

Investigating Noise Protection for Thousands – Noise Action Plans England

Noise Action Plans for England are finally out for consultation – just over a year after publication of noise maps.

The draft plans set criteria for areas for investigation, to assess if any further noise mitigation measures might be carried out, in the context of sustainable development. Defra thinking is that the 'noise making authorities' – highways, and rail operators – already have mitigation in mind in the development and operation of transport infrastructure, and that the noise action planning process will 'assist the management of noise in the context of sustainable development'. Following an impact assessment of costs and benefits, first priority areas for noise management in agglomerations are proposed where 1% of the population is affected by the highest noise levels, according to the strategic noise maps. Locations where the LA_{10,18h} is at least 76dB will be investigated as first priority locations. Maps indicating the location of these are now on the Defra website. As our office appears to be in one of these, Environmental Protection UK will be well placed to monitor progress! Supporting data detailing the numbers of dwellings and people in these areas for

agglomerations comes out at 122,500 people/57,700 dwellings. Using a 65dB(A) threshold would have entailed the assessment of nearly 1.9 million dwellings with a population of over 4 million – an option rejected as too costly and impracticable.

Defra want this consultation to reach beyond noise specialists, and are keen to more fully engage road and rail operators, local authority planning officers, special interest groups/professional bodies and those living in the 23 agglomerations covered by this first stage of the process. (It is a requirement of the Environmental Noise Directive that noise mapping is communicated to the public.) The consultation has been circulated to all local authorities and relevant agencies, however their publication with no ministerial/press announcement, means much work will need to be done to reach beyond the cognoscenti. Local authorities who, to date, perceive the noise action planning process as a Government responsibility beyond their remit, professionals for whom noise is not a core issue and the general public in areas covered by this first round consultation will need to be reached.



Preston Circus, Brighton, en route to Environmental Protection UK's offices, is a first priority location for noise action planning

To engage the cross-sectoral interests in local authorities, Defra will be holding workshops in five locations during September – details will be available shortly. Further, we will shortly publish a Defra sponsored leaflet explaining noise mapping and action planning to the public, for use by local authorities (as well as leaflets for Scotland sponsored by the Scottish Government and one for Wales sponsored by the Welsh Assembly Government).

Consultation and maps at:
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/noise/mapping/action-plans.htm>

Electricity & Industry the Centre of Government's Low Carbon Plans

The launch of the Government's Low Carbon Transition Plan (a White Paper) saw a tidal wave of paper flow out of a range of Government Departments, with the accompanying Renewable Energy Strategy, Low Carbon Transport Plan, Low Carbon Industrial Strategy, and associated studies and consultations' sure to keep interested parties in beach reading over the summer holidays.

The Low Carbon Transition Plan is a requirement of the Climate Change Act, and sets out how the Government will cut CO₂ emissions by 18% over 2008 levels by 2020. The associated Renewable Energy Strategy follows the draft released last year (see Briefing no. 94), and aims to implement the UK's binding EU target to obtain 15% of all our

energy requirements from renewable sources by 2020.

Anyone expecting a document that advocated radical changes in lifestyle and transport patterns will have been sorely disappointed. The plan takes an overwhelmingly technical approach, essentially using a 'business as usual, but with low carbon technology' methodology. Power generation and industry would provide the majority of the carbon cuts needed, with a combination of renewables and nuclear projected to meet 40% of electricity demand by 2020. Up to four demonstration carbon capture and storage plants will also be built, but the embryonic technology will have little impact in the 2020 time frame.

The Low Carbon Transport Strategy is by far

the weakest of the three supporting strategies, with much rehashing of previous policy announcements and little in the way of concrete commitments, apart from funding for emerging vehicle technologies. The strategy contains a summary of a study on carbon reductions from heavy goods vehicles, which follows our lead in advocating the use of lower rolling resistance (and quieter) tyres, yet neglects to make any mention of the role of biomethane, despite the study itself demonstrating the huge low cost carbon savings that the technology can deliver.

1. All documents are available via the Department of Energy and Climate Change's website at www.decc.gov.uk

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From the Chief Executive



What do the recent flurry of Government policy announcements and our summer weather have in common? Well in

June we experienced an extended period of hot sunny weather – long awaited and much enjoyed.

Similarly in July we were treated to a mini ‘policy-wave’, in fact on one day alone I attended the launch of four separate strategies and consultations covering noise action planning, sustainable transport, renewable energy and a transition to a low carbon society. These were also long awaited and relatively joined up; getting sun burnt in this analogy translates to my aching back after carrying the literally thousands of pages home.

Perhaps I am over extending this metaphor, but after wading through these documents I am minded of the heavy rain and chills that

followed our short fine summer. Take the Carbon Reduction Strategy for Transport for example. Despite the known carbon and air quality benefits that would arise from an increased use of biomethane as a transport fuel, there is virtually no mention and support for this technology in the strategy. The haulage industry, gas producers and technology providers are not looking for special treatment, but they do need to be confident in long term policy drivers to warrant the infrastructure investment required to shift biomethane from its current isolated trials to large scale up take. We will continue to promote the benefits of this integrated transport solution through our work convening the Biomethane for Transport Forum.

We recently met Lord Hunt, who is now a full time Minister at DECC. In his previous role as joint Defra and DECC minister we found him receptive to our thinking on the need for targeted deployment of biomass to provide air quality safeguards. During the meeting we raised the issue of local noise impacts from wind farms, and the need for the use of appropriate guidance for assessing these. The current ETSU-R-97 guidance, used for the assessment and rating for noise from wind farms, is, we believe, in need of review, to account for the impacts of the dramatic increased height of wind turbines over the past decade, and associated acoustic effects. Given the prominence of wind power in the renewable energy strategy, and the admission of Ed Milliband that ‘there can be local objections that are legitimate’, I will now be following up my

meeting with Lord Hunt by writing to explicitly request an urgent review of this guidance.

I am glad to read in the UK Low Carbon Transition Plan that the Government is working with industry and stakeholders to reduce the extraction of peat, although the details of the ways in which they are doing this are unclear. A significant amount of carbon is stored in soil, which also performs many other vital environmental ‘services’ relating to biodiversity and flood prevention. Possibly it is a step too far at this stage to expect such a radical concept from government as introducing market pricing for these less tangible, but vital, services our environment fulfils.

The Transition Plan is strong on how energy efficient new houses will be, but truly integrated thinking by government would also have seen stronger messages and incentives for prioritising the clean up of our historically contaminated land above building on greenfield sites. Greenfield sites are ‘worth’ so much more to us, in terms of wider environmental benefits, if they are not developed. The present housing doldrums means that house builders are less likely to risk development on sites that may be contaminated, and therefore requiring expensive remediation, and more likely to develop greenfield sites. This is something that must be avoided, not least for the reasons of limiting urban sprawl, encouraging sustainable transport planning, driving contamination clean up, preserving the wider function of soil and maintaining the aesthetics of our landscape.

Commission Rejects Air Quality Derogations

The European Commission has given decisions on the PM₁₀ time extension notifications submitted by nine EU countries – Austria, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Greece, Spain, France, Hungary and the Slovak Republic. The Member States had submitted individual notifications for a total of 94 zones, of which the Commission rejected 75. These covered zones in Belgium, Denmark, Greece, Spain, France and Slovakia; the Commission considered that the conditions for a

time extension had not been met, in many cases because insufficient data had been provided or because the measures outlined in the submitted air quality plans did not demonstrate that the standards would be met at the expiry of the exemption period. The Commission’s assessment also showed that exemptions will in some cases not be necessary since compliance with the limit values has already been achieved. Member States may re-notify for zones where the

Commission has raised objections if they provide new information to demonstrate that they meet the required conditions.

Environmental Protection UK welcomes the Commission’s decision as an indication that they are taking a tough line on the notifications rather than simply nodding them through. Decisions on the final batch of PM₁₀ time extension notifications, including the UK’s, are expected later in the year.

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Local Authorities and Climate Change – the Role for Environmental Protection UK

During the production of our 5-year 'Future Focus' strategy in 2007 Environmental Protection UK considered how the organisation could best contribute to the climate change agenda, with our decision being to integrate the issue with our three main areas of work to draw strong links between action on global and local environmental issues. The world does not stand still though, and with the recent passing of the Climate Change Act and the production of the UK's Low Carbon Transition Plan we decided to use a recent meeting of our President's Committee to take another look at possible actions for the organisation on climate change, and specifically what we can do to support the work of local authorities in this area.

The President's Committee is an ad-hoc advisory group for Environmental Protection UK, which takes in some of the most distinguished figures in UK environmental thinking. These included a former Secretary of State for the Environment, six professors, members of the House of Lords, the European Parliament, the Sustainable Development Commission, the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, Board members of the European Environment Agency,

advisors to business, a former local authority CEO as well as front line practitioners from central and local government.

The meeting started with a presentation by Derrick Ryall – Head of the Climate Programme at the Met Office Hadley Centre. This covered the new UK Climate Prediction service, which gives probabilistic forecast information for the impacts of climate change at a local level. Whilst the headline temperature increase is what usually captures the headlines, the main impact on many local authorities' functions is likely to be an increasing frequency of weather events that we currently consider 'extreme'; necessitating robust adaptation plans to be in place. There are also implications for large scale and costly adaptation projects, for example decisions on whether to replace the Thames Barrier should be based on warming assumptions at the upper end of the possibility scale, as such measures cannot easily be changed if the reality turns out to be a higher level of warming than expected.

The general consensus at the meeting was that while there were several examples of local

authorities acting innovatively, taking risks and operating beyond their required duties, across the board there was often a lack of cohesion and operation at a strategic level. In the absence of statutory duties, and with public finances looking scarce for years to come, local authorities will need support and encouragement to ensure they adapt services to climate change 'locked in' by historic emissions, and play a full role in meeting our legally binding emissions targets on emissions.

Given the current piecemeal support for local authorities and apparent gaps in knowledge as to what is possible, there may be a strategic role for Environmental Protection UK to provide information, promote best practice, produce guidance and ensure links within local authorities between those now responsible for climate change and environmental protection teams, who have much measurement and modelling experience to share. The President's Committee will be looking further into the issues over coming weeks, and drawing up recommendations for our trustees, Council and policy committees to consider.

Planning Guidance Review – Call for Evidence

One of Environmental Protection UK's most popular and respected guidance documents is 'Development Control: Planning for Air Quality'; this guidance, which is in widespread use amongst local authorities, was last updated in 2006, and our Air Quality Committee has decided that it is time now to update it again.

As part of this process we are calling for evidence, concepts, ideas and examples, which could be incorporated into revised guidance. Whilst we are interested in any material individuals and organisations are able to supply, we are particularly interested in the following areas:

- The need for an air quality assessment – i.e. when should an air quality assessment be triggered in the development control process, and how should this vary according to the type, size and/ or location of the proposed development?
- The use of buffer zones – for example between a major road and nearby homes.
- Planning appeals where air quality has been a factor – for example where an application has been refused, or conditions modified, on air quality grounds.

- Best practice in planning and pollution control liaison.
- Policies, or decisions on development, where pollution control and conservation issues may come into conflict (e.g. chimney heights).
- Mitigation measures applied to new developments.
- Integration of air quality and climate change policy in the development control process.

Submissions should be sent to Ed Dearnley (ed.dearnley@environmental-protection.org.uk) by the end of August.

In a parallel process the issue of significance criteria for air quality in the planning process is being examined by the Institute of Air Quality Management, who will produce recommendations for our project steering group to consider for inclusion in our updated 'Planning for Air Quality' guidance.



Continued from page 1

Low Carbon Plans

Air quality practitioners will be keen to see the Renewable Energy Strategy's proposals for biomass and air quality. These hold no surprises, however it is pleasing to see the Government's line now echoing that advocated by ourselves and other air quality bodies (see our website for more details). To aid delivery of the Low Carbon Transition Plan all major Government Departments have been given carbon budgets for their areas of work, and will be required to develop plans to show how they will deliver them.

With a general election looming on the horizon the views of the Conservatives on the White Paper are of key interest. At a recent Globe UK event a Conservative representative told the meeting that they feel the renewable energy targets are too ambitious to deliver in the 2020 timeframe. They also believe that the Government's weapon of choice for bypassing planning concerns around renewables and nuclear, the Planning Act, would simply move opposition from the planning to the political sphere, and the party would scrap the centralised Infrastructure Planning Commission now taking shape in Bristol. The White Paper is a welcome addition then, but far from the last word on delivering a low carbon UK.

Select Committee on Licensing

Supporting Vibrant or Vibrating Communities?

The recommendations of a recent House of Commons Select Committee Report on the Licensing Act 2003 raised concerns at our July Noise Committee meeting.

Support for increasing the number of Temporary Event Notices (TENs) allowed from 12 to 15 per year is deemed poorly worded. While it appears to be aimed at lifting restrictions 'in particular for community groups without a premises licence', our members' experiences indicate that such a move would be open to abuse, as in practice applications can be used as a means of extending opening hours. If this is to be enacted,

wording should be specific as to application. Scrapping the exemption for venues with a capacity of 200 or fewer from the need to obtain a license for the performance of live music and the re-introduction of the two in a bar exemption, allowing any venue to host one or two acoustic musicians was also recommended. Again, our committee felt that any liberalisation would be open to abuse. Any problems that arise can be most effectively managed with the support of licensing – and a circumspect approach is required here.

The increasing conflict between developing

vibrant communities and creating a noise problem is demonstrated by the ongoing case of the Rainbow Club in Birmingham, a long established music venue, now at risk of closure following noise complaints (some from recently built housing). Featured on BBC News programmes (BBC News and You and Yours) – this high profile case is bringing the noise and planning debate into the mainstream. Those with an interactive interest in the case can follow the debate on Facebook – where 'Friends of the Rainbow' report progress in the ongoing conflict between the venue and neighbours suffering from noise.

New Noise and Health Report Calls for Expert Group

Early July saw the publication of two new reports assessing our state of knowledge on noise and health.

Environmental Noise and Health in the UK¹, a draft published for comment by the Health Protection Agency, makes it clear that many people are affected, some seriously, by exposure to environmental (mainly traffic) noise. While Environmental Protection UK welcomes the draft findings of this ad hoc expert group, we are disappointed, given the five years it has taken to emerge, that recommendations amount to little more than a requirement for more research. Having said that, more research is needed to support work towards appropriate measures to reduce noise exposure. We also support the call for an expert group on noise and health – as we have been doing since at least 2002.

In 2002 'Towards an Ambient Noise Strategy' proposed an expert committee on noise – which has, to date, not been convened. In contrast, the Expert Panel on Air Quality Standards (EPAQS) was set up in 2001, the Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollution (COMEAP) was established in 1992, and Defra set up the Air Quality Expert Group as an advisory body (currently under review) in 2001. These groups have been instrumental in driving the establishment of air quality management. We hope that, with the HPA stating that 10% of the UK

population is exposed to daytime noise above 65dB, and noise action planning in its infancy, an expert group will be formed to establish coherent and consistent advice as the process progresses. We are encouraged that the newly established MRC/HPA Centre for the Environment and Health has noise in its research remit and will be looking at links between the impacts of air and noise. The HPA's report is open for comment until 17 August – please forward any comments to mary.stevens@environmental-protection.org.uk

Also published was Estimating Dose-Response Relationships between Noise Exposure and Human Health in the UK² – a report from Defra, commissioned by the Interdepartmental Group on Costs and Benefits, to establish an assessment of noise policy impacts. This work establishes clear links between noise and hypertension (stress), and that high noise exposure can increase the risk of heart attack by up to 50%. The authors, Bernard Berry and Ian Flindell, felt that work on dose response relationships must be closely monitored, before more substantive conclusions can be drawn.

1. <http://www.hpa.org.uk/web/HPAweb&Page&HPAwebAutoListName/Page/1246433632961>
2. <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/noise/igcb/health/report.htm>

FoI Survey Highlights Need for Noise Stats

In July insulation supplier Rockwool published a picture of noise complaint statistics across the UK, compiled from Freedom of Information requests issued to all local authorities, including a league table of the 'noisiest' councils. Feedback from our local authority members indicates that the picture presented is not entirely accurate – due to inconsistencies in data collection across local authorities. However, with a 76% response rate (compared to 53% for the most recent CIEH survey), Rockwool did at least demonstrate that there is more data out there. The report

received national and widespread local press coverage – which served to highlight interest in noise issues. While some local authorities expressed concern at the representation of data, the attention received by this report (commissioned for PR purposes), serves to underpin the need for a robust national data set that is truly representative of the situation across the UK. To date, collecting consistent figures has proved challenging due to the differing recording methods used by local authorities. We understand that Defra and CIEH will be looking to research current collection data methods.

Planning – National Policy Statements Delayed

The latest iteration of CLG's route map for planning reform sets out a revised, compacted, timetable for consultation and implementation of National Policy Statements (NPSs). NPSs for Renewable Energy and Ports originally scheduled for consultation this summer are now lined up for 'Autumn', with the new regime for the energy and transport sectors commencing on 1 March 2010. Depending on when 'autumn' is, this would appear to give very little time for full consideration of responses to the consultation. The rationale given for this delay is the

publication of the Low Carbon Transition Plan and the Renewable Energy Strategy, 'which it is vital the NPSs fully reflect'. (We previously understood NPSs and the Renewable Energy Strategy were to be published together...). Further, the third package of statutory instruments on examination procedures for nationally significant infrastructure projects has been published for consultation – closes 5th October.

Any comments to Mary.Stevens@environmental-protection.org.uk

Guest Article

Wind Turbine Noise 2009 – Third International Conference Aalborg Denmark

With the current dash to fill the energy gap and meet climate change targets, noise specialists, individuals and communities in the UK and beyond are concerned that poor planning and ill considered siting of wind turbines could result in significant noise problems for neighbours. The lack of official recognition of the impacts of wind turbine noise by governments to date was belied by Wind Turbine Noise 2009 – which attracted 150 delegates over 3 days. Julian T. Davis, BSc, MBPR, whose home has been made uninhabitable by wind turbine noise (to date, acknowledged by the local authority by a reduction in council tax), reports from the conference.

The impacts of noise on communities were highlighted by a number of presenters. Effects on nearby residents are a source of continuous study for Eja Pedersen (Sweden) – recent work revealing sleep deprivation as a common theme in terms of annoyance. From New Zealand Dave Bennett showed that seismic effects have been associated with a wind farm 3km away, probably Rayleigh waves causing the stimulation of vibrational modes within a home, also causing sleep deprivation. Kirsten Nielsen and Bent Christensen detailed growing concerns in Denmark at the prospects of smaller, old turbines being replaced by large modern ones. People in Denmark have tolerated the smaller turbines (similar in size to those ETSU-r-97 was based on) but do not want to live next to the larger models, especially as noise and lower frequencies are a major concern.

Amplitude Modulation (AM) – which adds very distinctive and identifiable characteristics – was the subject of limited discussion. The AM commented on was that associated with “swish/whoosh”, worse when the receptor is in the same plane as the turbine rota, with rotation from the top downwards (Stefan Oerlemans). Little work has been done on the very aggressive downwind modulation that can produce high levels of lower and low frequency sound waves. Carlo Di Napoli from Finland found 6dB modulation 2km away from a wind farm. Dick Bowdler (UK), chairing a session, asked delegates for suggestions on where to start investigating AM (thump or swish). The response was a deafening silence, with many



present appearing not to have heard nor have any understanding of this. This was confirmed by Bo Søndergaard in his discussion on the next version of the IEC 61400-11 (International Electrotechnical Commission Standard) measurement method for turbines, who stated he had never heard wind turbine noise.

Author's Opinion: if we are to fully understand wind turbine noise it is important that wind farms known to be problematic are studied, and guidance and assessments are based on these as representing the worst case scenario. It is no use studying only the ones that run perfectly.

Dick Bowdler examined the effects of wind shear on noise assessment. He illustrated the considerable increase in shear on flat landscapes compared to undulating ground. This would have significant impact on any noise assessment. Bill Palmer (Canada) also

investigated the relationship of wind shear to significant AM.

Studies investigating the reduction of turbine noise through better engineering design find that turbine blade trailing edge can be a considerable source noise and much wind tunnel time is being spent on improvements. Tests have provided a 3dB reduction in trailing edge noise, but this reduction cannot be realistically translated into the field, for reasons not yet understood.

One conclusion that can be drawn from WTN2009 is that turbine noise is a global problem which is not very well understood. Considerable further research and work will be required to reduce the impact of turbine noise whether on land or at sea. WTN2009 organiser Dr Geoff Leventhall stated that he will know they have succeeded, when there is no demand for a noise conference. Meanwhile, he is already planning WTN2011.

Wind Turbine Noise will be discussed in depth at Noise Update 2009 – Aston University, Birmingham, 7th October. Andy Mckenzie of the Hayes-McKenzie partnership will present the agreed view of a number of acousticians for a way forward for ETSU-R-97 – The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms; Mike Stigwood of MAS Environmental will present recent case studies, and Jane Davis will give an update on her battle to prove that wind turbine noise is affecting her home.

Aviation Noise Action Plans

At the time of writing, ten out of the eighteen airports in England required to prepare a noise action plan – including Heathrow and Gatwick – have been published for consultation. Defra requested the publication of these no later than 1st July, with consultations to close by 21st October, with a view to draft Noise Action Plans being sent to the Secretary of State by 30th November. Defra are following up those airport operators who have yet to consult.

We will be considering these in more detail and give a full report in a future Briefing. Meanwhile airport campaign groups continue to express dissatisfaction with the process. In their initial comments the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign says “the policy adopted by the UK Government of making airport operators responsible for the noise action plans is unlikely to produce significant noise reductions. Airports have a clear commercial incentive not to reduce

noise.” While they do find some good ideas in the draft, such as priority for quieter aircraft, phasing out noisy aircraft (but only voluntarily), and possibly steeper approach paths, they believe the onus will be on Defra and DfT to achieve noise reduction.

Published Noise Action Plan consultation plans can be found on the airport operator websites. Please forward any comments to: mary.stevens@environmental.protection.org.uk

European Elections

June's meeting of the European Environment Bureau's Clean Air Working Group heard that the freshly elected European Parliament is likely to prove more hostile to new environmental legislation than its predecessor. The elections returned a considerably more Eurosceptic Parliament, meaning that it will be difficult to gain the consensus needed to pass new legislation. Decision making in general is likely to be far more opaque to the watchful eyes of environmental NGOs.

Worrying developments are not confined to the European Parliament, with the Commission themselves looking to delay the implementation of emissions control legislation as they rush to respond to the economic downturn. The forthcoming Euro VI standard for heavy duty engines and the next stages of non-road mobile machinery standards may be earmarked for delayed implementation as the Commission hurriedly pulls together a package aimed at easing the burden on

industry. Whilst Environmental Protection UK and other European NGOs understand that the vehicle industry has an overhang of unsold vehicles to shift, we feel that the worst of the economic downturn is likely to be over by the time Euro VI comes into effect in 2013, and we will oppose any suggestions to delay implementation.

National NGOs attending the event reported more positive news though. Friends of the Earth Netherlands reported on the success of their community NO₂ monitoring programme, which has strong parallels with similar work in Sheffield under the Care4Air programme. The German LEZ framework was also bearing fruit, with the first annual monitoring report for the Berlin LEZ indicating a notable improvement in air quality. Martin Lutz (Berlin Senate Department for Health, Environment and Consumer Protection) will be talking on the Berlin LEZ at our Autumn Update this year (details at www.environmental-protection.org.uk/events).

COMEAP Finalise Health Impacts Report

The health impact of air pollution is what drives the vast majority of work to clean the air we breathe, and attempting to quantify these health impacts is of key importance in order to justify action. Through the magic of mathematics the estimated air quality improvement produced by a particular measure is transformed into the number of statistical 'life years saved', and by valuing each of these statistical years of healthy life the mathematicians are able to apply a financial benefit to a particular measure, which can be balanced against its costs.

Two years ago the Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollution (COMEAP), the Department of Health's advisory body, produced a draft report on long-term exposure to PM_{2.5}. This estimated that a 10 ug/m³ increase in PM_{2.5} levels would produce an increase of 6% in all cause mortality, or the overall number of deaths experienced by the British population. To this COMEAP applied a 95% confidence interval of 1.02-1.11, i.e. they are 95% certain that the true figure lies somewhere between 2% and 11%.

The finalised report¹ was released in July, with the 6% figure unchanged over the previous draft. Since the publication of the draft report there have been calls to revise the number upwards, reflected in some of the responses to the draft report published alongside the finalised version on the COMEAP website. Of

particular note has been the publication of the follow up to the Harvard Six Cities Study² (Laden et al, 2006), which suggested that the figure should lie towards the higher end of the confidence intervals suggested by COMEAP.

The full COMEAP recommendations are:

- For all-cause mortality: Best estimate 1.06 with 95% confidence interval (CI) 1.02–1.11
- For cardiopulmonary (heart and lung) mortality: Best estimate 1.09 with 95% confidence interval (CI) 1.03–1.16
- For lung cancer mortality: Best estimate 1.08 with 95% confidence interval (CI) 1.01–1.16

Professor Jon Ayres (Chair of COMEAP) will be speaking on the quantification of air quality health impacts at this year's Environmental Protection UK Air Quality Autumn Update being held in Birmingham on 12th November more details at www.environmental-protection.org.uk/events

1. Long Term Effects of Air Pollution on Mortality, <http://www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/comeap/pdfs/finallongtermeffectsreport2009report.pdf>
2. Reduction in Fine Particulate Air Pollution and Mortality *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine* Vol 173. pp. 667-672. (2006). <http://ajrccm.atsjournals.org>

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IUAPPA Regional Conference 2009

Taking place in the historic city of Tunis from 23-27 November, the conference will be held in conjunction with a meeting of the Global Atmospheric Pollution Forum, whose current programme includes support for development of an Inter-Governmental Network on air pollution in the region. The programme for the conference is being developed in close cooperation with UNEP, who are leading on Inter-Governmental

initiatives; IUAPPA will also continue to build on its links with the European Commission and with the UNECE Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution Convention. The agenda for Tunis is expected to include special sessions on the management of transport pollution in major cities and on the handling of natural sources in policy on air-borne particles.

More details www.iuappa.com

Grants for Measuring Methane

With the UK committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80% from 1990 levels, by 2050, the Environment Agency is keen to gain a better understanding of how much of the potent greenhouse gas methane is emitted from unregulated historic landfill sites.

With an estimated 23,000 sites, these landfills are thought to contribute 0.71% of total methane emissions across England and Wales. The Environment Agency has written to contaminated land officers at English local authorities to inform them that they may be eligible for funding to measure these emissions through the Defra Contaminated Land Capital Grant Programme.

