Annual Status Report Appraisal Report

The Annual Status Report sets out new information on air quality obtained by Fylde Borough Council (FBC) as part of the Review & Assessment process required under the Environment Act 1995 (as amended by the Environment Act 2021) and subsequent Regulations.

FBC currently has no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) and no associated Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP). However, the Borough Council has stated in the ASR that they are implementing measures to improve air quality. FBC have so far installed four rapid chargers, implemented requests of cycle storage on all planning applications and have an ongoing tree planting programme. The Council also has a number of measures targeted to raise public awareness of the impact of poor air quality and how to assist in improvements.

From 2023 authorities who have not had to designate AQMAs and produce AQAPs will be required to draw up a local Air Quality Strategy. The objective of a local Air Quality Strategy is to encourage prevention and reduction of polluting activities in preference to only taking steps to reduce air pollution once exceedances have been identified.

Local Air Quality Strategies will not have a set format and authorities will be able to draw on content within their ASRs and local transport plans to produce them. As long as the strategy addresses air quality assessments and policy responsibilities under the LAQM regime, it can be combined with the authority’s other relevant plans and strategies if it is logical to do so.

Defra will monitor whether Local Authorities have or are developing a local Air Quality Strategy through the ASR appraisal process.

No automatic monitoring was undertaken by the Council in 2023. Passive monitoring of NO2 was undertaken at 15 diffusion tube monitoring sites in 2023. None of the sites reported exceedances of the air quality objective of 40 µg/m3 in 2023. Diffusion Tube 35n (Peel Hill) reported the highest concentration of 23.6 µg/m3 in 2023.

The national bias adjustment factor was applied to the 2023 monitoring data as no co-location study was undertaken by the Council. Only one site required annualisation (site 25n) with 73.6% data capture. All of the other monitoring sites had either data capture above 75% or below 25% (e.g. site 38n) and therefore did not require annualisation.

On the basis of the evidence provided by the local authority the conclusions reached in the report are **accepted** for all sources and pollutants, on the proviso that the grammatical and formatting errors in the report are corrected prior to publication on the Council’s website. ASRs are public facing documents that serve to keep local communities informed of the steps being taken by their local authority to improve air quality, and as such it is important that they are accessible and easy to read.Following the completion of this report, FBC should submit an Annual Status Report in 2025.

**Commentary**

The report is well structured, detailed, and provides the information specified in the Guidance. The following comments are designed to help inform future reports:

1. The Council state in their ASR that they have developed and published an Air Quality Strategy, which will soon be available on the Council’s website. This is welcomed and demonstrates the Council’s commitment to improve air quality within FBC.
2. Although not currently monitored in the Council, FBC has implemented a few measures to help address PM2.5. This includes including encouraging the use of alternative transport, improving cycling infrastructure, increasing the number of EVR charging points and increasing the public awareness of the effects of PM2.5. This is commended.
3. In Appendix C, under Diffusion Tube Bias Adjustment Factors heading, it would be useful if the Council could insert the applied bias adjustment factor in “<insert factor>”. It is assumed this was a typo.
4. It would add to the report’s quality if all maps of diffusion tube locations were in the same format. The map for 38n (Worsley Road) is in a different format to the others. Additionally, it is highly encouraged that labels are added to all figures to help improve readability.

This commentary is not designed to deal with every aspect of the report. It highlights a number of issues that should help the local authority either in completing the Annual Status Report adequately (if required) or in carrying out future Review & Assessment work.

**Issues specifically related to this appraisal can be followed up by returning the attached comment form to Defra, Welsh Government, Scottish Government or DOE.**

For any other queries please contact the Local Air Quality Management Helpdesk:

Telephone: 0800 0327 953

Email: LAQMHelpdesk@bureauveritas.com

Notice for 2024

**Changes to the Local Air Quality Management Framework**

Through the Environment Act 2021 and Local Air Quality Management Statutory Policy Guidance 2022, the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) framework has been considerably strengthened. This page highlights some of the changes for delivery to help you prioritise action for improved air quality:

1. **Strengthened Criteria for Air Quality Action Plans (AQAPs)**

The requirements and guidance around AQAPs have been strengthened under the Environment Act 2021 and the LAQM Statutory Policy Guidance 2022. Action plans must include:

* an assessment of source apportionment,
* provide the population living within the AQMA (where the data is available),
* specify the concentration emission reductions required,
* set out the measures being taken to secure the achievement and maintenance of air quality standards and objectives,
* specify clear timescales for the implementation of measures,
* specify the date air quality objectives are expected to be achieved,
* include quantification of the impacts of the proposed measures,
* detail how delivery partners will work together to implement the AQAP,
* set out a plan to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the plan,

Actions plans must be finalised within 18 months of an AQMA being declared and reviewed every five years thereafter.

1. **Escalation Process for Reporting**

Government is committed to increasing transparency by requiring timely and accurate publication of Annual Status Reports (ASRs) and AQAPs by local authorities, as set out in the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023. These documents are public-facing and serve to keep local communities informed of the steps being taken by their local authority to improve air quality.

To ensure ASRs and AQAPs are delivered on time, Defra introduced a reminder and warning letter system for Local Authorities. This system was set out in the LAQM Statutory Policy Guidance 2022 and started to apply from 30 June 2023.

If reporting requirements continue to be missed, the matter can be escalated to a Section 85 Secretary of State direction to the relevant Local Authority Chief Executive specifying action. You are advised to ensure all statutory reporting duties for LAQM are met on time.

3. **Public Bodies Required to Contribute to Action Plans**

The Environment Act 2021 amended the Environment Act 1995 to increase the number of public bodies that have a duty to co-operate with Local Authorities for LAQM. Air quality partners are certain other public bodies that a Local Authority identifies as having responsibility for a source of emissions contributing to an exceedance of local air quality objectives. This could be a neighbouring authority, National Highways, or the Environment Agency. Once identified, there is a statutory requirement for such public bodies to engage and to contribute actions they will take to secure achievement of the local air quality objective and to maintain achievement thereafter.

All tiers of local Government are also now required by law to collaborate to address exceedances of Air Quality Objectives. County councils, the Mayor of London and combined authorities have similar duties to air quality partners. The difference is that, when requested, they must contribute to an action plan being prepared by a Local Authority, regardless of whether the local authority has identified them as being responsible for a source of emissions.

Under the legislation, you may choose to request the support of another public body in the development of an AQAP and the same may be requested of your organisation.

Please refer to the LAQM Statutory Policy Guidance 2022 for more information. Should you require further assistance, please contact the LAQM Helpdesk: <https://laqm.defra.gov.uk/air-quality/featured/england-exc-london-policy-guidance/>

Web: <http://laqm.defra.gov.uk/helpdesks.html>

FAQs: <http://laqm.defra.gov.uk/laqm-faqs/>

Tel: 0800 032 7953

Email: laqmhelpdesk@uk.bureauveritas.com

The Air Quality Hub also provides free online information and is a knowledge sharing resource for local authority air quality professionals: <https://www.airqualityhub.co.uk/>

Appraisal Response Comment Form

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| Contact Name:  |  |
| Contact Telephone number: |  |
| Contact email address: | UKLAQMAppraisals@aecom.com |

**Comments on appraisal/Further information:**