
Local Authority:	Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Reference:	ASR22-1547
Date of issue	December 2022

Annual Status Report Appraisal Report

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

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council have 4 designated Air Quality Management Areas within their jurisdiction, declared for exceedances of the annual mean objective for NO₂. AQMAs 1 (Intack) and 2 (Bastwell) were declared in November 2005, and AQMAs 6 (Blackamoor) and 7 (Four Lane Ends) were declared in February 2012.

BDBC undertook automatic monitoring of NO₂ at one roadside location during 2021, and non-automatic (passive) monitoring at 47 locations, including one triplicate co-location. 16 of the Council's diffusion tubes are located within AQMAs, with good coverage across all AQMAs.

The annual mean objective for NO₂ was not exceeded at any of the Councils monitoring sites during 2021, with a maximum annual mean NO₂ concentration of 31.0 µg/m³ recorded at DT10, a roadside site on Accrington Road, within the Intack AQMA. This is well below the annual mean objective.

The Council have provided an in-depth discussion of trends in NO₂ concentrations, with trend graphs provided for each AQMA. Trends have also been discussed for former AQMA areas, which is a useful addition. Further discussion on the potential revocation of the AQMAs at Intack, Bastwell and Four Lane Ends has been included, with the Council stating their intent to revoke these AQMAs. Based on the monitoring data presented within the ASR, this action is supported.

QA/QC of monitoring data is considered to be robust, with supporting evidence and discussion provided for all procedures applied. The Council have opted to apply a local adjustment factor to their 2021 monitoring data, which is consistent with the approach taken in recent years.

Distance correction has not been applied; all monitoring sites are considered representative of relevant exposure, with the exception of four locations (DT2, DT6, DT39 and DT47/48/49). However, the NO₂ concentrations do not exceed 36 µg/m³ at these locations, and therefore the concentration at the closest relevant exposure need not be calculated.

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Data capture was sufficient across the network, and therefore annualisation was not required at any site.

Table 2.2 – Progress on AQAP Measures has been completed in detail. It is evident from this table that the Council continue to make progress against their AQAP. It is noted that whilst the AQAP for Intack and Bastwell AQMAs is out of date, given that the Council are intending to revoke these AQMAs in the coming year, the decision to not update this AQAP is considered acceptable.

It is however noted that, though not applicable to BDBC at this time, from 2023 those authorities who have not had to designate AQMAs and produce AQAPs will be required to draw up a local Air Quality Strategy. These 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. The local Air Quality Strategy requirement aims to encourage local authority prevention and reduction of polluting activities in preference to only taking steps to reduce air pollution once exceedances have been identified.

On the basis of the evidence provided by the local authority the conclusions reached are **accepted** for all sources and pollutants. The next step is for Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council to submit an Annual Status Report in 2023.

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Commentary

The report is detailed, concise and provides the information specified in the Guidance. The following comments are designed to inform the completion of future reports.

1. The Council have provided an in-depth discussion of trends in NO₂ concentrations, with trend graphs provided for each AQMA. Trends have also been discussed for former AQMA areas, which is a useful addition. The Council are encouraged to continue presenting their monitoring data in this way in future ASRs.
2. Discussion on the potential revocation of the AQMAs at Intack, Bastwell and Four Lane Ends has been included, with the Council stating their intent to revoke these AQMAs. Based on the monitoring data presented within the ASR, this action is supported. It is understood that this is to be consulted upon.
3. The report draws links to the public health outcomes framework and the fraction of mortality attributable to PM_{2.5} emissions. Comparisons are made to neighbouring authorities and to England as a whole, which is commended.
4. Diffusion tube mapping is robust, and clearly demonstrates the extent of the monitoring network. The inclusion of an additional map depicting the borough as a whole is beneficial, and allows easy interpretation of the spatial distribution of monitoring locations across the borough.
5. Priorities for the coming year have been clearly stated. These priorities are considered appropriate, and it is expected that the Council will discuss progress against these priorities in next years ASR.

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

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Appraisal Response Comment Form

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

Comments on appraisal/Further information: