

Local Authority:	Breckland District Council
Reference:	ASR20-0633
Date of issue	August 2020

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.

Breckland District Council generally enjoys good air quality, however has declared one Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in Swaffham for exceedances of the annual mean objective for NO₂. Since its declaration in 2017, there have been no monitored exceedances of the annual mean AQO. However, the maximum concentration reported in the AQMA had increased to 38.0 µg/m³ at monitoring site S12, which is within 10% of the objective. This location has increased from last year by 6.5 µg/m³ and therefore the Council do not wish to consider revocation at this time.

Automatic monitoring was undertaken at two sites during 2019, representing rural and roadside exposure types. The automatic monitoring station located in East Wretham (Rural) monitored NO₂, PM₁₀ and O₃, whilst the roadside site in Swaffham monitored NO₂. Data capture across the continuous monitoring network was good in 2019, with annualisation not required at either site.

Non-automatic monitoring of NO₂ was undertaken via a network of 30 diffusion tubes across 26 sites (including two triplicate sites co-located with each of the Council's automatic monitoring stations). A maximum annual mean NO₂ concentration of 38 was recorded at site S12, making this site the first site with an annual mean of >36 µg/m³ since 2016. Whilst no exceedances of any AQO were recorded during 2019, increases in annual mean NO₂ concentrations were noted at 21 of the Council's 26 passive monitoring sites, therefore suggesting a district-wide worsening in air quality compared to 2018. Data capture across the passive monitoring network was largely sufficient, with annualisation required at one site (S12) due to a data capture rate of less than 75%.

QA/QC is considered to be thorough, with extensive discussion and supporting evidence provided for all procedures applied. The Council opted to apply a local bias adjustment factor to their 2019 monitoring results in order to ensure best practice in line with TG16 and to maintain consistency with previous years' results. A discussion of the choice of factor has been provided, and the application of a local factor is considered appropriate. The local factor for 2019 (0.95) also offers a more conservative assessment than the national factor (0.92). Distance correction was not required at any site, as those sites experiencing annual mean NO₂ concentrations in excess of 36 µg/m³ are representative of relevant exposure.

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The Council are commended on their progress against AQAP measures during 2019, of note:

- Raising awareness of eco-driving through promotion of air quality issues on websites, e.g. anti-idling added to council's web pages. Clean Air Day on 20th June 2019 to inform schools of air quality issues.
- Installation of fast chargers in Market Place, and plans to install rapid chargers in Pedlar car park to encourage the use of electric vehicles within the town centre; and
- Completion of a review of illegal and habitual parking on Station Street that hinders traffic flow.

Priorities for the coming year have also been outlined, which are considered appropriate.

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 Breckland District Council to continue to work towards completion of further AQAP measures, and submit an Annual Status Report in 2021.

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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 provided a thorough report which contains the required content.
2. The Swaffham AQMA has seen no recorded exceedances of the annual mean objective for NO₂ since its declaration in 2017, however the maximum concentration reported in the AQMA had increased to 38.0 µg/m³ at monitoring site S12 during 2019, which is within 10% of the objective. This location has increased from last year by 6.5 µg/m³ and therefore the Council do not wish to consider revocation at this time. This position is supported.
3. QA/QC is considered to be thorough, and the Council are commended on the extensive detail provided when discussing procedures applied. This is encouraged in all future reports.
4. Whilst no exceedances of any AQO were recorded during 2019, increases in annual mean NO₂ concentrations were noted at 21 of the Council's 26 passive monitoring sites, therefore suggesting a district-wide worsening in air quality compared to 2018. The Council are encouraged to investigate the reasons for these increases where practicable, and report on this in next year's ASR. An extension of the monitoring network in areas where the greatest increases have been identified is also encouraged if possible.
5. Trends in monitoring data are presented, however further discussion of these trends is welcomed for each pollutant.
6. Mapping clearly demonstrates the extent of the monitoring network, and site locations with respect to the AQMA. This is encouraged in all future reports.

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

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Appraisal Response Comment Form

Contact Name:	
Contact Telephone number:	
Contact email address:	

Comments on appraisal/Further information: