

6.0 Progress Report for Benzene

6.1 The national perspective

The main sources of benzene emissions in the UK are petrol-engined vehicles and petrol refining and distribution activities. A number of policy measures already in place, or planned for future years, will ensure that benzene emissions continue to be reduced.

Since January 2000, EU legislation has reduced the maximum benzene content of petrol to 1% from a previous upper limit of 5%. Benzene emissions from vehicles will be reduced further through the provisions the European Auto-Oil Programme. Emissions from petrol storage and distribution activities are already widely controlled by the use of vapour fuel recovery systems.

Modelling and monitoring undertaken at a national level indicates that existing national policies should generally be sufficient to achieve the 2003 objective for benzene. However, some localised exceedances of the 2010 objective may occur close to very busy roads¹.

6.2 The local perspective

In the First Stage Review and Assessment of Air Quality in York benzene was assessed against the following objective:

'A running annual average of 5ppb or less to be achieved by the end of 2005'.

It was concluded that this objective would be met in York without the need for further action at a local level.

In the Second and Third Stage Review and Assessment of Air Quality in York benzene was assessed against a revised objective which was:

'A running annual mean of 16.25 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (5ppb) or less to be achieved by the end of 2003'.

It was concluded that this objective would also be met in York without the need for further action at a local level.

In the Update and Screening assessments undertaken in 2003 and 2006 benzene was assessed against the following objectives:

'A running annual mean of 16.25 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ or less to be achieved by the end of 2003'.

¹ DEFRA Review and Assessment: Technical Guidance LAQM.TG (03) 2003

'A fixed annual mean of 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ to be achieved by the end of 2010.'

During the review and assessment process in York no requirement to monitor benzene has ever been identified. On this basis there is no benzene monitoring data available to present in this report.

6.3 Conclusions

Based on the results of the Update and Screening Assessment (April 2006) it was concluded that City of York Council was not required to progress to a detailed assessment of benzene. Since 2006 no further development has taken place in York which would have the potential to give rise to exceedences of the benzene objectives. The findings of the last Update and Screening Assessment are therefore still considered valid and there are no plans to proceed to a detailed assessment for benzene at this time. A further update and screening assessment for benzene will be carried out in April 2008.