



**AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT CONSULTATION WORKSHOP: SHARING
BEST PRACTICE – REGIONAL WORKSHOPS
LONDON**



WORKSHOP 1

Question 1:

What do you expect to achieve from carrying out your local authority statutory duties for AQM consultation?

Defra

Group 1

- If we met statutory requirement; expect degree of feedback (how we could improve on what we done); having Defra approval gave us backing & support especially when we speak to politicians and senior people.

Group 2

- Response; policy QA on what they are doing; more responsibility on LAQM & involvement in terms of their response

Group 3

- A quicker response; link with LTP more in touch with DfT; confirmation that we're doing things right; being reminded of what we need to do; quality control of responses from Defra.

Group 4

- Technical appraisal, technical feedback, seal of approval, nod from the central government, important for funding.

Group 5

- List of statutory consultees given are minimum least, where is PCT? Getting in touch with them are crucial. Confirmation & validation of the process. Have they missed any information out with HA & EA. We have to do it, just statutory fulfilment. It's a mean to address & inform. When it's going to affect people (AQMA declaration & action plan), there is a stronger desire to involve people.
- People associate very strongly with the key finding. Issue expert/non expert: gap between the Council and the public. Timescale that Defra impose are too restrictive. Council scrutiny committee deadline doesn't line up. The expectation that Defra has on what LA can do is too high: time, money & staffing expertise. AQ doesn't always seen as high up issue in local authority.

Group 6

- Done it right. Particular problem needs more attention.

From the flipcharts:

- Approval of reports, ask Defra opinion (via helpdesk) before the finished report, critical appraisal, taking on board comments local authorities put in the reports.
- Constructive guidance, check on consistency, appropriateness of proposals, adds weight (akin to external audit).
- Technical, political (resources, other issues e.g. source such as factory).
- Response, policy, more responsibility on LAQM & involvement.
- A quicker response (understand problem but perhaps need more resources), link with LTP, less changes, confirmation that we are doing the right thing, being reminded of what we need to do, more quality control, reality check on Defra responses.
- To make sure have met statutory requirements, feedback, backing/support.

The public

Group 1

- Participation in air quality activity and support for the work we are doing; corporate ownership (air quality need to be seen as a corporate issue, and the Council take ownership); incorporated in other local authority plans and strategies.

Group 2

- More involvement, less consultation; anti smoking example; information provision is a key component to tie in air quality & health issues; different problems in dealing in people under different social conditions (less privileged area means less time to discuss things through); more integrated or embedded; difficulty to engage with the public (science, expertise, practice); different kinds of communication with different kinds of public.

Group 3

- Corporation with local authorities' ideas; layman perspective not too technical, difficult acronyms; local knowledge; unrealistic expectation (apathy from the public but strong response from NGOs); difficult to get into public domain; no interest (or other things are more important, cement work is 6 on the list in Rugby); link to climate change or environment more generally; do the public understand air quality problem/issue?

Group 4

- Awareness, what the public want to do; how to get messages across.

Group 5

- No agreement on 1 way or 2 way. Important to capture local knowledge, sometimes not aware of what happening on the ground, engaging with communities from the early stage, community involvement, validation/acceptance from the community.
- From their flipchart: Ideas/options; Local knowledge; Local need; Ownership/support; Validation.

Group 6

- Trust. Targeting audiences correctly. Exhibition held in pubs. Important to take the public with you. Show that it can benefit the public; turn it into positive spin. Some people aren't concerned at all.

From the flipcharts:

- Let them know scientific findings (Executive Summary form), more involvement from public but how to break through the subject?, ownership of air quality problem, real support to the action plan (implications to people's life style), address it from the health point of view, awareness of cost, to suggest solutions.
- Raising awareness, get public involvement, test whether our ideas are in line with public, need to find ways of getting right messages across to get 'buy-in' from public, be transparent.
- Some people not concerned, sell it in the way e.g. mechanism to improve.
- Meetings (house price concerns, information explanation, trust, history of local authorities, targeting audience); influence analyser site, take the public with you; can benefit their cause e.g. re-locate school, 'scared' to consult (house price fear).

- Little less consultation, more active involvement (e.g. anti-smoking), information provision (tie-in air quality and health), different social conditions. Some kinds of 'pining' up the ends, difficult to engage with public in science, expertise and practice; different kinds of public.
- Co-operate with local authorities ideas, lay-man perspective, local knowledge, key into the outcome rather than the activity, people perception, unrealistic expectation. Difficult to get into public domain, no interest, link to climate change-local issue, reporting improvement is the reason public not getting involved?, do the public understand?
- Raising awareness, highlighting local issues, ownership, credibility (support for local authorities' work), accountability, raising expectation (positive)

Internal departments

Group 1

- Ownership (not just something that being produced by Environmental Health); consultation as being awareness raising process & opportunity for a local perspective to be brought to local air quality management; public support & ownership on air quality action plan in particular give credibility & accountability; raising expectation often seen as negative but we saw it as positive thing i.e. give a knock on effect on other organisations.

Group 2

- AQ consortium (DC talks to CC); land use planners are difficult to engage because of development pollution dilemma in the context of sustainable development; land use planners are forced to make decisions before EHO get in there.

Group 3

- Co-ordination of approach; planning department seen AQ issue as a nuisance; ODPM to get involved?; sensible development control; social services & housing authorities as more AQMA's are in deprived areas.

Group 4

- Holistic approach, corporate buying especially when it has implication on budgets.

Group 5

- Environmental information (geographical info), transport, planning liaison, hotspots, tourism (English tourism increasing parking), health information (PCT), telephone information & other enquiries. Informing boundaries whether it's the whole borough.

Group 6

- Corporate acceptance & responsibility.

From the flipcharts:

- Support, join-up policies/non-conflicting, Council as a 'whole' (including Elected Member), link between departments and outside the Council, co-operation and understanding, dialogue and working towards the scope goals.
- Need to encourage holistic approach, need to get 'buy-in' from other teams where budget implications and on policy issues, need to get air quality implications in other teams service plans and budgets, raising awareness with councillors.

- Transport internal and external, planning (district council and local development framework), action using section 106 Agreement, corporate acceptance & responsibility, CEO & members.
- District councils and county councils via air quality consortium. Dilemma to separate development and pollution in the context of sustainable development and time constraints of LUP's regarding decisions.
- Co-ordinated approach, other strategies/policies, other departments relying on EHO professional judgement regarding air quality, sensible development control in AQMA, join-up governments, more involvement in LTP with transport, more input from social & housing, not enough air quality professionals.
- Participation in air quality activities, support for local authority's work, corporate ownership (ensure air quality considered in other LA plans/strategies).

External government bodies

Group 1

- Ownership; support & buying into the process of air quality management; helping to create network & build up relationship with other organisations.

Group 2

- HA late comers to the process; EA key individuals; if you can get ducks in a line then you can start to get something happen; differences between different authorities in dealing with the problems; AQ is important to quality of life and LA want to know better practice.

Group 3

- Technical expertise EHOs haven't got; share responsibilities (somebody else to blame); workload; consultation by sending report is just another air quality report.

Group 4

- Expert feedback, audit of what we're doing, identifying any conflict or synergy on what we're doing.

Group 5

- No comment on the flipchart.

Group 6

- No comment on the flipchart.

From the flipcharts:

- Action, money, contact name, attendance, data/information (e.g. commercially confidential like the M6 Toll Road), dispersion model (from the Environment Agency), County groups working well, join-up air quality strategies.
- As with government, identify conflicts with other policies, check actions are complimentary, not re-inventing wheel.
- Highways Agency & Environment Agency, help to resolve.
- Highways Agency – late comer to a party, Environment Agency – depends on individual.
- Technical expertise, shared responsibilities, workload & another air quality report.
- Ownership, support/buy-in, creation of networks (building up relationship)

Question 2:

Do our research findings reflect your experiences?

