
Local Authority:	West Berkshire Council
Reference:	ASR23-1653
Date of issue	June 2023

Annual Status Report Appraisal Report

The Report sets out the Annual Status Report, which forms part of the Review & Assessment process required under the Environment Act 1995 and subsequent Regulations.

West Berkshire Council have declared two Air Quality Management Areas within their jurisdiction:

- Newbury AQMA: declared in 2009 for exceedance of the annual mean and Air Quality Objective (AQO) for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂); and,
- Thatcham AQMA: declared in 2011 for exceedance of the annual mean AQO for NO₂.

Revocation of an AQMA should be considered following three consecutive years of compliance with the relevant objectives, as evidenced through monitoring. Due to at least two years of continual monitored compliance with both NO₂ AQOs (excluding 2020 and 2021 data), the Council have set out that they will consider the total revocation of both of these AQMAs. This should now be actioned following four consecutive years of compliance with the relevant objectives.

Where 2020 and 2021 are a continuation of a downward trend and part of many consecutive years of compliance (e.g., where compliance has also been achieved in 2019, prior to COVID-19) the AQMA may be considered for revocation.

Please be aware that unless a likely exceedance has been identified in the area, Defra will not appraise AQAPs for AQMAs that have been in compliance for five years. Local Authorities will instead be advised to revoke the AQMA.

West Berkshire Council undertook automatic (continuous) monitoring at one site during 2022 (CM1 Newbury). NO₂ was measured by the automatic monitoring site, with the 1-hour mean objective and the annual mean objective both meeting the national objectives during 2022.

The Council undertook passive diffusion tube monitoring of NO₂ at 36 monitoring locations, including one triplicate site, which is co-located with the automatic monitor. No

Local Authority:	West Berkshire Council
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exceedances of the annual mean objective were recorded at any of these sites during 2022.

QA/QC procedures have been applied appropriately and accurately to the 2022 monitoring data. Both national and local bias adjustment factors have been considered, with justification provided around the choice to apply the national factor. Annualisation was required at one site during 2022 and distance correction was not required at any location. All calculations were clearly outlined and justified.

In the report, the Council has detailed extensive measures and plans to continue to address air quality within its jurisdiction. Key completed measures in 2022 include: continuing improvement works to the A339 Bear Lane Roundabout to improve traffic flow; continuation of the car club; setting up further EV charging points; continued improvement of pedestrian and cyclist signage to improve walking and cycling; and continued improvements to cycle parking provision.

Priorities for the upcoming year include consideration of the revocation of the Newbury AQMA, continuing various forms of public engagement such as introducing monitoring of PM_{2.5} at schools in the vicinity of AQMAs and encouraging travel alternatives; continuing to work with various stakeholders such as Public Health England and with the Public Protection Partnership; and continuing the automatic and passive air quality monitoring programme.

On the basis of the evidence provided by the local authority the conclusions reached are **accepted** for all sources and pollutants, on the provision 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, West Berkshire Council should submit an Annual Status Report in 2024.

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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 used the latest reporting template in production of their 2023 ASR.
2. A number of errors within the tables in the report are also noted. Table 2.1 references 'Newbury AQAP' twice, with an incorrect declaration for exceedances of the 1-hour NO₂ AQO. This data does not match the LAQM Portal or UK-AIR.
3. Table 2.1 also does not include a link to the relevant AQAP for each AQMA, a link is instead included to the local authority's 2022 ASR on their website. A link to the relevant AQAP document itself or a note as to how members of public can access this should be provided in this table in future reports. A draft 2021 AQAP is available on the LAQM Portal; however this is not mentioned within the ASR.
4. Table A.2 states that the majority of monitoring locations are located 0.0m from relevant exposure, inclusive of Urban Background sites. Monitoring site "A339 Newbury Central" is listed as a kerbside site but is located 4m from the kerbside and 204m from relevant exposure. This column of Table A.4 requires review and amendments.
5. Within Tables A.4 to A.8, the 'Valid Data Capture for Monitoring Period' and 'Valid Data Capture 2022' have not been calculated correctly. The 'Valid Data Capture for Monitoring Period' is in cases where monitoring was only carried out for part of the year. If monitoring was intended to be carried out for the full calendar year, then the entries in this column will be the same as the 'Valid Data Capture 2022'. The 'Valid Data Capture 2022' is the data capture for the full calendar year (e.g., if monitoring was carried out for 6 months, the maximum data capture for the full calendar year is 50%). The council should contact the LAQM Helpdesk for further assistance on these calculations.
6. Passive monitoring of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) using diffusion tubes was completed at 36 locations during 2022 (a decrease of two since 2021). This includes two triplicate sites, one of which is co-located with the automatic monitor (CM1), which monitors NO₂. This is welcomed, however a discussion of the reasons for these changes has not been included and would be beneficial to include in future years. It is noted that this point was not addressed in the 2023 ASR.

Local Authority:	West Berkshire Council
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7. Both the annual mean and 1-hour mean Air Quality Objectives for NO₂ were complied with at all monitoring locations within 2022.
8. Comments from last year's ASR have been mentioned. This is encouraged for future ASRs.
9. The report includes detailed discussion of the measures the council are taking to address PM_{2.5}. The council set out that, within the next reporting year, they intend to establish the feasibility of monitoring PM_{2.5} (particularly at schools within the vicinity of AQMAs) within their jurisdiction, which is commended. Links are provided and discussed regarding the Public Health Outcomes Framework and fraction of mortality attributable to PM_{2.5} emissions, which is welcomed. Comparisons to the regional and national average would be beneficial to include in future reports.
10. Sufficient detail is included in the QA/QC procedures for both the automatic analyser and the NO₂ diffusion tubes. Calculations for local bias adjustment and annualisation are outlined in detail. Distance correction was not required. Data showing the choice of bias adjustment factors for previous years, and discussion around the choice to apply the local factor this year, has been included.
11. The laboratory and analysis method for the 2022 diffusion tubes is specified in the report, however and the council have deployed diffusion tubes in line with the Defra calendar dates during 2022.
12. The Council have provided mapping of their automatic and diffusion tube monitoring network in relation to their AQMAs; however this is labelled with site IDs that do not correlate with those in the results tables. An attempt has been made to make this easier to read with the inclusion of numbered tables alongside the Figures, however these Site IDs should be provided in all other relevant tables of the main body of the ASR. This should be amended in future reports.
13. The council have included detailed trend graphs which have been updated since the 2022 ASR which also show sites outside of the AQMAs.
14. The Council has included a discussion and review of its AQMAs, which is well-informed due to its monitoring network. Total revocation of both AQMAs has been considered and a decision has been made to keep these in place for now. This is accepted, and full revocation of both AQMAs should now be considered during 2023.

Local Authority:	West Berkshire Council
Reference:	ASR23-1653
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15. The continual collaborative approach that West Berkshire Council is taking with the Public Protection Partnership is commended.
16. Table 2.1 does not state the year the most recent Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) was published, nor is this discussed anywhere else in the report. It is noted that the latest AQAP for both AQMAs appears to have been published on the council's website in 2011 but this is not available on the LAQM portal as adopted. The Environment Act (2021) requires that a local authority must, for the purpose of achieving AQOs in an AQMA designated by that authority, prepare an action plan in relation to that area. The Act also requires that Action Plans be periodically reviewed. While no time limit is explicitly set within the Act, ideally this is expected to occur no later than every five years. It is recommended that the Council follow this guidance.

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 Progress 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 Assembly Government, Scottish Government or DOE.

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

Local Authority:	West Berkshire Council
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Appraisal Response Comment Form

Contact Name:	
Contact Telephone number:	
Contact email address:	

Comments on appraisal/Further information: