

## **SOUTH EAST DIVISION AGM AND PRESENTATIONS**

**23<sup>RD</sup> JULY 2010**

### **OFFICES OF THE CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION**

Prior to the elections and appointments sections of the AGM, the meeting was brought to order by the Chairman, Philip Thompson, to hear two thought provoking presentations on environmental issues of particular significance to the South East.

The meeting welcomed Adam Ingleby of the Environment Agency who spoke on Planning, Environmental Protection and Air Quality Issues for the South East and Peter Fleming of TRL who spoke to the topic of Air Quality Monitoring and the available Methodologies. This note deals with the presentation and proceedings relating to Peter's talk; that provided by Adam Ingleby will be addressed in a separate report of the meeting.

Peter introduced the work of TRL and explained some of the challenges that may be expected to arise in the field of Air Quality Monitoring and Assessment as a consequence of budgetary constraints imposed by the present economic downturn. Key points noted by Peter included:

- The Transport Research Laboratory was privatised in 1996 as TRL Ltd., a wholly owned subsidiary of the Transport Research Foundation. It specialises in Transport related consultancy, research and testing services. With no shareholders, profits pass to TRF which reinvests them in TRL's pure research. TRL's Academy provides a framework for this research and is also able to offer higher degrees. TRL is based in new offices near Crowthorne in Berkshire.
- In recent years better management of urban air pollution has been helped by the establishment of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). TRL operates over 35 monitoring stations; most are used to provide data to Local Authorities to determine AQMAs and to supply data to consultants in support of their clients' planning applications.
- TRL has over 100 instruments for continuous monitoring and sampling of ambient air providing a complete service from site survey to ratified data report.
- There is now a large number of Air Quality monitoring stations in the UK and the main challenges over the next few years will be the operating costs and operator time they will require.
- It was suggested that the priorities for the future should be to provide the data for DEFRA reports, identification and prioritisation of AQMAs and in measuring the effectiveness of Action Plans. Meanwhile we should not forget the need to provide warnings to those most at risk from air pollution; possibly employing new techniques such as Air Alerts and I phone Apps.
- Under current budgetary cuts there will be pressure to close monitoring sites. In his presentation Peter suggested a methodology to prioritise the sites that need to be retained by cross-plotting AQ results from coupled sites to determine the degree of correlation. Sites which correlate poorly with others will need to be retained as a priority whilst, for those pairs that correlate well, it may be possible to retire one in preference to the other without significantly affecting the quality of the overall AQ data base.
- There is a need to continue the programme of further assessments of marginal AQMAs. It may be possible to use the correlation technique to optimise the number of sites required

and the monitoring period at each site. Monitoring sites operated concurrently instead of consecutively should also produce comparable data and maximise the amount of useful data at minimum cost. It may also cost less to monitor multiple sites for say only 3 months concurrently than moving a single set of equipment between sites.

- Compliance with TG09 calls for a minimum survey period of 3 months to be correlated against a reference site so that estimates of yearly ambient levels can be made with reasonable confidence.
- Where closure of redundant monitoring sites is unavoidable, this must be undertaken in a manner that will enable decommissioned equipment to be properly mothballed and sold if required. There have been many instances of equipment left in unheated enclosures through winter months where the components have become corroded and rendered beyond economic repair. It is therefore far better to sell the equipment, while still in good condition, to provide much needed income or use the funds raised in part payment for other services.

The Chairman thanked Peter for explaining and elaborating on the possible difficulties ahead for organisations charged with the duty to provide sound and reliable data on ambient air quality. These are very much core interests for many of Environmental Protection UK's members and the meeting was opened to the floor for questions and comments. There followed an informed debate about the pros and cons of monitoring, including queries about how sites suitable for the correlation techniques might be chosen and, thereafter, who would be the authority who would decide on the adequacy or otherwise of any claimed correlation in seeking to minimise the number of monitoring sites and the costs involved. Members also noted that there are now several key and important monitoring networks in the South East, including those operated by Local Authorities, by ERG at Kings College and by TRL. It was also noted that, for London, reliance is placed on each LBC discharging its responsibilities for Air Quality Management, including implications for Monitoring, but it was also observed that not all LBCs may have budgets that can be tailored to these needs.

Members expressed their thanks in the usual way and confirmed that Peter's presentation had been thought provoking and instructive with important messages to taken back to the front line.

For further information, please consult the Division's web page or contact Dr Peter Kayes at [southeast@environmental-protection.org-uk](mailto:southeast@environmental-protection.org-uk)