Group 1

Feeling more at ease with expert consultees on over complicating matters.

Group 2

1st if you have the County, the County lead at the end.

2nd and land-use planners not development control

3rd the county is higher on the list

4th main consultation strategy is one way, AQMA declaration then changes to 2-way

5th NSCA 'how to consult' guidance but most of us are not aware of it

Apathy rather than consultation fatigue, they're just not bothered. Until getting to the action plan, hopefully they're more interested.

Addition from their flipchart: Do not agree re. non-experts vs. experts; Very low impact.

Group 3

There are other alternatives than using the Internet e.g. main libraries. But with other bullet points, we agree with your comments. No further comment on the flipchart.

Group 4

Yes, agree. In relation to consultation training, there is other expertise in the Council better to do consultation. Quite often people are interested about air quality although there isn't much feedback.

Group 5

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Group 6

Response rate from consultation can be improved. Really have to put energy into it. You can find your way around people.

From flipcharts:

1: yes

2: yes

3: neighbouring authorities >>> Defra, County Council (County Analyst) has big interest, nothing from the Highways Agency.

4: yes; mail shots, radio, media profile, internet for information, more in the future.

5: there is training but more affordable training is needed.

6: Environmental Health department, not local authorities.

7: yes

8: depends, not if 'experts' think you are criticising their work.

9: yes

Missing health bodies (PCTs etc); statutory consultees – confirmation/validation of process (missing information), statutory fulfilment; public – statutory fulfilment, advise & information, input to action plan.

2: yes

How equipped to deal with non-experts, time scale to restrictive to consult (especially internal), expectation of local authorities are too high.

1: external – Defra, Highways Agency, County Council, neighbouring authorities, major local employers, Environment Agency, PCT, LEA, any local business groups e.g. Chamber of Commerce, local public transport companies & freight, local recognised environmental groups, public in general.

Internal: planning, management (corporate involvement), transport people e.g. Highways Agency if not County Council level, economic development group within Council (make sure not conflicting strategies).

2: several stages – all stages to different degrees.

3: hard to answer so many factors – concentrate/focus on local transport group & Highways Agency – liaise closely to because they are the ones most likely to cause barriers to routes for improving situation. Workshops to bring relevant groups together.

4: barriers – not under local authority control e.g. motorway, population density (government), apathy. Opportunities – encouragement to provide and use alternatives e.g. park & ride, sharing cars, bicycle lanes; implementing steps to better practice at every stage of consultation.

Other points that come up from discussion workshop 1:

- LEA (education body) needs to be consulting; think widely of who you're trying to get involved. Transport planners come to the air quality people with regards to LTP.
- More original ideas on how to interact. How do you provide information that the LTP needs.
- Timetable of LTP is different to air quality. However, last minute request of help from transport planners.
- Integration actually makes EHOs life easier. No continuity between different government offices.

WORKSHOP 2

Question 1:

Explore 3 aspects of consultation (which stakeholders, at which stage, and what is the most effective strategy) to ensure an effective AQM consultation & to achieve beneficial outcomes from the consultation.

Group 1 (Blueberry DC)

Which stakeholders?

Internal consultation by making other colleagues aware on how things developing.
External stakeholders: engage with business (contacts from Economic Development), residents (local councillors, press, pressure groups involve them early), school at early stage. Transport planners at County level, use existing network. Transport providers. Primary Care Trust engage at local level and link it to activity they have. Engage with large business, encourage travel plans. Advertise park & ride.

Which stage?

Consultation at very small scale. Not until AQMA but consultation at very large scale.

How?

Limited expertise in house. Use consultant to advice on the strategy. Other colleagues done consultation before? Tap into expertise. Town council with focus interest in area rather than the whole district council. People are not interested on what's happening in another area.

Group 2 (Blueberry DC)

Which stakeholders?

Secretary of State, County Council, neighbouring authorities, Town Council, Chamber of Trade, Town Resident Association, Health Authority/PCT, public (selective and targeted), forums that have been set up in the Council.

Which stage?

Major engagement until AQMA declared. But before it's largely information provision. Managing key stakeholders i.e. potential allies & enemies, making sure that they're aware. Not everybody on every stage (except Defra). Detailed Assessment: copies to statutory consultees & Executive Summary to Town Council residents, possible actions the Council may take. Air Quality Strategy: distribute information & consult internally.

How?

Approaching this as borderline, managed public consultation at locations where exceedences occur (perhaps in the market), advertising boards, buses, depending on the area size do targeted mail shots and questionnaires, Council medias (web, press release).

Group 3 (Cherry CC)

Which stakeholders?

Statutory consultees, NGOs, local business groups, other internal local authority departments.

Which stage?

Prior to AQMA declaration, the importance to carry out progress report meetings, only taking forward specific measures, continuous consultation website.

How?

Wide range of media, websites, local press also targeting particular groups to raise the awareness of issue.

Group 4 (Cherry CC)

Which stakeholders?

Defra, County Council, neighbouring authorities, major local employers, Environment Agency, PCT, LEA (school involvement), business groups, local public transport companies, local recognised environmental groups, planning, transport people, economic development group to make sure no conflicting strategies.

Which stage?

All stages to different degree.

How?

Local transport groups & highway authorities, maybe they are the ones to cause barriers. Workshops to bring relevant groups together.

Group 5 (Blackberry MBC)

Which stakeholders?

Infinite number of groups that you can actually consult. How many consultation documents you get and how many do you actually look at? Email list for consultation.

Which stage?

Depend on the problem. Generally declaration of AQMA and action plan as the public has the chance to participate and play a role. Don't be narrow of your thinking, holistic.

How?

Group 6 (Blackberry MBC)

Which stakeholders?

SO₂: keep it narrow i.e. the residents out of it. Speak to the residents and the Environment Agency. Internally: ward councillor (might be political issue), economic development people.

NO₂: couple of hundred houses. Use neighbourhood partnership, get everybody involved at local scale. Get ward councillors and officers (transport as well) involve. Town Centre management group. Health people.

Which stage?

Internal consultation is the 1st step. Split between do you raise issue during the USA (issue there might be a problem) or wait until it gets approved by Defra (single message to your councillors).

How?

From flipcharts

Which stakeholders?

Internal: ward councillors, Economic Development; External: operator, Environment Agency. Post USA: what data is available, worst case permitted limit, approach operator for stack data, individual approaches or working groups, threat to jobs (enforcement of 15 minute SO₂ objective vs. BAT).

Everybody mentioned before, Environment Agency, Operator. Small AQMAs: targeted public consultation, action groups, draft action plan options and ask who will be willing to support, useful/important stakeholders.

NO2: couple of hundred houses. Stakeholders & strategy, use neighbourhood partnership (portfolio holders, ward councillors, officers), get everybody involved at local scale (Town Centre Group, Freight & Public Transport). Get ward councillors and officers (transport as well) involve. Town Centre management group. Health people. Begin to tell internally during USA, post Defra.

Which stage?

Industrial AQMA: behind close door due to technical solutions. What actions are available? Depends on timetable, more stringent requirements, engage straight after Detailed Assessment.

Transport AQMA: engage more later on, consider options first, partner organisations to develop the options – draft – wider audience, talk to transport people as soon as you think there is problem & local planners.

How?

Internal/external meetings with other departments, operator and Environment Agency, Local Authority Unit, body for the specific industry, display in town centre.

Which stakeholders?

Statutory consultees, representative from NGOs, business groups, other internal LA departments, area panels/forums, PCTs, local community organisations.

Which stage?

