



Derry City & Strabane
District Council

Comhairle
Chathair Dhoire &
Cheantar an tSratha Báin

Derry Cittie & Strabane
Destrack Council

Ref: EIR / 1817

04 May 2018

Ms

Email: @outlook.com

Dear Ms

Environmental Information Regulations 2004 Request Request for information about air quality

I refer to your EIR request as above and advise Council holds the requested information as follows:

Request:

1. The amount of money spent each year, from 2012 to present, on local air quality work
2. The number of staff FTE (Full Time Equivalent) each year, from 2012 to present, who work on local air quality
3. What correspondence Derry & Strabane council has had with the relevant national regulatory agency, DAERA, about air quality in the last 24 months?
4. What are the barriers to progress when tackling poor air quality in this local

Response:

Points 1 and 2.

The following table shows money spent on air quality work and full time equivalent staff working in air quality in the legacy Derry City Council and Strabane District Councils, 2012 – 2015 and also similar figures after the merger to Derry City and Strabane District Council for years 2015 – 2018.

Derry

C/o Council Offices
98 Strand Road
Derry
BT48 7NN

Strabane

C/o Council Offices
47 Derry Road
Strabane
BT82 8DY

+44 (0) 2871 253 253
info@derrystrabane.com
www.derrystrabane.com

f Derry City & Strabane District Council
@dcsdcouncil

Year (April – March)	Amount (£) ¹		No of equivalent full-time staff working in air quality ²	
	Derry	Strabane	Derry	Strabane
2012-2013	49, 221.79	9651.20	0.59	0.1035
2013-2014	46, 901.00	10774.28	0.53	0.12
2014-2015	45, 011.23	13231.01	0.48	0.1
2015-2016*	42, 380.00		0.67	
2016-2017	45, 865.28		0.67	
2017-2018	44, 802.50		0.63	

* Derry City Council and Strabane District Councils merged in April 2015 to form Derry City and Strabane District Council.

¹ Includes all air quality costs including monitoring, equipment support, data management and auditing contractors and also staff costs.

² This figure represents the total equivalent full-time staff for officers involved in, from Technical Assistant to Principal EHO, working on air quality duties.

Point 3.

Council have been in regular contact with DAERA throughout the last 24 months. The following correspondence took place:

- Council is required to submit an annual Local Air Quality Monitoring (LAQM) Progress report (with update on Action Plan progress)/Updating and Screening Assessment report. These are loaded onto the LAQM Report Submission Website. DAERA obtain expert feedback on the content of the reports and check that all requirements have been met and respond to us with any issues raised. We respond and amend the reports accordingly, if necessary.
- DAERA administer the Environment Fund grant. This is the source of grant income for local authorities in Northern Ireland to assist in fulfilling their LAQM obligations. There is regular contact, by telephone and e-mail, in the administration of the grant. DAERA makes an annual grant offer. We accept the offer and each year provide two grant progress reports, a final claim for all items granted and also a Post Evaluation report.
- Following a request from DAERA on 26 October 2016, we supplied information, on 07 November 2016, in relation to Action Plans and Detailed Assessments that DCSDC has carried out since 2012.

- In response to a request by DAERA to participate in an open forum for informal discussion in relation to LAQM Policy Review, a representative from the Environmental Health Service of DCSDC attended DAERA offices in Belfast on 17 November 2016.
- We provided a response to DAERA following consultation on the draft revised UK Air Quality Plan for tackling nitrogen dioxide on 16 June 2017.
- In response to a request from DAERA on 30 June 2017, we supplied information, on 30 June 2017, in relation to the rationale for why the Marlborough Street Automatic Monitoring site ceased to operate in 2015.
- In response to a request from DAERA on 24 October 2017, we supplied information, on 25 October 2017, in relation to AQMA Orders and maps in the Council district.
- When high pollution levels are reported in annual reports or there are sporadic episodes of high pollution levels, with associated media attention, both locally and at other locations in NI, we liaise with DAERA to inform our response to the media. In the last 24 month period, we liaised with DAERA, in December 2017, in relation to elevated Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbon levels, identified in an annual report, at the Brandywell air monitoring site.
- We provided a response, on 23 April 2018, to DAERA following pre-consultation presentation and discussion on 29th March 2018, on the Northern Ireland Air Quality Strategy.

Point 4.

Whilst not a requirement for information held under the Environmental Information Regulations, it is felt the main barriers to progress when tackling poor air quality are:

- The suspension of the NI Assembly is currently delaying progress on the local air quality strategy and Clean Air bills. In England, DEFRA and government are moving forward on redressing air quality problems, by example banning petrol and diesel cars/vehicles by 2040. With no legislative Assembly currently in place in NI, we cannot progress on these issues.
- Reduced financial resources to put in place real measures that will improve air quality more quickly, again this is dependent on central government and block grant to NI Assembly. Some of our previous Action Plan measures, such as realigning roads at traffic junctions/ compulsory purchase and demolition of affected dwellings were projected to result in significant costs. Other potential measures such as Low Emission Zones/ out of town park and ride facilities and Quality Bus Corridors with improved public transport will be considered as part of our Action Planning process. DCSDC has advocated longer term solutions for improving air quality with the construction of a third road bridge and ring road around the city, all requiring significant investment.

- Council has currently no statutory control over traffic and highway planning and management. This function lies with the Department for Infrastructure (DfI).
- Public attitude to sustainable modes of transport. It would appear there is a culture of reliance on the car in Derry and Northern Ireland as a whole. It is cheaper and more convenient to use the car in Derry, particularly for shorter journeys. Sustrans locally does excellent work in cycling and walking initiatives, school travel plans and the promotion of use of the greenways that have been and continue to be developed. It would help greatly if the message for sustainable travel can be strengthened to promote a change in the culture of reliance on the car.

If you are dissatisfied with our response you have rights of review and appeal; these rights consist of two review processes.

Firstly our internal review procedure is available by contacting:

John Kelpie
Chief Executive
Derry City and Strabane District Council
98 Strand Road
Derry BT48 7NN
Tel 028 71253253 or email john.kelpie@derrystrabane.com

Secondly, you can appeal directly by contacting the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
CHESHIRE SK9 5AF
Tel: 0303 123 1113 (local rate) or email: casework@ico.org.uk

Yours sincerely

Head of Health & Community Wellbeing