



# Mitigation for Air Quality in the Planning System: case study and lessons learnt

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# Introduction

- Little guidance in terms of what is expected with respect to mitigation (and impacts of mitigation)
- Inconsistency between local authorities
- Often causes long delays in planning process (with a need to appraise options quickly)
- I will present a case study, then some general points to conclude



# Case study...



- Supermarket/ DIY/ Garden store, business units/ residential in medium sized town (outskirts)
- Minor Adverse impacts in an area close to, or exceeding NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean objective. Exceeding **ONLY USING NO EMISSION REDUCTION APPROACH**
- Additional vehicles on some parts of a main route into town
- Existing properties relatively close to the road

# Process

- Lengthy discussions between developers and EH re: what mitigation could be implemented
- Already implementing lots of traffic related measures, which would be beneficial to AQ e.g.
  - network of streets and convenient pedestrian links to the existing highway network
  - Toucan crossing facilities
  - An overarching 'Framework Travel Plan' & specific supermarket Travel Plan
  - Real time displays at bus stops
  - Cycle infrastructure
  - Junction improvements



# The problem..

- What else could be implemented?
- No Air Quality Action Plan to guide
- Whose responsibility to come up with ideas?
- Council wanted quantification



# The Solution!

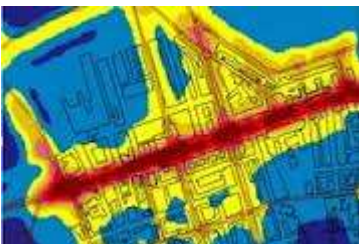
- Hospital further up the road. Capacity for increasing sustainable travel given the money to do it! S106 money to pay for travel planning at the hospital
  - 67% of staff travelling in a single occupancy vehicle in 2011. The 2013 target was 59%, which equates to a reduction of approximately 192 car trips to the hospital (i.e. 400 ish movements on the road in question)
  - The Travel Plan indicates that of the existing car users, 30% of staff were interested in transferring to car sharing, and 19% in switching to Public Transport or Park and Ride, 19% to cycling and 16% to walking.

## Travel Plan



# Assessment of impacts

- Assumptions of increased use of sustainable travel incorporated into a remodel
- The results show a marginal improvement (up to  $0.2 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ) at receptors in question
- This improvement changes the impact descriptor from 'moderate adverse' to 'slight adverse' at the worst-case receptor, using either emissions assumption (although other receptors below objectives still moderate adverse).



# General Observations

- Discuss at the outset what potential mitigation might be expected
- Think more widely than just the development
- Traffic measures versus air quality measures?
- Keep up dialogue with traffic consultants/ officers (they are often best placed to suggest mitigation)



# Other Mitigation Issues

- County/ District issues – sometimes County Councils can be negotiating cash for air quality separately with traffic consultants.
- Mechanical ventilation/ filtration – properly assess where the inlets are taking air from
- Some local authorities asking for mitigation without assessment

# Local Approaches

- West Midlands Low Emissions Towns and Cities Programme Good Practice Planning Guidance
- London Air Quality Neutral approach
- Air Quality and Emission Mitigation Guidance for Sussex

# Conclusions

- Best case scenario is where a detailed (and properly evaluated/ up to date) action plan is in place and the developer can contribute to a meaningful measure

OR

- System in place to add to general air quality fund
- Council should make it clear what they expect at the outset (possibly through an SPD)



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