

**MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY TASK & FINISH GROUP:
LONDON LUTON AIRPORT AIR QUALITY IMPACT**

TUESDAY 22ND OCTOBER 2019 AT 6.00 PM

PRESENT: COUNCILLORS; KEENS (CHAIR), FRANKS, MOLES, AND TAYLOR

SUPPORT OFFICERS / ADVISORS:

- Eunice Lewis – Democracy and Scrutiny Officer
- Andrew Loosley – Technical Officer - Environmental Protection / Air Quality
- Lisa Hudson - Public Health Development Officer
- Antony Aldridge - Strategic Development Manager LLAL

15.	APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE (REF: 1)	
	<p>Resolved: An apology for absence from the meeting was received on behalf of Councillor Wynn.</p>	
16.	MINUTES FROM 23RD SEPTEMBER 2019 (REF: 2)	
	<p>Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd September 2019 be agreed, taken as read and as a correct record and the Chair be authorised to sign them subject to the following amendment: That it be noted that Councillor Petts sent his apologies for absence for this meeting; and that Minute No: 12 paragraph 11, last sentence be amended as follows; delete – someone over thirty five or who had never smoked was more likely to <u>Replace with</u> "someone under thirty five or who had never smoked was less likely to develop COPD"</p>	
17.	AVIATION RELATED EMISSIONS DATA CONTAINED IN THE AIR QUALITY POLLUTANTS INVENTORY FOR ENGLAND – (REF: 6)	
	<p>The Technical Officer (Environmental Protection and Air Quality), submitted the report (Ref: 6) on aviation related emissions data contained in the air quality pollutants inventory for England.</p> <p>He advised that at the previous meeting of the Task and Finish Group, Members asked requested clarity in relation to the source of pollutants. He stated that this was a progress update was requested by Members of the Committee at its last meeting. Members asked for clarity about the source of pollutants.</p> <p>The limitation of information meant that the data available was national data only and inclusive of local data. In a bid to better inform policy-makers in pursuit of the objectives set in the Clean Air Strategy, Defra commissioned National Air Pollutant Inventory Reports. The recording of these emission</p>	

inventories were an accounting of the amount of pollutants discharged into the atmosphere within a specific geographical area over a set period of time.

The Technical Officer stated that the most recent report was published on 4 October 2019 covering pollutant releases between 1990 and 2017. In addition to being published as a report, the inventory data was also made available in the form of an Excel pivot table to enable users to interrogate the information further and filter pollutant contributions by source.

Although the inventory recorded aviation related pollutant contributions under eight different source descriptions, unfortunately it was not possible to look at this data at a sub-national level. Members were referred to the information on stacked plots of pollutant emissions for England between 1990 and 2017 from aviation-related source types for NO_x, PM₁₀, PM_{2.5} and VOCs.

The Technical Officer highlighted the eight aviation sources included in the inventory as follows:

- Aircraft – military
- Aircraft – support vehicles;
- Aircraft – domestic take-off and landing;
- Aircraft between UK and other Overseas Territories (excluding Gibraltar and Bermuda) – take-off and landing;
- Aircraft between UK and Gibraltar – take-off and landing;
- Aircraft between UK and Crown Dependencies – take-off and landing;
- Aircraft between UK and Bermuda – take-off and landing; and
- Aircraft – international take-off and landing.

A Member commented that it had been established that majority of air pollution came from vehicles as previously stated, and enquired if this information had been included in the Defra report. Responding to a question, the Technical Officer stated that these would be vehicles within the airport and not passenger related vehicles.

A Member of the Committee also enquired how much air pollution was produced by the Airport itself and how much of the air pollution came from other sources. Another Member of the Committee commented that the Defra document gave a national picture, but if there were to be information specific to the London Luton Airport, what would this look like and what would be the key difference in terms of the national picture. In response, the Technical Officer stated that there would be some variation from airport to airport. However, he stated that the estimated source apportionment included in the previously mentioned Sustainable Aviation publication UK Aviation and Air Quality Report would likely give a reasonable approximation of where the pollution at LLA was likely to come from. He explained that the Sustainable Aviation Dataset was based on site specific inventories for Gatwick and Heathrow, the Officer explained that producing a similar inventory for Luton would be highly specialist, time-consuming and costly task.

Looking at the particulate matter emissions attributed to support vehicles, it was noted that significant improvements appear to have been made. The observed reduction in emissions was likely to be due to the introduction of more stringent vehicle emissions standards.