Prior to AQMA declaration, development of AQMA, progress reporting meetings, taking forward specific measures, continuous consultation on website.

How?

Range of media (i.e. website, local press, etc) but also targeted action to engage groups, need to raise awareness of issues.

Which stakeholders?

Environment Agency, English Nature, all statutory consultees, PCT, neighbouring local authorities. Environment Agency discharges to groundwater, depends on the process type.

Road: all statutory consultees, planning department, campaign groups, small businesses, anyone likely to be affected, County (Highways department), Ward/parish councillors, need a 'champion' (on behalf of local authorities).

Which stage?

Industry: after DA, but let consultees on email list, know first what you are doing thorough air quality assessment. Depend on what people think on the industry & perception. Strategic and selective consultation sensitive to local needs.

Road: outcomes of DA, depends on local circumstances, AQMA declaration, action plan. People inside & outside AQMA, consult at each stage but the extent of it depends on the report outcomes.

How?

Industry: regular consultation with statutory consultees, local display, press release, newspaper, public meeting tagging along to other events e.g. regeneration meeting, affect business, holistic.

Question 2:

What are the barriers to and opportunities for implementing our steps to better practice?

Group 1

- Barriers: Apathy from the public. People think they got no power to influence the situation so why bother. Apathy by transport authorities, not interested in changing. Unaware of the solution so you need to make people aware.
- Opportunities: Consultation going on about something else, air quality & transport solutions might be a part of that. Education, school outside projects. Beacon status for engaging young people.

Group 2

- Extended timeframe. Continuous level of engagement. Consultation after DA only if there is a need to declare. What can planners ask for (section 106 agreement)? Role of members? Slowing the process down rather than supporting it. Not an easy thing to get. Generate business case based on air quality information.

Group 3

- Barriers: expertise, resources, level of public interest, political barriers, language, local authority departments not buying into it.
- Opportunities: make better use of internal communication departments in the Council, better use of other organisations, sharing best practice (guidance, involving local communities can save resources).

Group 4

- Barriers: apathy from everybody i.e. the public, even local authority officers; local authority control; population density (government legislation can be a barrier).
- Opportunities: alternative transports, implementing steps to better practice at any stage of consultation.

Group 5

- Opportunities: flexible guidance, value for money, best practice (Defra to organise).
- Barriers: inflexible guidance, has to deal with pressure groups, funding, focus on activity rather than outcomes.

Group 6

- Barriers: we cannot do anything is just going to cost too much. Fund problem, where to find the money for it. How enforceable the 15-min objective is because it is not EU compliance.
- Bring in the land-use planners.

From flipcharts:

- Barriers: resources, public apathy, business interest, conflict with other policies. Resources (staffing/funding/time issue), lack of expertise, level of public interest, political, language, no buy-in from other LA departments/two-tier/external.
- Inflexible guidance, funding, focus on activity rather than outcomes, has to deal with pressure groups.
- Opportunities: section 106 Agreement, LTP, LDF, LSP, Freight Quality Partnership, Bus Quality Partnership, taxi licensing, Green Travel Plan, sustainable development. Make more use of internal communications' departments, better use of other

organisations e.g. PTEs, more guidance/sharing best practice, involving local communities can save resources.

- Flexible guidance, value for money, best practice (Defra).

Other points that come up from discussion workshop 2:

New AQS imply we're gonna have to look at exposure, not just AQMA. Perhaps we need a different strategy for this? Activity rather than outcomes, people might get agitated about air quality issue. I worry about the process not solving problem but moving the pollution somewhere else.

Is there any intention to formalise this? Easier for us if we can get a formal guidance as the NSCA guidance is not actually accepted by planners and other departments.

Authorities have to deal with this corporately, set up steering group.

What are we going to do next? Reflect on what we heard from today and the other 3 workshops. Incredibly useful today. Digested and re-assessed, working on some guidelines, steps to better practice and inform you. Report to funding body and to Defra.