

TRANSPORT WORKING PARTY 6TH OCTOBER 2011

BRIEFING NOTE

1. Subject

Hele Road Air Quality Management Area

2. Introduction

In response to a request for an update on progress by the former Transport Working Party, this report presents an update on progress of transport actions contained within the existing Action Plan along with the latest air quality and traffic flow data.

The air quality across Torbay is assessed on a regular basis in line with the Review and Assessment process to meet the air quality objectives set out in Air Quality (England) Regulations 2000, and the Air Quality (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2002.

From a detailed assessment an air quality management area (AQMA) has been declared along part of Hele Road. The AQMA has been declared due to the measured levels of nitrogen dioxide being over the objective of 40 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. Table 1 below indicates the annual mean concentration of NO₂ recorded by the continuous analyser located close to the Baptist Church. Monitoring has also been carried out using a number of passive diffusion tubes in and around the AQMA. In 2010 one of the diffusion tubes recorded a level above the objective of 40 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.

Table 1, results from the continuous analyser

Location	Annual mean NO ₂ concentrations ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)				
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Hele Road	35.7	46.3	41.0	31.94	40.11

The level of air pollution within the Hele AQMA is just above the objective. Therefore there is a requirement to improve the air quality and reduce the pollution to below the objective of 40 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ for nitrogen dioxide.

2. Implementing the Action Plan

The Air Quality Action Plan focussed solely on reducing traffic, being one of the significant sources of emissions in the area, and following local consultation with residents and businesses between 2005 and 2007, the following traffic measures were introduced:

- On-street parking at lower Hele Road was swapped over to the down hill side of the road
- A new bus stop was provided next to the new parking spaces at lower Hele Road
- Road signing was changed to discourage through traffic, especially lorries and coaches, using Hele Road
- Improvements were made to some alternative routes, particularly Happaway Road.
- Travel Plans to discourage driving to school and promote walking and cycling were developed in all Torbay schools.

The Hele Air Quality Action Plan is attached as Appendix 1 and details the progress made against the current actions.

3. Progress

The actions that have already been carried have shown some improvement of the air quality within Hele Road AQMA. The average levels of traffic have also shown a reduction of approximately 6%. Details of the latest traffic follows and No2 levels are shown in Appendix 2. However there is still a requirement to improve the air quality further to ensure that the objective is met and sustained.

Options

The Council needs to reduce levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) by a small amount, about 5 µg/m³, when averaged out over a year to achieve the air quality objectives. Given the current financial climate, any new interventions need to provide good value for money and be monitored to assess their impact.

Option 1 – Further Minor Transport and Environment Alterations as follows:

- Further signage alterations in order to direct traffic away from Hele Road. This will mean positively signing other routes such as Cricketfield Road and Happaway Road.
- Periodic emissions testing in Hele Road, as part of a scheme to raise public awareness, discourage polluting vehicles from using Hele Road, and to oblige drivers to fix polluting vehicles.
- Clearance of low level vegetation to the east of Hele Road to improve air flow.
- Work with Schools to further implement travel plans.
- Work with local businesses to ensure large vehicles are using the correct routes.

Option 2 – Major Highway Alterations

If the minor alterations do not achieve the small improvement required then restrictions on use such as a one way system of weight limit would be required. This would have serious implications as other neighbouring roads would see significant increases in traffic

4. Recommendations

That the alterations listed in Option 1 are progressed and further monitoring taking place

In the long term, if the effect of these recommended measures is not sufficient, further actions may need to be implemented from the Hele Air Quality Action Plan (Appendix 1) including those listed in Option 2.

- 5. Author
- 6. Responsible Chief Officer
- 7. Date

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Appendix 1: Progress Report of the Air Quality Action Plan
Appendix 2: Average Monthly levels NO₂ and Traffic Flows