Applicable sites must already be identified as high priority sites under the council's contaminated land inspection strategy, with landfill gas emissions identified as a potential significant pollutant linkage, posing a risk to human health or the environment under the Contaminated Land regime (Part 2A of EPA 1990).

Landfill gas occurs as waste

decomposes; it is typically comprised of 40% carbon dioxide and 60% methane. Methane has a global warming potential 21 times higher than CO₂. Interestingly, landfill gas provided roughly 30% of the UK's total renewable electricity in 2006. Clearly win-win opportunities exist to improve the management of landfill gas across the UK, simultaneously increasing yields of renewable energy and reducing harmful emissions.

Landfill gas is not the only potential asset that councils can reap from waste-filled holes in the ground. Landfill mining is attracting increasing attention as it provides a means by which councils can reclaim urban space whilst also reclaiming potentially valuable metals and other materials.

Environmental Protection UK's Autumn Workshop – 'Managing Closed Landfills: From Problem to Solution', which takes place in Nottingham on 5 November, will provide a first rate opportunity to learn about these topics in greater detail. More details at www.environmental-protection.org.uk.

National Events

23 September - London

Biomass and Air Quality – Managing the Impacts

This one day conference follows the recent release of our biomass and air quality guidance, and will further explore the air quality impacts of biomass heat and how they can be successfully managed. It will explore current biomass technologies and their emission performance, before examining the regulatory framework and techniques for air quality assessment.

Emerging renewable heat and air quality policy will also be covered, and the issue of embedding air quality management in the planning process for biomass deployment will be discussed. A programme is now available on our website.

7 October - Birmingham

Planning for Managing Noise

With major policy developments set to impact on noise management currently under consideration – in particular radical reform of the planning system and noise action planning, this one day update enables professionals in noise and in planning for healthy, sustainable local environments to get up to speed on this rapidly developing policy and its impacts on current and future practice. Programme includes

- Environmental Noise – Planning to prevent noise, an update on the emerging planning regime for major infrastructure projects. Preventing noise problems from renewables – wind turbines large and small.
- Transport Noise – Progress to date in managing transport noise.
- Neighbourhood Noise – Noise from licensed premises.

5 November – Nottingham

Managing Closed Landfills – from Problem to Solution

How can closed landfill sites be successfully managed to mitigate risk and provide profitable opportunities. Good management and clear understanding of the risks and rewards presented by our waste filled holes in the ground, will help local authorities lead the way towards sustainable land management and offer measurable returns.

12 November – Birmingham

Nitrogen Dioxide – Time for Compliance

This year's Environmental Protection UK Autumn Air Quality Update will explore practical local actions to tackle nitrogen dioxide, and how local and national actions can effectively work together. A particular focus will rest on cost effective action that delivers dual benefits for both air quality and climate change. In addition the event will contain topical updates on air quality issues. A programme is now available on our website.

For more details of all events and to register online go to: www.environmental-protection.org.uk/events



No Soil Directive but New Guidance

Despite the best efforts of the outgoing Czech Presidency and the European Commission, the Soil Framework Directive failed to secure political agreement from EU member states in time for the June meeting of the European Environment Council.

The Article on soil contamination was cited by the Czechs as one of the 'most intensively debated provisions of the Directive'. Several delegations expressed concern that the regime was costly and cumbersome whilst others were strongly opposed to the high level of flexibility and felt the text had been widely watered-down. Despite added flexibility and a more risk-based and proportionate approach, the requirements for the identification and inventory of contaminated sites prohibited political agreement.

Environmental Protection UK

remain concerned that the progress achieved towards a more proportionate and appropriate Directive under the Czechs, will be reversed over the next 12 months due to the negotiating positions of the incoming presidencies, most notably Spain in January 2010.

With the implementation of a European Directive on Soil Protection off the cards for the foreseeable future, Defra's attention has turned to the domestic contaminated land regime. New guidance on decision-making under Part 2A of the EPA 1990 is expected for publication this autumn. This will be non-statutory guidance, aimed primarily at contaminated land officers and senior managers to provide a steer on how to make contaminated land decisions, including information on prioritisation of sites for investigation and communicating Part 2A decisions.

East Midlands Visit Quarry

Twenty-six members and guests attended a very interesting AGM and site visit at the Tarmac, Tunstead quarry site near Buxton, Derbyshire in late June. Dr. George Waterhouse was confirmed as chairman, Mr Nigel Tranmer as Vice-chairman, Mr. Robert Deller as Trustee and Dr. Bill Pearce as secretary/treasurer. John Peck was also elected to the new post of assistant secretary/ treasurer.