In terms of higher readings of particulate matter, a Member asked if these were impacted by weather conditions. Members were informed that these were annual emission figures, so to a certain extent metrological factors would be “averaged out”. Accepting that the weather would likely exert some influence, the Officer suggested that the dominant factor was likely to be the introduction of more efficient aircraft engines.

Another member of the public, and a local resident stated that CO₂ emissions increased as a result of the Airport moving from standards 18 million passengers to aspirational 32 million passengers. She stated that the expansion of the Airport was likely to increase its CO₂. She said, she could hardly understand why and how Her Majesty’s Government could allow this degree of air pollution.

In response to some of the issues expressed by members of the public and Members of the Committee, the Technical Officer stated that the airport expansion was not within the scope of this review. He went on to explain that the Group was looking at the air quality impact of the airport in accordance with the Council’s duties under the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) regime. Under LAQM, local authorities are required to monitor and take action to limit exposure to certain named pollutants that are known to have a direct health impact on exposed individuals. As CO₂ does not directly affect health at atmospheric levels, it is not included in the LAQM regime and as such falls outside of the remit of the Group’s work. Accepting that climate change is of at least equal importance to other air quality concerns, the Officer stated that CO₂ emissions were being addressed by the Council’s ongoing work on carbon reduction.

The LLAL Strategic Development Manager referred to the Preliminary Environmental Information Report, and stated that it included a chapter on climate change and another chapter on greenhouse gas emissions which he said, as part of the expansion proposals, were not within the remit of this review group.

A Member stated that whilst expansion was not a key focus it should not be excluded from the work of the review. The figures produced were national figures and the figures received were no different from any other airports in the UK.

A member of the public present stated that he did not understand why the airport had not been declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), as diffusion tubes monitoring results indicate that annual mean NO₂ concentrations exceed the air quality objective level of 40µg/m³. In response, the Technical Officer explained that the area in the immediate vicinity of the airport had not been declared an AQMA due to a lack of relevant receptors as defined in the Defra technical guidance document TG16 (i.e. there are no residential properties).

A Member of the Committee stated that this came as a shock the other day, to discover that places of work were not considered relevant receptors. He stated that this area could be an area of recommendation to request the Council to take action to closely monitor and address air pollution around the Airport vicinity of the Airport even though it was not a residential area. The majority of people spent reasonable number of hours working at the Airport. He said a recommendation to address this particular issue should be made at the conclusion of the review to address this matter. The Technical Officer clarified that although the mean annual objective would not apply to the workplaces around the airport, there is an hourly objective that has a wider catchment (i.e. 200µg/m³ NO₂ not to be exceeded more than 18 times a year). The Officer went on to explain that monitoring data indicates that this second objective has not been exceeded, as annual levels have not exceeded 60µg/m³ (Defra guidance states that this would be necessary for the hourly objective to be exceeded).

A member of the public present stated that he had carried out his own NO₂ diffusion tube monitoring in the Wigmore area, and had identified 1 or 2 locations where monthly levels approach or exceed the annual mean objective level of 40µg/m³. In response, the Technical Officer stated that caution was necessary when interpreting monitoring data from short-term diffusion tube studies, as in addition to bias correction any location with less than 9 months' worth of data will also need to be annualised.

A Member of the Committee stated that it would be worthwhile to see evidence of the impact of air pollution on local residents and the 14 schools currently on the flight path. In response to sickness related to respiratory diseases, the Council had been asking the Airport Operators but it appeared to be an impossible task just to respond to queries and questions as those working at the Airport were employed by various company and not just one employer and as such it had been challenging to get this form of data.

A member of the public stated that there was evidence about the air quality management sites and this would be forwarded to Members of the Committee. She stated that 4 of the sites already breached the required minimum, including LA14, 15, 16, etc. She stated that they had also looked at the wards in the town with verified evidence that some of the wards had fallen below standards and had been neglected. The Public Health Officer stated that in relation to air pollution, there were so many factors that could lead to respiratory diseases and air pollution was just one of such.

Another member of the public, stated that living near a busy road was of most danger to local people. In the morning rush hour the Defra monitors show very high NO₂ levels, with the expansion of the airport, the AQ management area in the town should be widened.

