
Local Authority:	Chorley Council
Reference:	ASR24-2164
Date of issue	July 2024

Annual Status Report Appraisal Report

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

CC does not currently have any active AQMAs within their jurisdiction. Despite this, the Council has detailed 13 measures to improve air quality. These include the promotion of low emission transport by improved access to electrical vehicle charging points and development of the Local Plan.

From 2023 those authorities who have not had to designate AQMAs and produce AQAPs should 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.

CC does not currently have any automatic monitoring sites. However, they have continued to trial EarthSense Zephyr continuous automatic particulate monitors at three locations across the borough. The result of this monitoring is indicative and should not be included in the ASR.

The Council carried out passive, non-automatic monitoring of NO₂ at 42 diffusion tube monitoring sites in 2023, with three new sites added and two removed. The maximum reported NO₂ concentration was 33.1 µg/m³ at CH60 (Water Street), this is a reduction from 34.1 µg/m³ in 2022. Therefore, there were no exceedances of the AQO reported in 2023.

Over the past few years from 2019-2023, there has been a general decrease in annual mean NO₂ concentrations from the sites active within this period.

CC has a robust QA/QC procedure, which has been appropriately applied to the 2023 monitoring data. Diffusion tubes were deployed in line with the Defra calendar, and instances where this has

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deviated have been noted. Annualisation was required at one diffusion tube site (CH56). Appropriate calculations have been provided. A national bias adjustment factor of 0.81 was applied to the 2023 monitoring data. Distance correction was not required for any site in 2023.

Defra recommends that Directors of Public Health approve draft ASRs. Sign off is not a requirement, however collaboration and consultation with those who have responsibility for Public Health is expected to increase support for measures to improve air quality, with co-benefits for all. Please bear this in mind for the next annual reporting process.

On the basis of the evidence provided by the local authority the conclusions reached in the report are **accepted** for all sources and pollutants. Following the completion of this report, Chorley Council should submit an Annual Status Report in 2025.

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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 have put together a good quality ASR submission and should be commended for their efforts.
2. It is not detailed in the text which diffusion tubes have been removed/added or as to the reason for the decision. This can only be determined by cross referencing last year's ASR.
3. The Council have correctly applied QA/QC protocols for annualisation and have selected an appropriate bias adjustment factor using a national factor. Please note it would be useful to know if the zephyr data has been adjusted to a co-location methodology.
4. It is positive to see CC commitment to developing a Local Plan with a positive impact on air quality.
5. It is noted that the Council have installed three low-cost Zephyr monitors for NO, O₃, NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} monitoring within the Borough which is welcomed. The Council are reminded that these monitors are indicative and should not be used to provide any conclusions against the air quality objectives. Although this is highlighted in the report, it is recommended that the details and results of monitoring from these sensors are only included as separate appendices in future ASRs. The monitoring results shown in the appendix indicate there are currently no concerns with PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} concentrations.
6. The Council have provided detailed ways for the local populace to engage in air quality improvement, offering a variety of methods through which they can contribute and providing links for further information.
7. The Council have demonstrated consistency between the ASR submission and the supplementary Excel ASR Table.

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.

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For any other queries please contact the Local Air Quality Management Helpdesk:
Telephone: 0800 0327 953
Email: LAQMHelpdesk@bureauveritas.com

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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.

2. 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

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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: laqmhlpdesk@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/>

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Appraisal Response Comment Form

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

Comments on appraisal/Further information: