gateshead Council has agreed to progress schemes that overcome delays to buses, making journeys quicker and more reliable. Nexus has committed to providing high standards of passenger information at bus stops and bus interchanges as well as making sure bus shelters are clean and well maintained. Measures like this can be rolled out across the Tyne and Wear in order to encourage the upgrading of bus fleets, or re-routing of poor Euro engines.

ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the powers forthcoming in the Local Transport Bill to improve the quality of local bus services including modernising the fleet to reduce harmful emissions from bus operations. 	Plan Partners, Superoutes board and bus operators	Ongoing. Using improvements of existing mechanisms.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage eco- friendly driving courses for bus drivers to prevent bus idling. 	Plan Partners, bus operators and PHEPS officers. Energy Saving Trust currently looking into providing this service to bus operators	Ongoing. Using improvements of existing mechanisms.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better enforcement mechanisms preventing engine idling in city centres. 	Plan Partners, bus operators and PHEP officers.	Ongoing. Using improvements of existing mechanisms.

8.3 Effective use of awareness and marketing campaigns (see Indicator 3)

ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employ the services of the Smarter Choices Team to orchestrate a comprehensive and area wide marketing campaign to spread awareness of sustainable modes and air quality problems. Such campaigns may include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Co-operation with local newspapers to ensure media coverage on daily levels of air quality in AQMAs and future AQMAs, and suggestions of alternative routes. - Offer personalised journey planning - Offer days with free public transport to encourage people to familiarise themselves with these modes. - Update the Tyne and Wear joint Air Quality web site and make this accessible for the public. 	Smarter Choices Team, Tyne and Wear councils in-house PR teams and JTWG	Up to 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use in-house PR teams or social marketing to raise awareness about travel offices or alternative services for business travel in councils 	Tyne and Wear in-house council PR teams	Ongoing

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gateshead is currently carrying out an internal consultation in areas with poor air quality in order to write an action plan. Information could through this process be spread to households in the affected area, informing them of current conditions and related actions. This is a statutory requirement prior to declaring an AQMA 	Tyne and Wear Councils and PHEPS officers	Ongoing
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8.4 Councils own vehicle fleets and business travel arrangements (see Indicator 4)

ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop consultations on improvements for travel planning in each local authority (see Chapter 7) 	Tyne and Wear Councils	By 2009
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move towards setting up Travel Offices in each local authority, as this is vital to the operation of in-house travel plans. 	Tyne and Wear Councils	By 2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include targets for low emission council fleets in the next LTP, LA21 Strategies and Carbon Managements Plans to assure more cooperation between policy makers and fleet managers. 	JTWG	Commence 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that Council Staff Travel Plans are mandatory and operational 	JTWG, LTP Steering group and Tyne and Wear Travel Planners group	By 2009
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce low emission car leasing schemes throughout Tyne and Wear local authorities (see Chapter 7) 	Travel Offices	By 2010