Following the AGM Jo Barnes of the University of West of England gave an update on the new Updating and Screening Assessment (USA) for air quality for local authorities and what changes had been made. It was interesting to hear that only one-third of local authorities had submitted their reports at the time of the meeting. A delay in submissions was expected however, as local authorities and consultants needed time to get up to speed with the updates following the delay in the publication of the technical guidance, which included changes to the USA's structure, new sources to be considered and changes in some screening criteria.

Malcolm Brown and Rhonda Newsham of British Geological Survey gave an update on the Part IIA contaminated land regime and explained the services provided by BGS. The assessment of Significant Possibility of Significant Harm (SPOSH) was causing difficulty and they felt there was a skills gap in this field of work. In England and Wales 90% of contaminated sites had been dealt with under the planning regime. Of 781 sites identified as contaminated 35 had been declared as special sites to be dealt with by

the Environment Agency. The cost so far of remediation was about £30M and the Polluter Pays Principle was in the main working; to date no site had been declared contaminated with radioactivity. Rhonda went through a presentation of the ConSEPT software used to prioritise sites. It reduced 5,000 sites to a prioritised 500 sites.

Tarmac, the Division's hosts for the day, is part of the global Anglo American PLC group of companies, with the company operating in 60 countries. The final presentation of the day was from Peter Grosvenor and Frank Emerson of Tarmac who set the scene for the afternoon tour of the quarry and cement works. They outlined the four core issues of the company, which are Response, Reliable, Understanding and Straightforward, with health and safety and the environment being key drivers in the business.

Quarrying had occurred at the site since 1891, which has the National Park running through it. It was a tremendous achievement that only 0.5% waste was generated at the site as most waste products were recycled or reused. The quarry has a life of another 50 years at its current extraction rate.



Speakers at the AGM (l to r): Jo Barnes (UWE), Peter Grosvenor (Tarmac), Frank Emerson (Tarmac), Malcolm Brown (BGS), Rhonda Newsham (BGS)

Scotland – Assessment and Management of Contaminated Land

The Scottish Division recently ran a two-day introduction to contaminated land in conjunction with Alison McKay, McKay Environmental and Dr Mary Harris, MRH Consultants. Held at the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, the event had been designed for contaminated land officers who wanted to gain a better understanding of assessing land contamination.

Day 1 focused on Site Characterisation and highlighted the relevant policy and legislation, before discussing conceptual site models, site investigations and how to confirm pollutant linkages. The first group exercise of the day let delegates develop a conceptual site model; the second exercise gave a chance for the delegates to show off how much they had learned throughout the day by critically examining a Ground Investigation Report.

Day 2, entitled Land Contamination Risk Assessment and Management, started off with an introduction to human health risk assessment with a discussion on SGVs and SPOSH. Following a group exercise on reviewing risk assessments, there was discussion on determining contaminated land (how much data is enough?) and how to deal with risk management and communication.

A similar event is being considered for the future; if you are interested please contact Clare Carruthers (clare.carruthers@environmental-protection.org.uk, 0141 287 6530) for further information.

Planning is at an early stage for the Scottish Division's next event which is expected to take place in early autumn and to focus on air quality. Contact Clare Carruthers for more details.

Regional Diary

26 August (Yorkshire Division)

Meeting and site visit, The BOC Group, Stallingborough, Grimsby
Attendance merits CPD Certificate
Please let Neil Schofield (neil.schofield@corusgroup.com or 01709 825569) know by 11 August if planning to attend this meeting.

Please see website for further details
www.environmental-protection.org.uk/your-region/yorkshire

9 September (Northern Division)

AGM and site visit, Sellafeld Nuclear Facility, West Cumbria
More details, Emma Lutman (northern@environmental-protection.org.uk) or visit website www.environmental-protection.org.uk/your-region/northern

30 September (South West Division)

'Air Quality Management – the Eleventh Hour' is the title of the Division's Annual Conference with the Air Quality Management Resource Centre at the University of the West of England, which is being held at Bristol Zoo. The wide-ranging programme is expected to include presentations on

- Accountability in air quality management – from policy through to public health;
- Improving air quality now – options for integrated management of transport and its impacts;
- Biomass and air quality;
- Managing transport emissions – noise, air quality and carbon dioxide;
- Integrating air quality and strategic land planning;
- Managing air quality and climate change in the LTP process.

Last year's winner of the National Student Research Competition, Ben Williams (Portsmouth University) will be providing an update on his work on empirical dust dispersion monitoring and modeling.

More details and registration details at www.environmental-protection.org.uk/your-region/south-west or contact Jo Barnes, at the AQM Resource Centre, jo.barnes@uwe.ac.uk