

Airshed News

SEPA issues Draft Odour Guidance
Airshed Success Stories
Birmingham Reviews Noise Policy
Belfast Consults on Air Quality
Revised Technical Guidance for Local Air Quality
CFD—The Next Generation

SEPA Odour Guidance

SEPA issued a consultation paper in July 2008 proposing new Odour Guidance.¹ The Guidance will apply the same odour standard to all processes regulated by SEPA irrespective of whether they are permitted by the Pollution Prevention and Control (PPC) regime or subject to the Waste Management Regulations. Assuming the Guidance is adopted, all SEPA regulated processes with offensive odours will need to achieve 1.5 OU_E/m³ 1 hour 98%^{ile} in a year. At present it's not clear if this means a typical year or, say, the worst case in 5 years. The Agency proposes to apply 1.0 OU_E/m³ to processes where there is a history of odour complaints. The Guidance will be the first formal PPC odour Guidance to be adopted by any of the UK's environment agencies. It's not based on any new research or studies into odour and basically implements the same approach advocated by H4 which has languished in draft form since 2002.²

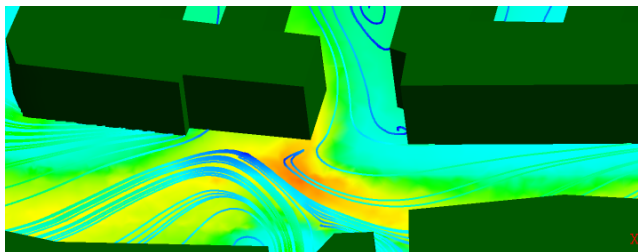
Airshed Success Stories

Recent successful planning applications include Invergordon WwTW where The Airshed conducted the odour and noise assessments on behalf of Scottish Water. A previous application for a site nearby (where the EIA was conducted by a different assessment team) was refused at appeal. The Airshed was the lead consultancy for Oran Utilities in their successful application for a PPC permit for a new animal rendering plant. See Case Study:

http://theairshed.com/pdf/Case_Study_No._37.pdf

Next Generation Model

Dispersion models (ADMS/AERMOD) are generally suitable for most air quality studies but may be unreliable in street canyons, complex terrain or where buildings near the source are unusual shapes. Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD) mod-



els are increasingly being used to model dispersion in such conditions, particularly since the publication of best practice Guidelines³ for CFD simulation in the urban environment.

www.theairshed.com/air.htm

Birmingham Noise Policy

From a consultancy point of view Birmingham City Council is one of the more straightforward authorities to deal with. This is due in some measure to the formal noise policy that the City Council's adopted, plus the pragmatic approach at Officer level. That's not to say the authority is a soft touch, just that decisions are more transparent and that's a good thing. The City are reviewing their policy in the light of recent experience in Digbeth, where residents complained about music from The



Greenscene Custard Factory Digbeth

Spotted Dog pub after moving into a new residential development.⁴ Paradoxically many of the new residents apparently were attracted to Digbeth by the vibrant pubs and clubs. The Airshed considers that the real acid test of any noise policy must be to ensure that the sleep disturbance effects of noise are fully taken into account in any new dwelling, but that it's unrealistic to apply the same standard to all habitable rooms in city centre locations.

End to Gravy Train?

Belfast City Council's Environmental Protection Unit (EPU) has issued new air quality Guidelines for planning applications that may be affected by air pollution.⁵ Belfast has seen a boom in development in the last few years which so far seems to be bucking the slowdown elsewhere in the UK. The City currently has a policy that effectively requires detailed dispersion modelling assessments for all schemes in the city centre. While this has been great news for air quality consultants, it means that in many cases the level of detail required was *over the top* and imposed unnecessary costs on small developments where changes in traffic were minuscule. The amended policy proposes a case by case approach. The EPU may now accept screening assessments rather than full dispersion modelling, at least in some cases.

1. SEPA July 2008. Guidance on Regulating Odorous Activity <http://www.sepa.org.uk/pdf/consultation/closed/2008/odour/odourconsultation.pdf>.
2. Environment Agency October 2002. Technical Guidance Note IPPC 4 Horizontal Guidance for Odour
3. Cost Action 732 Quality Assurance and Improvement of Micro-scale Meteorological Models May 2007.
4. <http://www.createdinbirmingham.com/2007/06/29/spotted-dog-served-with-noise-abatement-notice/>
5. Belfast CC 2008. Air Quality and Land Use Planning - A Belfast Specific Guidance Note for Developers and Air Quality Consultants Draft 1.0
6. DEFRA 2008. Review and Assessment TG(08) <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/airqualitymanage-guidance/technical-guidance.pdf>
7. <http://www.airquality.co.uk/archive/laqm/tg08-consult.php>

Scottish Water Win Appeal

The Scottish Executive Inquiry Reporters Unit (SEIRU) granted planning permission for a new wastewater treatment plant in Dunoon, Argyll. The Airshed represented Scottish Water on noise and odour issues. The works are to be built in a disused quarry with primary and secondary treatment. The approved design included a fully enclosed primary treatment plant, covered secondary tanks, odour control and a tall stack. Argyll and Bute Council refused the application due to concerns about odour, with two houses within 100m of the process. The odour assessment included detailed dispersion modelling, CFD and wind tunnel tests. This rigorous approach helped to demonstrate that the works could be operated without



causing significant loss of amenity. The Airshed worked closely with ABC and their consultants to reach technical agreement. See Case Study No. 29. www.theairshed.com/pdf/case_study_no_29.pdf

Airshed News

The Airshed has now worked on over 150 projects since September 2005. Our growing client list includes energy, mining, retail and waste management companies, property developers, and planning/engineering consultancies. We have invested in new CFD models for air dispersion and microclimate, and in the last year sponsored three people through the Institute of Acoustics course for Environmental Noise. www.theairshed.com/

TG08 At Last! - Almost

DEFRA has issued revised technical Guidance on local air quality assessment.⁶ This will replace the local air quality "Bible" in the UK (TG03) with updated tools and procedures for air quality assessment. Work is still ongoing to update current baseline conditions and projections for future years which form a crucial part of the assessment process. These are likely to be available by December 2008.⁷

The revised Guidance could have significant implications for developments within the planning system e.g. where the Guidance changes baseline conditions or projections for 2010 and beyond.

Odour No Reason For Refusal

Ediston Properties made application for outline planning permission to the City of Edinburgh Council to develop former industrial land for housing. A previous application was refused, partly because Environmental Health had "serious concerns" about odour from a nearby plastics factory. Ediston was



unable to obtain information from the operator to confirm the likely process emissions from the plant, while the City Council were understandably unwilling to consider an application that did not assess odour. The Airshed conducted an assessment based on pessimistic emission assumptions. This indicated that a small part of the development site was likely to be unsuitable for housing. This was taken into account in the final site layout for the planning application. The City of Edinburgh Council accepted the findings of the report. The Environmental Health Department agreed that odour would not be grounds for refusing planning permission for housing, provided subsequent validation monitoring was conducted at the detailed planning stage. See Case Study below: http://theairshed.com/pdf/Case_Study/No_33.pdf

Down the River

We have now organised three successful canoe trips down the River Spey. Our next planned trip will start at the Loch Insh Water Sports Centre



near Aviemore and end at Spey Bay in the North Sea. The four day trip includes wild camping on an island and relatively easy paddling. Drop us an email if you fancy joining us for the trip in May 2009.