The Portfolio holder for Customer and Commercial (Housing & Environment) explained that the area of climate change emergency was already being looked into by the Council with a Climate Change body already established

	<p>as an Advisory body to the Council's Executive. He stated that two consultation dates had been set up to take place to progress the work of this Advisory Body.</p> <p>In relation to the Air Quality Management Areas, the Overview and Scrutiny Board receives annual report with comparative figures over years and including figures from the works and reconstruction work at Stuart Road. It was yet to be confirmed that the works which took place had made any difference in terms of managing the traffic and causing less pollution over time.</p> <p>Resolved: (i) That the Report (Ref: 6) on aviation related emissions data contained in the Air Quality Pollutant Inventory for England be noted.</p> <p>(ii) That the contributions of Aircraft, support vehicles relative to total non-military emissions be also noted; and the possible identical figures for PM10 and PM2.5 could be another reason for the limitation of the data reported.</p>	
18.	<p>LTN DIFFUSION TUBE DATA REPROCESSED WITH BIAS CORRECTION FACTORS SPECIFIED IN THE VERSION 0619 – (REF: 7)</p>	
	<p>The Technical Officer (Environmental Protection and Air Quality), submitted the report (Ref: 7) in relation to historical discrepancies between the airport nitrogen dioxide (NO2) diffusion tube datasets published in both the Airport's Annual Report and the Council's Annual Status Report.</p> <p>A Member of the Committee commented that due to the congested traffic in the Wigmore and Stopsley area in the mornings and evenings, the Council should consider installing monitoring tubes especially the fact that there were lots of schools in the area. In response, Members were informed that monitoring tubes had already been installed around Ashcroft and Wigmore Lane, including a location towards south of Ashcroft junction on Crawley Green Road.</p> <p>The Strategic Development Manager LLAL, stated that the locations of all the new LLAL monitoring tubes would be forwarded to Members of the Committee.</p> <p>A member of the public questioned the location of the new LLAL air quality "supersite" and expressed concern that it was located a considerable distance away from local residential premises. Responding to this point, the Technical Officer referred to the explanation given on the LLAL website, i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The location was selected because of its proximity to nearby sensitive receptors (residential property) and as it is between these and the airport. The monitoring site is deliberately located closer to the airport than the nearest residential properties which are located to the north of Eaton Green Road. This will mean that stronger concentrations of pollutants are measured than would be experienced at the nearest residential properties. • The site is located north-east of the airport, downwind of the airport under the predominant wind direction, south-westerly. A south-westerly wind is characteristic of Luton and the south of the UK generally. • The proposed location means the monitor would not be significantly affected by the presence of trees or buildings. 	

- The site is owned by Luton Council and would be undisturbed by construction, either of our proposed commercial development or our proposals for airport expansion. As such, it is able to provide a long-term monitoring record. As many air quality objectives are based on annual averages, a long-term (multiple years) record is very valuable for distinguishing trends in air quality.
- Automatic air quality monitors require mains power to operate and are required to be easily accessible for maintenance; the chosen site fulfils both these criteria without significant additional works.

Given the focus on understanding the effects of the airport on air quality for our nearest neighbours, our new 'supersite' is positioned in the most appropriate location. We have elected to sample a wide range of pollutants at this location as it represents the best opportunity to capture such data before it reaches residential areas.

A member of the public also stated that a private reading test which took place revealed that there were no safe levels of air pollution in Luton. It was stated that the biggest air pollutants came from vehicles with impact on the reading from the supersite monitors giving poor reading. He stated that the Crawly Green reading and the reading at the entrance of ASDA was over the required limit. He said this could be attributed to high traffic in those areas. Responding, the Strategic Development Manager LLAL, stated that the diffusion tubes were located all over the highway network.

An Officer explained that the seasonal impact of the weather conditions was worth noting as this tend to have impact on the result of the readings of the monitoring tubes. As a result when analysing this data, an annual data analysis would give a more accurate analysis in order to identify whether the Council was in breach of or not in terms of the requirement.

A Member of the Committee asked whether the MET Office regularly liaise with officers in terms of when air pollution was dominant in the air. The Technical Officer explained that last year an air alert system was introduced. The alert notifies you when air pollution was expected to be raised and provides health recommendations. The alert system enabled people to sign up to be able to receive update of the air quality and tells you whether the air was good or not so good. Being better informed meant that people could take steps to reduce exposure and manage their health condition better reducing negative impacts of air pollution on their health.

It was stated that, Members of the Committee had heard from Public Health about the required work standard as part of Government requirements. It was further stated that there was no safe level of PM2.5 and NO2 was still found to be harmful to health at agreed standards and below.

A member of the public stated that although there were six sites of diffusion tubes within the Airport Complex, the biggest worry about pollution was from vehicles and congested traffic as the biggest contributors on the Airport sites.

	Resolved: That the Report (Ref: 7) on the revised dataset highlighted in the report be noted.	
19.	AIR QUALITY DEFRA DOCUMENT – INFORMATION ITEM (REF: 8)	
	<p>Members of the Committee received the DEFRA Document produced in March 2017, a briefing for Directors of Public Health.</p> <p>In relation to a question about the lack of up to date data, Members were informed that Public Health England and DEFRA had produced a report on air pollution, its source as well as its health impacts on human health.</p> <p>The Chair stated that the document covered a whole range of issues and possible actions on how to mitigate air pollution and including what actions elected members could take as well as what questions they could ask.</p> <p>A Member commented that air pollution seem to have been reduced in the congestion free zones in London, although there was no current evidence to establish this. A Member of the Committee also commented that in relation to clean air zones, there was concern in London that the benefits of measures to reduce dirty vehicles by low emission zones was being undone by the number of log burners and open fires going into homes in the capital. It was suggested the smoke free zone in Luton could be revisited.</p> <p>In terms of what could be done to reduce air pollution, a member of the public commented that there were several actions that local residents could take in order to respond to air pollution, such as planting more trees in the community. The challenge about progressing this would be the lack of funding. Community group may only be eligible for funding where the Council had community infrastructure in place. She stated that a group formed by local residents were currently looking at the possibility of a community social enterprise and need to plant more trees. A Member of the Committee advised that Woodland Trust may be able to support the group, it was stated however that the issues around funding were outside the remits of this Committee.</p> <p>The Technical Officer explained that it would be difficult to justify tree planting on the basis of air quality, as there was evidence that tree planting was not an effective way of managing air pollution. He stated that trees change the way air pollution was distributed as against absorbing it. To try and justify tree planting on the basis of mitigating air pollution may not be the right direction of travel.</p> <p>The Public Health Officer explained that Public Health England had recently in March 2019 carried out an evidence review of interventions to improve outdoor air quality and public health. At the conclusion of the review, Public Health recommended a range of options and interventions in order to prevent, mitigate and avoid air pollution. She explained that while trees and green infrastructure have some positives for air pollution and carbon sequestration, they can if planted wrongly cause a canopy effect. This can trap air pollution and pollen. There was good evidence that shrubs and bushes could create a barrier between residents and where they lived, therefore reducing the impact of air pollution on human health. She further stated that the Review Document covers</p>	

	<p>the evidence in depth and would be very useful for the purpose of the work of the TFG.</p> <p>A member of the public stated that in 2010 to 2012 the Council commissioned a Report on air pollution and the result was that Luton had 12% more air pollution compared to the national average in terms of use of vehicles. He explained that proposals as stated in the report was that planting trees was one of the ways to mitigate air pollution. The Public Health Officer added that careful consideration and discussions needed to take place in relation to how trees and other green infrastructure were used and in line with the range of options covered in the Review Document referenced.</p> <p>The Chair of the Committee advised that the Defra document detailed the role of decision makers in terms of local priorities in local authorities. He stated that it was a good reference point for recommendations at the conclusion of the task and finish group.</p> <p>Resolved: That the DEFRA Document on Air Pollution (Ref: 8) received by Members of the Committee be noted; and that Officers comments also be noted.</p>	
20.	FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME/SCOPE AND PROJECT PLAN (REF: 9)	
	<p>Members of the Committee received the work programme which also detailed the project plan and scope. A Member commented on the scope of the review which excluded certain activities of the Airport. He stated that the Committee had at a previous meeting resolved that it was not necessary to exclude these areas due to potential relevance as evidence to the review. He requested that the project scope be updated to reflect this.</p> <p>A brief conversation took place in relation to the drop off zone at the Airport and the plans to roof the drop off area. They felt an enclosed drop off zone with fumes from vehicles may impact on people's health, especially people who suffer from asthma, and other respiratory diseases.</p> <p>Also, the plans for the Vauxhall Way improvements were discussed briefly in terms of air pollution and air management around the Airport. Members requested Officers to attend submit a report highlighting the proposed plans and likely benefits of the works.</p> <p>Members requested the following items for submission to the next meeting of the Committee.</p> <p>Resolved: (i) That the work programme report (Ref: 9) and comments made by Members of the Committee be noted;</p> <p>(ii) That the items listed i-iii below be considered for submission to the next meeting of the TFG on 3rd December 2019 in consultation with the Chair.</p> <p>i. That the London Luton Airport Operators be requested to attend the next meeting to answer questions about the Airport Flight Path and the Drop off zone at the Airport.</p>	

	ii. Vauxhall Way Improvements Report; iii. Need to hear from schools around the flight path of the airport	
	(NOTE: The meeting ended at 19.50)	