

Low Emission Forum – Meeting Report

One Queen Anne's Gate, London, SW1H 9BT
25 February 2010



OVERVIEW

The LES Partnership (www.lowemissionstrategies.org) was established in 2007 to disseminate good practice in reducing transport emissions of toxic air pollutants and greenhouse gases. The Partnership specifically seeks to accelerate the deployment and penetration of low emission transport fuels and technologies. This is achieved by supporting local authorities to adopt and implement low emission policies, strategies and measures.

Under Phase II of the LES Programme, two existing stakeholder groups have been integrated to create a single 'Low Emission Forum' (LEF). The aim of the newly combined, Low Emission Forum, is to 'provide regular opportunities for the Low Emissions Community in its widest sense to review and discuss progress on the development and delivery of low emission strategies, measures and other initiatives.'

The first meeting of the Forum brought together technical experts and policy practitioners to discuss a range of topics relating to Low Emission Strategies. The session involved presentations and questions for a range of speakers.

The session began with presentations from Rob Pilling and Andrew Whittles to describe the previous and ongoing work of the LES Partnership. The key focus of which is to work closely with Local Authorities to: (i) get buy-in for low emission approaches; (ii) get the right policies in place; and (iii) get low emission technologies implemented on the ground.

The two keynote speakers focussed on low emission vehicle technology. Robin Haycock from the Office of Low Emission Vehicles discussed the national framework for incentivising electric vehicles. Greg Archer from the Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership then gave a presentation on the potential role for biofuels as a low emission solution.

We then had a series of short presentations from local authority officers, to discuss their experiences in putting LES principles into practice. Karin Grey described the approach they have taken in Tunbridge Wells to develop policy, highlighting the barriers and challenges that they have faced. Roger Pitman provided an outline of the process that Oxford has gone through to establish a Low Emission Zone for buses within the city. Dave Cherry from Leeds outlined the measures that they were taking to implement low emission technologies to get vehicles and infrastructure in place.

The event was well attended with over 50 delegates, representing local government, central government, industry and non-governmental bodies.

SPEAKER SUMMARIES

Title	Speaker
LESP Phase I Achievements	Rob Pilling (Blue Condor / LES Programme Manager)
LESP Phase II Update	Andrew Whittles (Cenex / LES Board Member)
Office for Low Emission Vehicles: Plugged in Places – an enabler of change	Robin Haycock (Office for Low Emission Vehicles)
The Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership: Opportunities for Biofuels in the UK	Greg Archer (Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership)
Local News: 3 updates on local low emission project work	Dave Cherry (Leeds) Roger Pitman (Oxford) Karin Grey (Tunbridge Wells)
LEF work programme	Steve Simmons (Sheffield / Chair, Low Emission Forum) Katherine Wilson (Blue Condor / LES Programme Manager)

Full presentations are available on the LES website (www.lowemissionstrategies.org). Summaries are provided below.

LESP Phase I Achievements (Rob Pilling, LES Programme Manager)

Rob introduced the LES Partnership and the principles of the low emission strategies approach. The Partnership was formed as a result of momentum generated during the Air Quality Beacons year of 2007, when Greenwich Council received recognition for its approach to securing low emissions transport outcomes and funding through the planning system. The basic principle is that transport related emissions from new developments should be minimised. Travel planning and 'softer' measures seek to achieve this by reducing trips, i.e. by reducing the number of journeys made or through modal shift. Low Emission Strategies then seek to reduce the residual emissions that are generated by improvements in technology. Technology improvements can be made at the new development site itself (e.g. minimum emission standards, graduated residential parking charges, provision of electric vehicle charging points), or alternatively developers could pay financial contributions to offset the emissions elsewhere in the local area (e.g. contributions to enhance provision of local public transport, supporting low emission technologies).

Rob outlined the progress that the LES Partnership has made under Phase I of the programme. Phase I ran between mid-2008 and to Dec 2009. It was funded by grants from Defra and CLG, and supported by significant in-kind and match funding from participating organisations. The headline achievements are:

- Publication of National Guidance on Low Emission Strategies: A consultation draft, published in 2008 has now been adopted by Defra and now sits within Defra's LAQM suite of guidance. (<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/quality/air/airquality/local/guidance/index.htm>)
- Progress on the ground in advancing Low Emission Strategies through 18 projects with 15 'Peer Group' local authorities: The key aim of developing the Peer Group was to work in partnership with local authorities to share knowledge and experiences. Projects were established at each point of the LES cycle, from achieving buy-in, through to getting technology on the ground.

- Strengthened engagement with and support for the Partnership itself and its aims and objectives. At the outset of the projects, the largest perceived barrier was achieving buy-in. This is where we have seen significant progress, as summarised by the external evaluator in a draft report.
- Expansion and extension of the Work Programme: One of the key outcomes of Phase I was to secure funding for Phase II. The level of funding for Phase II (November 2009 to March 2011) has doubled to £400k (again, through a combination of grants from Defra, CLG and in-kind / match funding from partners). This funding has allowed the Partnership to strengthen the arrangements for the board and Programme Management. It will also fund three main strands of work: (i) Projects – including a Low Emission Toolkit, Procurement Guidance and a Case Studies Project; (ii) the Regional Groups Initiative – working with three regional groups to advance low emissions strategies in their areas; and (iii) Events and Communications.

LESP Phase II Update (Andrew Whittles, Cenex / LES Technical and Strategic Advisor)

Andrew ran through three key parts of the Phase II Programme.

1. The Regional Group Initiative: The LES Partnership is working with three regional groups during 2010. Andrew highlighted the key outcomes that each group was aiming to achieve.
 - The Leeds City Region – a joint initiative between Leeds and York Councils
 - Sussex – led by Sussex-Air and Lewes District Council
 - Liverpool City Region – led by Sefton Council
2. The Low Emission Toolkit: This project will provide an evidenced based approach to low emission strategies, seeking to provide a robust assessment of the costs and benefits of various LES measures. There will be three parts to the toolkit: (i) technology guidance, to summarise low emission vehicle technologies; (ii) fleet management tool, to enable fleet managers/procurement officers to assess the costs and benefits of replacement with low emission technologies; (iii) development tool, to enable planners / developers to assess the costs and benefits of various planning-based LES measures to be applied at new development sites.
3. Procurement Guidance: This project will seek to develop a consultation guidance document relating to low emissions procurement. There will be a focus on the engagement process, in getting key stakeholders on board.

Plugged in Places – an enabler of change (Robin Haycock, Office for Low Emission Vehicles)

Robin began by presenting an overview of the UK's approach to reducing CO₂ from transport and the changes in technology necessary to achieve this. He particularly identified the role for electric vehicles which aligns with UK objectives for renewables and low carbon electricity. As part of the national strategy, the Office for Low Emission Vehicles has been tasked with placing the UK at the forefront of global low carbon vehicle development and for establishing an early market for low emission vehicles across the country.

Regarding electric vehicles there are two key elements – demand for the vehicles, and supply of the infrastructure. OLEV has announced a consumer incentive package, the 'Plug-in Car Grant', which will run from January 2011. Total funding is £230m to which motorists can apply to receive up to 25% of electric vehicle RRP. The infrastructure framework is being promoted through 'Plugged in Places'. Regions, cities and rural communities can apply to this fund (up to £30m available) to establish electric vehicle infrastructure. The first wave of Plugged in Places has been decided, with successful bids from London, Milton Keynes and the North East. The next stage will need to consider the strategic fit with a view to developing a country-wide network for electric vehicles.

Robin then discussed various research and development projects supported by OLEV, notably, a £19m competition for innovative research and development into Ultra Low Carbon Vehicles, which will be announced shortly.

In response to a number of questions from the delegates, Robin gave the following answers:

- Car clubs are certainly part of the solution. They offer particularly useful opportunities for members to 'test out' new technologies without making significant investments. They can then share their experiences.
- The first round of Plugged in Places bids allocated £8m from the £30m available. As such, there is still plenty of funding available for future bids.
- Some analyses have shown that electric vehicles are already beneficial in carbon terms from well to wheel, even with the existing grid mix. This is due to the efficiency of transformation. As the grid is decarbonised in the future, this will increase.

Opportunities for Biofuels in the UK (Greg Archer, Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership)

Greg began with a background on the work of the Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership in accelerating a sustainable shift to low carbon vehicles and fuels in the UK and in doing so, stimulating opportunities for UK businesses. Greg highlighted the fact that low carbon vehicles are only part of the solution and fit within a broader family of low emission transport options.

The remainder of Greg's presentation focussed on biofuels, as one of a wide range of options for low carbon vehicles. He discussed the conclusions from a study by the Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership to investigate the opportunities for high blend liquid and gaseous biofuel penetration in the UK and to recommend appropriate measures to stimulate uptake. The study considered 72 combinations of fuel and vehicle types. Greg highlighted the following conclusions:

- They found that greenhouse gas savings could range from 2-6Mt CO₂, resulting from limited penetration of biofuels into a range of different fleets.
- Low blends were found to be generally more cost effective than other options and that introducing biofuels into HGV and bus fleets was generally the lowest cost option.
- Additional costs are incurred due to capital costs, service and fuel costs.
- The cost-effectiveness of biomethane varies widely when used in different types of HGVs. However, it is emerging as a commercial option when compared with standard fuel.

Greg highlighted the range of approaches that local authorities can use to promote biofuels, including use of biomethane for refuse trucks, deployment of higher blend biofuels within local authorities' own fleets, use of bioethanol, biodiesel or biomethane.

Local News: Dave Cherry (Leeds)

Dave provided a summary of the low emission vehicles projects that Leeds City Council is involved with. These include:

- Biomethane Trial: To assess the performance of dedicated CNG/Biomethane technology as applied to refuse collection vehicles. Unfortunately the trial of the dedicated gas engine has been disrupted by an 11 week refuse collection strike and a poor winter! However, the vehicle is performing well, with an annual CO₂ saving of around 32 tonnes or 60% on well to wheel, and 7.6 tonnes or 16% on tailpipe emissions. They are also testing a dual fuel engine, and performance is still being assessed.
- Gas refuelling infrastructure: At the moment, the gas used by Leeds is supplied by Gasrec (a Surrey landfill). Leeds is looking into developing a regional source of biomethane. Dave made the point that the presence of a permanent refuelling stations is akin to the chicken and the egg, and making

the step from a handful of vehicles to a critical mass is difficult without suitable refuelling infrastructure.

- Low carbon vehicle procurement programme: Leeds has been provided with funding under this programme to trial a number of diesel electric hybrids and electric plug ins within the Council fleet. They will monitor the performance and compare it with the diesel alternative.
- Regional Group Initiative: The Leeds City Region makes up one of the regional groups under the LES Partnership's Regional Groups Initiative. As part of this work the Leeds based activities will include development of a 'plugged in places' bid, promotion of biomethane, working with ITS on remote sensing, developing a regional template for a Supplementary Planning Document for Low Emission Strategies and a dissemination workshop.
- Other: Leeds is also working on a Low Carbon Vehicle Demonstration Handbook, fleet initiatives within the Council, assessment of transport interventions including low emission zones, and new generation transport such as trolley buses, regenerative braking and a commitment to use Green Electricity.

Local News: Roger Pitman (Oxford)

Roger noted that Oxford was one of the authorities involved with Phase I of the LES Programme. They are scoping out an overarching low emission strategy for Oxford, and are currently in discussions with the Council's policy and development control planners. Roger's presentation was on the development of the Oxford Low Emission Zone, which will mean that buses entering the city centre will need to be at least Euro V from 2014. Buses are the target because they create up to 80% of pollution in the city centre.

The policy driver was the local air quality management process, which requires measures to reduce nitrogen oxides and particulate matter. Roger identified a number of key success factors, including: (i) having the debate in public and being able to understand the barriers; and (ii) linking with, and understanding the drivers for the Local Transport Strategy, which encourages an increase in bus use in order to reduce congestion.

Following the declaration of the low emission zone, the County Council, with the City's support has negotiated a 'bus qualifying agreement' with the bus companies which includes: a high frequency service on four key transport corridors; more seats using fewer high quality double-decker vehicles, better information and faster boarding for passengers. This has resulted in a 25% reduction in bus numbers of the high street and made a significant contribution to delivering a sustainable network with reduced emissions.

Roger concluded by highlighting the Oxford's Low Emission plans. These include continuation with local air quality management processes, an ambitious Carbon Management Strategy to reduce in-house emissions, a low carbon vehicle demonstrator programme 'the Mini E', and the development of a broad based Low Emission Strategy for Oxford during 2010. This will help move the Council towards an integrated approach to tackling climate change and air quality as part of a city-wide emissions approach.

Local News: Karin Grey (Tunbridge Wells)

Karin described her experiences in introducing low emission strategies to Tunbridge Wells. She provided an overview of the Borough, as regards its transport links and air quality issues. Karin highlighted the high levels of car ownership and congestion within the main town and the key A-roads.

Regarding planning-based low emission strategies, the Council has managed to secure contributions for air quality monitoring and action planning through section 106 agreements. The recession has put some of the development on hold, which provides a good time to develop and refine planning policies. They are working on a draft Supplementary Planning Document for Low Emission Strategies, but are currently struggling with the assessment of emissions from developments. Karin highlighted the potential role that the LES Partnership's Low Emission Toolkit could play in assisting with this. She would like to maintain the links with the Partnership through the peer group, or the Low Emission Forum because she feels that there

is a lot value in networking with likeminded professionals. They have found the publication of the LES/Defra Guidance to be a very useful step in discussions with planners. The next challenge is to engage with transport planners, potentially using the links between transport, air quality and climate change.

LEF Work Programme (Steve Simmons, Chair LEF; Katherine Wilson, LES Programme Manager)

Unfortunately, we were short of time at this point on the agenda, and as such, this item did not include detailed discussions with delegates. The LES Partnership would be pleased to receive feedback on these issues via email or through the website.

Steve presented the proposed 'vision' for the Low Emission Forum. The aim is to provide regular opportunities for the 'Low Emissions Community' to review and discuss progress on the development and delivery of low emission strategies, measures and other initiatives. In our view, this 'low emissions community' would be made up of: (i) people from local authorities working in emissions management, environmental strategy, spatial/transport planning, procurement and fleet operations; but also (ii) stakeholders who interact with these functions from public, private and third sector bodies, as well as from regional and national government.

Meetings of the LEF will be held every six months (this is the first, with others to be arranged in July and December 2010). The intention is that the LEF can act as the 'outward facing' part of the LES Programme. It could become a 'community' enabling discussion and sharing of information. The three meetings would then provide a focal point within this framework, rather than simply three separate events.

Katherine went on to describe the project fund. This is £5,000 which has been allocated by the board to be spent by the Forum on LES projects. The idea is to have something solid and real that the LEF contributes to.

We would like to have a number of proposals to take forward. Ideally they would be match funded to make the most of the available pot. The project can be anything associated with the Low Emission Strategies agenda. Examples could include:

- development of a case study
- drafting of a policy position paper or review (e.g. on the implications of the the community infrastructure levy, or integration with LTP3);
- conduct modelling or evaluation;
- develop funding formulae for offsetting through planning obligations;
- life cycle analysis of low emission technologies;
- assist with technology trial or implementation; or
- fill any data gaps.

The process from here is for Forum Members to email expressions of interest to Katherine (kwilson@lowemissionstrategies.org) or enter them via the website enquiry form. The proposals will be taken to the Partnership Board and selected by the end of June 2010. They will then be announced at the July LEF Meeting. Delivery would be during July-December, with the outputs being presented at the December LEF meeting.

Appendix A: Attendees

Steve Simmons	Sheffield	LEF Chair
Karen Birch	Sheffield	
Katherine Wilson	Blue Condor	LES Programme Manager
Rob Pilling	Blue Condor	LES Programme Manager
Andrew Whittles	Cenex	LES Technical & Strategic Director
Greg Archer	Low CVP	Managing Director
Robin Haycock	OLEV	
Roger Pitman	Oxford	
Dave Cherry	Leeds	
Karin Grey	Tunbridge Wells	Environmental Protection Manager
Michael Bull	ARUP	
Adam Finch	South Cambridgeshire	
Iain Forbes	DfT	Air Quality, Environment Policy and Delivery
Ed Dearnley	EPUK	Policy Officer
Simon Cousins	GLA	
Linda Johnson	Croydon	Senior Environmental Consultant
Nigel Jenkins	Sussex Air	Project Manager
Ruth Calderwood	City of London	
Ogo Osammor	Sheffield	
Tom Parker	TTR	Associate & Office Manager
John Newington	Maidstone	Senior Pollution Officer
Robert Vaughan	Defra	
Chas Ball	Carplus	Director
Cassandra Harrison	LACORS	Policy Officer
David Fisher	London Borough of Hillingdon	Transport Manager
Nicky Callen	Lewisham	Environmental Protection Officer
Gareth Simkins	The ENDS Report	Writer
Eddie Stedman	London Borough of Sutton	Air Quality Officer
Neil Vincent	Medway Council	Senior Transport Planner
Kyro Eleftheriou-vaus	Kensington and Chelsea Council	Senior Technical Officer
Phil Mason	Cheshire East Borough Council	Environmental Control Officer
Flo Churchill	Havant Borough Council	
Christpoher Maidment	Stockport Council	Assistant Policy Officer
Phil Govier	Swansea Council	EMS Development Officer
Feliciano Cirimele	Waste & Env Protection	Environmental Protection Officer
Sam Bryan	Reading Borough Council	Air Quality Project Officer
Stephen Briers	Fleet News	Editor
Jennie Preen	Westminster City Council	Project Manager - Air Quality
Claire Spendley	Wycombe District Council	Air Quality Officer
Deirdre Illingworth	St Albans City and District Council	Senior Environmental Health Officer
Gloria Esposito	London Borough of Camden	Senior Sustainability Officer
Jodie Wilson	Reading Borough Council	Environmental Health Officer
Melanie Crump	Bedford Borough Council	Environmental Health Assistant
Lucy Kirk	Medway Council	Environmental Protection Team Leader
Gavin McIntosh	Technical Officer - Env Health	London Borough of Merton
Mike Galey	Director of Marketing	Eminox Limited
Jack Ettinger	Strategic Transport Planner	Tower Hamlets Council
Chris Randall	Transport Strategy Officer	Leicester City Council
Paul Medlicott	The Westminster Consortium	Director