

Local Authority:	<b>Cheltenham Borough Council</b>
Reference:	<b>ASR24-2284</b>
Date of issue	<b>August 2024</b>

## **Annual Status Report Appraisal Report**

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

CBC currently have one Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) declared for exceedances of the NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean air quality objective (AQO). The Cheltenham Borough Council AQMA 2020 was declared in 2020 to replace the borough-wide AQMA which was revoked in 2020, and is described as 'an area including properties with a façade fronting onto: High Street from Junction of Gloucester Road and Tewkesbury Road to Junction of Burton Street; Poole Way; and Swindon Road from junction of Poole Way to St Georges Street'. The Council formally adopted their new Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) in 2024.

The Council undertook automatic (continuous) monitoring at two locations during 2023, CM1 (Swindon Road) which monitored for NO<sub>2</sub> and CM2 (Gloucester Road) which monitored for PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>. CM1 recorded an annual mean concentration of NO<sub>2</sub> of 25.3 µg/m<sup>3</sup> in 2023, which is well below the annual mean AQO of 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. CM2 recorded an annual mean PM<sub>10</sub> concentration of 17.0 µg/m<sup>3</sup> and an annual mean PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration of 9.6 µg/m<sup>3</sup>, which are both below their respective AQOs. Additionally, there were no exceedances of either the 1-hour mean NO<sub>2</sub> or 24-hour mean PM<sub>10</sub> objectives recorded in 2023.

EBC undertook non-automatic (passive) monitoring at 45 sites during 2023, including one triplicate site, resulting in a total of 47 diffusion tubes being deployed across the borough each month. In 2023, an additional site was added to the network at St Paul's Medical Centre, as part of a collaborative project with the NHS. There were no exceedances of the AQO at any of the passive monitoring sites. The maximum reported concentration in 2023 was 32.4 µg/m<sup>3</sup> at diffusion tube monitoring ID 5 (422 High Street), which is located within the Cheltenham Borough Council AQMA 2020. The annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> concentration did not exceed 60 µg/m<sup>3</sup> at any non-automatic monitoring site, and therefore exceedances of the 1-hour mean NO<sub>2</sub> AQO are unlikely at any monitoring locations. When compared to the 44 monitoring sites that made up the network in the previous reporting year, the NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean concentration decreased at 42 sites, equating to a reduction in pollutant concentration at 95% of sites from 2022.

QA/QC of monitoring data has been discussed, with a local bias adjustment factor of 0.89 applied to the results, with appropriate calculations provided. One location required annualisation during

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2023 (Diffusion Tube ID: 47) as it was not introduced into the network until August 2023. Appropriate calculations have been provided, and no locations required distance correction during 2023. The Council have provided excellent mapping of all monitoring locations within the network.

During 2023, CBC completing several key measures relating to air quality. Some of these include.

- Highways Improvements: 2-way junction priority changes at Albion Street and Imperial Square, which facilitates easier access of traffic into two centre car parks. Upgrades have also taken place on traffic signals on St Margret's Road/A4019 areas, which are now running on the new SCOOT system, helping to keep traffic flowing.
- Low Emission Bus Fleet: Stagecoach buses are now fitted with a black box system, which promotes fuel efficient driving and anti-idling.

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, 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, Cheltenham Borough 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 considered the comments made during the previous appraisal. This is commended and the Council are encouraged to continue this approach for future ASRs.
2. The Council have continued to provide clear evidence of several key actions to improve air quality which have been completed during the current reporting year. In addition, the Council have clearly listed their priorities for the coming year. This is commended and indicative of good practice.
3. The Council have provided excellent mapping of all monitoring locations within the Borough and included AQMA boundaries, which is commended.
4. Extensive trend graphs and analysis have been provided for all monitoring data, which is welcomed.
5. An additional passive diffusion tube monitoring location was commissioned in 2023, as well as a new monitoring station on Gloucester Road to monitor PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations. This is welcomed, and the Council should continue to regularly review their monitoring network to identify any potential new hotspots.
6. The Council should update Table B.1 to include all diffusion tube monitoring locations, as it currently is missing Diffusion Tube IDs 46 and 47.
7. 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. The Council have stated that the ASR has been sent to the Director of Public Health and is awaiting comments, which is welcomed.
8. The Council should ensure that the report refers to 2023 rather than 2022 in all sections, for example within the 'NO<sub>2</sub> Fall-off with Distance from the Road' sub-section.
9. Overall, the report is well structured, detailed and satisfies the criteria of the relevant standards.

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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

The [Air Quality Hub](#) is now run by Defra, it is a free online information and knowledge sharing resource for local authority air quality professionals. Please consider onboarding on the Air Quality Hub to access a multitude of air quality resources and be kept up to date with local authority air quality activity and air quality news.

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## **Appraisal Response Comment Form**

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

**Comments on appraisal/Further information:**