

STRABANE DISTRICT COUNCIL



Strabane
District Council
Comhairle Ceantair
an tSratha Báin
Stràbane Destrìck Cooncil

Environmental Health Department

Air Quality Progress Report & Action Plan Progress Report

April 2008

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1.0 Requirement To Produce Progress Reports

This progress report is prepared in order to fulfil Strabane District Council's obligation under the Local Air Quality Management Policy Guidance: Policy Guidance on Air Quality Progress Reports (LAQM.PRG NI (04) and the Environment (NI) Order 2002.

2.0 Local Air Quality Management Progress To Date

Strabane District Council has now completed the first round of the review and assessment process. The findings of the review and assessment identified exceedences of the air quality objectives for particles (PM₁₀) resulting from domestic emissions. Three air quality management areas affecting Strabane, Newtownstewart and Castleterg became effective on 30th June 2004 and an action plan was developed in order to identify measures to reduce ambient concentrations of particles and attempt to comply with the objectives for particles (PM₁₀).

Strabane District Council have also completed an updating and screening assessment in October 2006 which did not highlight any other areas of concern and that required a detailed assessment to be undertaken.

3.0 Air Quality Monitoring

Strabane District Council continue to operate a combined PM₁₀/sulphur dioxide monitoring station at Springhill Park, Strabane as illustrated in Figure 1 below. The site is surrounded by housing and has been in operation since April 2002. The site is subject to independent QA/QC audits by AEA Energy & Environment in order to provide confidence in the procedures adopted by Strabane District Council in managing the site and to enable the data ratification process to take place. Data management services are also provided by AEA Energy & Environment.

Figure 1 Location of the Springhill Park Monitoring Site



The automatic SO₂/PM₁₀ monitors are co-located with an 8-port sampler which provides black smoke and sulphur dioxide data. The 8-port sampler has been in operation since 1999 and has recorded the highest black smoke levels in the UK in all years from 1999 to 2004. The provisional monitoring results from the PM₁₀ monitor are shown in Table 1 for the period 01 April 2007 to 31 March 2008.

Table 1 Strabane, Springhill Park, 01 April 2007 to 31 March 2008

These data are provisional from 01/03/2008 and may be subject to further quality control

POLLUTANT	SO ₂	PM ₁₀ *+
Number Very High	0	0
Number High	0	0
Number Moderate	0	26
Number Low	32261	8665
Maximum 15-minute mean	29 µg m ⁻³	147 µg m ⁻³
Maximum hourly mean	21 µg m ⁻³	147 µg m ⁻³
Maximum running 8-hour mean	14 µg m ⁻³	90 µg m ⁻³
Maximum running 24-hour mean	8 µg m ⁻³	68 µg m ⁻³
Maximum daily mean	7 µg m ⁻³	62 µg m ⁻³
Average	2 µg m ⁻³	17 µg m ⁻³
Data capture	89.9 %	98.7 %

+ PM₁₀ as measured by a BAM using a factor of 0.83333 to give Indicative Gravimetric Equivalent
All mass units are at 20°C and 1013mb

Table 2 below provides a direct comparison with the relevant air quality objectives for PM₁₀/SO₂. The number of exceedences of the daily mean PM₁₀ objective was 3 and the annual mean was 17µg m⁻³ indicative gravimetric equivalent. These figures are similar to those for the 2006 calendar year. The dramatic reductions experienced in the number of daily mean exceedences and annual mean on previous years would now appear to have halted. The reduction in the number of daily mean exceedences and annual mean can be accounted for by the implementation of the air quality action plan including measures such as the NIHE heating conversion scheme, introduction of fuel conversion schemes for owner-occupied and rented accommodation funded by Northern Ireland Electricity and the Department for Social Development in conjunction with Strabane District Council and action by the introduction of smoke control areas in April and September 2007. Such measures have helped to produce an improvement in the air quality across the District and an overall reduction in background concentrations as a whole compared to previous years.

Table 2 Comparison of Monitoring Data With Air Quality Objectives

Pollutant	Air Quality Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003	Exceedences	Days
Sulphur Dioxide	15-minute mean > 266 µg m ⁻³	0	0
Sulphur Dioxide	Hourly mean > 350 µg m ⁻³	0	0
Sulphur Dioxide	Daily mean > 125 µg m ⁻³	0	0
PM ₁₀ Particulate Matter (Gravimetric)	Daily mean > 50 µg m ⁻³	3	3
PM ₁₀ Particulate Matter (Gravimetric)	Annual mean > 40 µg m ⁻³	0	-

4.0 New Local Developments

The Environmental Health Department of Strabane District Council dealt with over 380 planning consultations in the period 01 April 2007 to 31 March 2008. The majority of such consultations related to single one-off dwellings as is commonplace in a rural district such as Strabane District Council. However there were a number of consultations in relation to larger housing developments, sand and gravel quarries and other commercial development. The Environmental Health Department continue to assess the potential impact of such developments on local air quality and make

recommendations to Planning Service accordingly, particularly where developments are within or adjoining existing Air Quality Management Areas. Recommendations are also made to the Industrial Pollution and Radiochemical Inspectorate in relation to existing or proposed industrial processes controlled under the Industrial Pollution Control (NI) Order 1997 or the Pollution Prevention and Control Regulations (NI) 2003.

5.0 Air Quality Action Plan Implementation

Strabane District Council continue to promote and implement the measures included in the air quality action plan agreed in 2005 as outlined in Table 3 overleaf. All elements of the action plan are currently being progressed, particularly the implementation of smoke control areas as this is deemed necessary in reducing domestic emissions of PM₁₀. The first smoke control area in Strabane came into operation on 30th April 2007. The remaining two smoke control areas became effective from 30 September 2007 in Castlederg and Newtownstewart. In addition two schemes have been implemented in conjunction with Northern Ireland Electricity which have replaced approximately 170 solid fuel appliances in owner-occupied and privately rented properties. A significant number of properties were also referred to the Warm Homes Scheme funded by the Department for Social Development. It is now felt unnecessary to declare a smoke control area in Sion Mills as a result of the other aspects of the action plan being introduced in this area of the district. The NIHE heating conversion scheme is also substantially complete and it is estimated that there are approximately 80 further conversions required across the district. Verbal agreements have been given that these will be prioritised in the current financial year subject to funding being available and in any case will be complete by 2010.

The Environmental Health Department continue to refer private households and private landlords to the NIHE housing grants section. New responsibilities for district councils contained in the Private Tenancies (NI) Order 2006 have facilitated access to such landlords thereby targeting eligible households more effectively.

Table 3 Action Plan Measures Summary Sheet

ACTION PLAN MEASURE	ORIGINAL TIMESCALE	PROGRESS WITH MEASURE	OUTCOME TO DATE	COMMENTS
Implement smoke control areas: Strabane Newtownstewart Castledearg	September 2006 October 2007 October 2007	Introduced 30-04-2007 Introduced 30-09-2007 Introduced 30-09-2007	Smoke control areas routinely enforced.	Pollutant levels have decreased substantially
NIHE Conversion Schemes	October 2007	Majority of conversions complete	Verbal assurance given that all will be complete by 2010 with Strabane properties converted in 2008-9	
Warm Homes Scheme Promotion	Ongoing	Ongoing	Referrals made to Warm Homes Scheme. Increased awareness via publicity, Citizens Advice Centre etc	
Energy Efficiency Promotion	Ongoing	Ongoing	2 NIE Energy Efficiency Schemes complete, routine referrals to EST Advice Line	
Planning Controls	Ongoing	Ongoing	Informatives made on planning approvals	Also raised in regional working groups
Bonfire Guidance and Controls	Ongoing	Ongoing	Contact with community organisations to avoid bonfires annually	

