

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT
GROUP HELD AT FOLLATON HOUSE, TOTNES ON TUESDAY, 5 JUNE 2007**

MEMBERS

* Cllr R Rowe - Chairman

* Cllr T J Hewitt - Vice-Chairman

* Cllr R J Carter

* Cllr P Coulson

* Cllr M J Hicks

* Cllr D M O'Callaghan

* Cllr R Vint

* Cllr A Ward

* Denotes attendance

∅ Denotes apology for absence

Also in attendance:

Cllrs B Carson, P W Hitchins and R J Tucker

Officers in attendance:

All agenda items: Strategic Director (Operations), Head of Environmental Health
and Divisional Environmental Health Officer

EPDG.1/07 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Environment Policy Development Group held on 6 March 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

EPDG.2/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of the meeting but none was made.

EPDG.3/07 REVIEW OF AIR QUALITY STRATEGY

A report was considered which updated Members on the progress of implanting the Council's Air Quality Strategy which was formally adopted by the Executive at its meeting of 27 June 2002 (minute E.23/02 refers). The report also sought Members' agreement on proposed revisions to the Strategy.

The Rogers Review of Local Authority Regulatory Priorities, published as part of the March 2007 budget, identified Air Quality as one of only five national priorities for enforcement. The adoption and implementation of the Council's Air Quality has ensured that the Council's work in this area delivered efficiently. The revised strategy will maintain and further develop the protection of air quality in the South Hams.

Prior to discussion on the report, Members received a presentation on the Air Quality Strategy. The presentation outlined the background to the development of such a strategy highlighting issues such as traffic and industry. It had been a statutory duty for Local Authorities review and assess air quality since 1999. One of the main issues facing the South Hams was traffic pollutants, and in particular NO₂. Dean Prior had been identified as an Air Quality Management Area as its NO₂ levels from the A38 were significantly affecting residential property. Areas in Totnes and Ivybridge were also being closely monitored as traffic congestion was raising the NO₂ levels along residential streets.

In terms of pollution prevention and control, the Divisional Environmental Health Officer (DEHO) informed the Group that the Environmental Health Service 'permitted' industries with a risk based inspection regime. Industries / business who complied and performed better in line with pollutant control monitoring were the lower risk industries. The lower risk industries paid less in line with 'the polluter pays' principle. However, the importance of balancing environmental issues and economic issues was highlighted.

During discussion on the presentation and report, the following points were raised:-

- a) Clarification as to what stipulates an Air Quality Management Area. In response it was noted that it was the levels of NO₂ which residents were exposed to for an extended period of time. In terms of the issues facing Dean Prior, it was one property which was of concern but the only solution at present was to relocate the house or the expressway, neither of which was viable;
- b) Confirmation that Devon County Council, as the Highways Authority, monitored progress through the Devon Air Quality Management Group to ensure that there was consistency with its own strategies and processes;
- c) The enforcement powers of the Environmental Health Service which enabled them to take action against those who did not comply with the regulations;
- d) In reference to planning applications, it was confirmed that environmental health was a statutory consultee;
- e) The high CO₂ emissions in the South Hams compared to other local authorities was highlighted. However, it was noted that it was difficult to pin point why South Hams was higher in comparison to other authorities of a similarly rural nature;
- f) The importance of highlighting in the strategy the Council's cross cutting theme of Healthier Communities.

RECOMMENDED

That the Executive be **RECOMMENDED** that the Environment Policy Development Group have considered the proposed revisions to the Air Quality Strategy and recommend its approval subject to comments made by the Group as detailed above

(Meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 4.20 pm).

Chairman