

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 Technology 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 Technology.

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 monitoring results from the PM₁₀ monitor are shown in Table 1 for the calendar year of 2006.

Table 1 Strabane, Springhill Park, 01 January To 31 December 2006

These data have been fully ratified by netcen

POLLUTANT	SO ₂	PM ₁₀ *+	PM ₁₀ +
Number Very High	0	0	-
Number High	0	9	-
Number Moderate	0	47	-
Number Low	33482	7856	-
Maximum 15-minute mean	35 µg m ⁻³	-	-
Maximum hourly mean	35 µg m ⁻³	250 µg m ⁻³	208 µg m ⁻³
Maximum running 8-hour mean	15 µg m ⁻³	161 µg m ⁻³	133 µg m ⁻³
Maximum running 24-hour mean	8 µg m ⁻³	102 µg m ⁻³	85 µg m ⁻³
Maximum daily mean	7 µg m ⁻³	99 µg m ⁻³	83 µg m ⁻³
Average	2 µg m ⁻³	20 µg m ⁻³	17 µg m ⁻³
Data capture	94.1 %	89.0 %	89.0 %

* PM₁₀ is measured with a BAM1020 instrument without a heated inlet
 + PM₁₀ data converted to 'Indicative Gravimetric Equivalent' units using a conversion factor of 1/1.2

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 2 and the annual mean was 17µg m⁻³ indicative gravimetric equivalent. These figures represent a dramatic reduction in the number of daily mean exceedences on previous years. The reduction in the number of daily mean exceedences may be accounted for by 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 taken by householders in preparation for the introduction of smoke control in April 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.

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	2	2
PM ₁₀ Particulate Matter (Gravimetric)	Annual mean > 40 µg m ⁻³	0	-

This reduction in daily mean exceedences has continued into 2007 as indicated in Table 3 below with only 3 exceedences in the months January 2007 to April 2007.

Table 3 Comparison of Monitoring Data With Air Quality Objectives (Subject to Ratification)

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 (Indicative gravimetric equivalent)	Daily mean > 50 µg m ⁻³	3	3
PM ₁₀ Particulate Matter	Annual mean > 40 µg m ⁻³	-	-

4.0 New Local Developments

The Environmental Health Department of Strabane District Council dealt with over 422 planning consultations in the period 01 April 2006 to 31 March 2007. 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 are currently consulting on the contents of the draft action plan. 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 with the remaining two areas in Castlederg and Newtownstewart coming into operation on 30th September 2007. In addition two schemes have been implemented in conjunction with Northern Ireland Electricity which have replaced approximately 140 solid fuel appliances in owner-occupied and privately rented properties. 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.