8.5 Business travel plans (see Indicator 5)

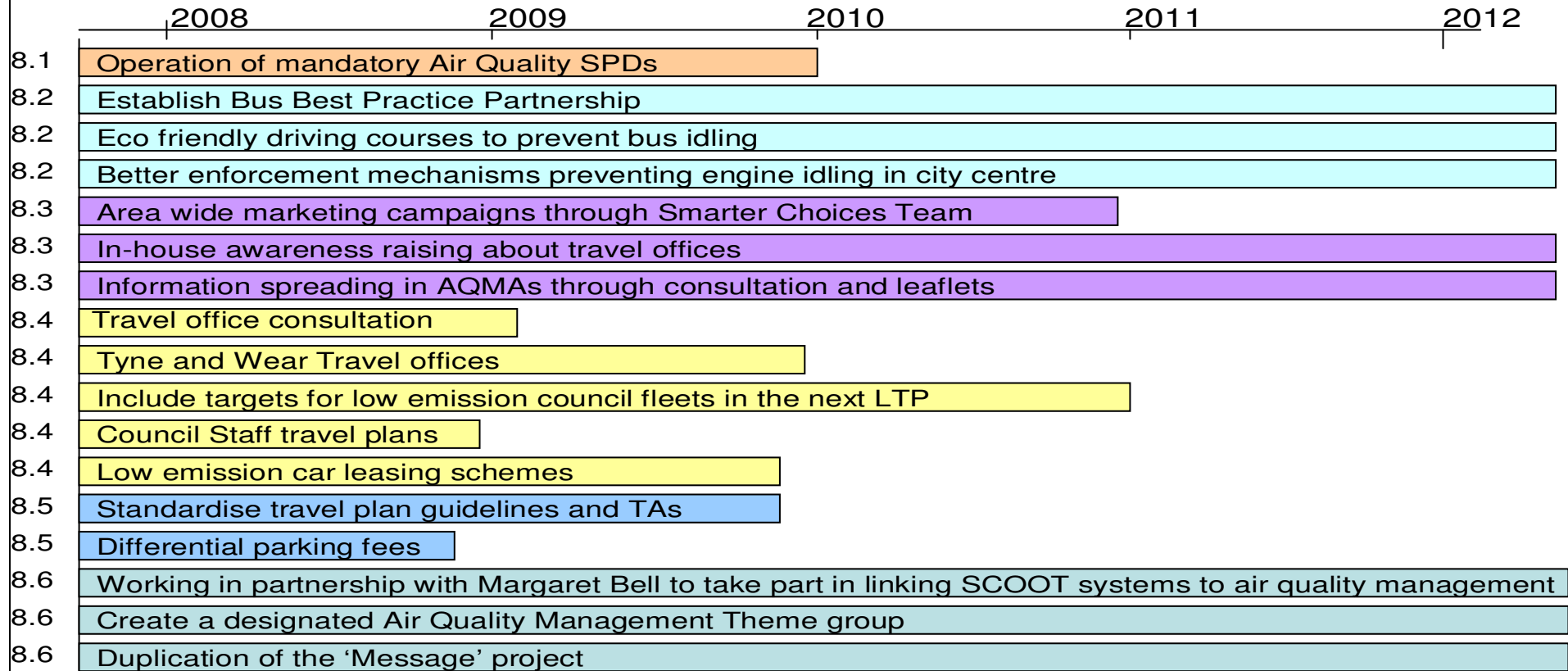
ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standardise guidelines for thresholds, trips generated per day and size of developments demanding travel plans for both old and new developments. 	Planning Officers, Development Control and JTWG	Expected completion of LDF process (expected 2010)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve above through a SPD Standardise transport assessments for Tyne and Wear. 	Planning Officers, Development Control and JTWG	Expected completion of LDF process (2010)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the opportunity for city wide differential parking fees to give an incentive to use public transport/ car sharing schemes/ low emission cars 	Tyne and Wear Councils, TIF investigations and parking managers	Requires scoping study by 2009
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8.6 Other Actions

ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
Work in partnership with Newcastle University to contribute to work in linking SCOOT systems to air quality management processes. Tyne and Wear is a Transport Innovation Fund area, and is in accordance to this carrying out a pilot study for the usage of UTMC with elements of Air Quality. Should this pilot study prove successful, there might be a scope to investigate the opportunity to roll out this study to all parts of Tyne and Wear,	JTWG and LTP Core Team	Commence 2008
Create a designated Air Quality Management Theme group (see Chapter 3) in order to ascribe formal ownership of the plan and its monitoring process to a specific group. Meeting dates for this group must also be formalised.	JTWG, LTP Core Team and Environmental Health Officers	Commence 2008
Gateshead Council is, in cooperation with Newcastle University, working on a project called 'Message', which develops traffic sensors calculating levels of emissions. These small sensors can count traffic flows as well as communicate with each other using ultrasound. They can also be placed on moving vehicles in order to monitor and measure a wider area and build up database of information. There is currently a pilot study being carried out for these sensors on certain Gateshead networks to collect initial information and determine the success of the sensors. We propose an action whereby this pilot study is duplicated to the other Tyne and Wear authorities, subject to satisfactory results from the Gateshead trial.	JTWG and TORG	Commence 2008
Continuing investment in the Metro, such as the Metro Reinvigoration Project, will retain and encourage rising metro use and provide a non-emission quality travel alternative to car use in AQMAs and hotspot areas.	Nexus	Ongoing

Table 8.7: Actions Timeline
Timescale for completion/ ongoing



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Actions numbered as explained on previous pages

