

LOCAL AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT - UPDATE

Integration of Air Quality Action Plans into Local Transport Plans (LTPs)

1 Department for Transport has published the final guidance on the LTP reporting requirements for 2008. The document is available on the DfT website <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/ltp/guidance/prog>. Local Authorities are encouraged to send a draft of their reports to the Government Offices by the end of July 2008. The aim is to complete all reports by December 2008.

LAQM Statistics

2 The table shows the number of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) declared and Air Quality Action Plans submitted to Defra/devolved administrations. Figures in () were last reported figures.

	Number of AQMAs declared	Number of Action Plans received
England	191(189)	162 (143)
Scotland	14(12)	5 (3)
Wales	6 (5)	4 (4)
Northern Ireland	18(22)*	8 (6)

* 4 AQMAs have now been revoked in NI

3. Majority of AQMAs designated are for nitrogen dioxide and particulates (PM₁₀) objectives. Road traffic emissions are the main source in 95% of the AQMAs. Only a handful have been designated as a result of industrial sources. The first AQMA for benzene (2010 objective) was designated in England, in 2005. 50% of AQMAs in Northern Ireland have been designated for domestic emissions.

4. The majority of the Action Plans received focus on measures dealing with road traffic, such as local traffic management schemes, setting up clear zones, low emissions zones (particularly in London) or working with the Highways Agency to tackle pollution on the motorways/trunk roads. Defra encouraged English authorities whose draft action plan primarily related to local road transport to integrate them into the second round of LTPs. A number of London local authorities are beginning to revise their Air Quality Action Plans.

Third round of reviews and assessments

5. In April 2007 local authorities were required to submit to Defra and the devolved administration an Annual Progress Report or a Detailed Assessment report where they identified the need for further work following their 2006 USA. To date, around 82% of English authorities, 90% of Scottish authorities, 100% of Welsh authorities, and 100% of NI authorities required to submit a Detailed Assessment have done so. Around 88% of English authorities and 100% of Welsh authorities, 90 % of Scottish authorities and 100% of NI authorities required to submit a Progress Report, have done so.

As part of their Local Air Quality Management duties local authorities are also required to submit either a Progress Report or a Detailed Assessment by the end of April 2008.

Update of LAQM Guidance

6. Defra and the devolved administrations are taking forward an update of the Technical and Policy guidance. The plan is to consult on draft guidance by the first half of 2008.

NI 194 Level of air quality – reduction in NO_x and primary PM₁₀ emissions through local authority's estate and operations

7. Communities and Local Government has announced the final 198 national performance indicators for local authorities -

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/nationalindicator

8. Authorities will report against the 198 indicators, with up to 35 (plus 17 statutory ones) selected as improvement targets. LAAs are led on by top-tier authorities, who will work with their districts, their partners and Government Offices when drafting and agreeing LAAs.

9. Improvement targets are not intended to duplicate statutory requirements. For air quality, we already have the statutory local air quality management system. The performance indicator enables local authorities, and partners, to lead by example and make reductions in NO_x and PM₁₀ concentrations by reducing emissions across their entire area. Emissions from strategic partners can also be included in improvement targets. There is an equivalent indicator for CO₂ emissions (from authorities' own estates and operations), as well as a CO₂ indicator targeting community action. The latter is likely to target areas that are already dealt with through local air quality management.

10. CLG consulted on the indicators in late 2007 (consultation closed on 21 December), and the emissions tool for the air quality (and climate change) indicator was consulted on as part of this - www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/local/indicator.htm

11. Local authorities will collect data from April 2008 and develop a baseline of emissions for 2009. Guidance will be provided in the revised LAQM guidance.

Defra/DAs
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