

Navigation Committee

05 September 2019

Agenda item number 13

Air pollutant emissions from domestic vessels and inland waterways

Report by Director of Operations

Purpose

Seek comments and advice from the Committee on the Department for Transport's call for evidence on air pollution from domestic vessels and inland waterways to assist officers in responding to the consultation.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Poor air quality is one of the most significant risks posed to public health in the UK. The World Health Organisation has concluded that long-term exposure to air pollution reduces life expectancy, increasing deaths from circulatory, respiratory and heart conditions. The emission of air pollutants also has an impact on our natural environment, adversely affecting our waterways, biodiversity and crop yields.
- 1.2. In January 2019, the Government published its Clean Air Strategy setting out actions to tackle poor air quality attributable to a wide range of sources. This is a major, long-term programme of measures that include high-profile commitments. One of these is the Road to Zero Strategy, which outlines how the Government will support the transition to zero emission road transport and reduce emissions from conventional vehicles during the transition. Mitigating air pollutant emissions from the transport sector is a key focus of the Clean Air Strategy and, for the first time, the Government has brought forward measures that respond specifically to emissions from the maritime sector, including recreational vessels and those operating inland waterways. In summary, these measures are:
 - This Call for Evidence to gather information on vessels operating domestically in UK waters as a whole including in inland waterways.
 - A consultation on options for extending the existing Emissions Control Area in the North Sea and English Channel to other parts of the UK's waters and
 - A commitment from the Department for Transport to publish guidance for major ports in England, in order to facilitate their development of individual port air quality strategies.

- 1.3. The consultation entitled 'Air Pollutant Emissions from Domestic Vessels and Inland Waterways' calls for evidence on those vessels operating domestically in the UK. The information requested is focused primarily on those vessels not currently subject to international environmental standards for air pollutant emissions.
- 1.4. This diverse group of vessels includes both modern craft that are currently unregulated, and vessels that form part of a legacy fleet built before modern environmental standards were implemented. In the development of the Clean Air Strategy, it was identified that emissions from these vessels were potentially of concern. Due to a lack of centralised information to date, the Department has taken the view that a Call for Evidence is required to understand more clearly if a significant problem exists and to help shape any future policy responses.
- 1.5. Alongside the Call for Evidence, the Department is undertaking detailed environmental and economic modelling work on the scope and nature of emissions in the UK and to identify trends that may shape future policy decisions.

2. Information sought in this process

- 2.1. There are **six** principal evidence gaps that policymakers wish to address through this Call for Evidence and through wider research being undertaken by the Department.
 1. **The size and key characteristics of this sector:** An estimate of the total number of vessels and vessel types operating in England's inland waterways and the UK's coastal waters, as well as the age, engine size, and fuel type of these vessels. This information will assist the Department in quantifying the emissions produced by the propulsion engines of relevant vessel types, which is essential information for the understanding of this sector.
 2. **The functioning of the current regulatory landscape governing air pollutant emissions from vessels operating in England's inland waterways and UK coastal waters:** This includes the identification of any gaps in the existing regulatory framework or inconsistencies that have led to poor environmental or business outcomes.
 3. **Innovative approaches being taken in this sector:** The Department recognises that these sectors are highly diverse and include many innovative actors. Therefore, the Department would welcome responses that identify potential abatement methods, green technologies or opportunities for innovation that can mitigate the emission of air pollutants from vessels.
 4. **Identification of potential market failures or barriers (technical, commercial, financial, cultural) to the deployment of emissions abatement and reduction options in this sector (for instance infrastructure requirements or possible unintended consequences):** As part of the responses to this section, the Department would welcome solutions to these barriers and suggestions in relation to the role Government can play in removing or minimising them. In

particular we would seek the views of consultees on social and cultural factors that could influence the success or failure of measures to reduce emissions from the sector – for example could Government usefully publicise best practice and early adopters to encourage sectoral change?

5. **Longer term trends in the sector:** Here they are seeking to better understand likely changes in the inland waterways and coastal fleet in order to better shape any policy outcomes. The Department would value information on the long-term forecasts of vessel numbers, trends in operating profile and fuel type, fleet replacement rates and the uptake of new technologies or abatement measures. A better understanding of these trends will allow the Department to assess to what extent a movement to lower emission vessels is underway already and how the overall impact of these changes on the fleet will change in relation to emissions.
6. **Funding:** The Department is aware that some non-Government/private sector funding for innovation and infrastructure in the maritime sector is available, and which could in some cases be accessed to facilitate research into low and zero emission vessels. The Department would welcome responses from businesses and organisations that provide such financial support, setting out what funds are available and the conditions for accessing it. Additionally, respondents may wish to highlight where they see gaps in funding for innovation and infrastructure.

3. Submitting consultation responses

- 3.1. The Department has recognised that the summer season is particularly busy for many small craft operators, who form a key group of respondents and therefore the consultation period for this Call for Evidence is 11 July 2019 to 11 January 2020.
- 3.2. The Department has undertaken to publish a summary of responses within three months of the close of the Call for Evidence and paper copies will be available on request.
- 3.3. The Committee's views are sought to help inform the Broads Authority's response.

Author: Rob Rogers

Date of report: 2 August 2019

Background papers: [Domestic shipping air pollution: call for evidence](#)

[Broads Plan](#) objectives: 2.2