

# Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 Local Air Quality Management

Consultation Draft

Progress Report Guidance  
LAQM.PRG(03)

Issued by

Defra  
Scottish Executive  
Welsh Assembly Government

July 2003



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government



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Published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Printed in the UK, July 2003, on 100% recycled material.

# CHAPTER 1: Introduction

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## Introduction

- 1.01 This guidance document is designed to assist local authorities in the preparation of air quality Progress Reports which form part of the local air quality management (LAQM) system introduced in the Environment Act 1995 and subsequent Regulations. It supplements the two documents issued in February 2003, which provide policy guidance (LAQM.PG(03) in England and Wales, and LAQM.PG(S)(03) in Scotland) and technical guidance (LAQM.TG(03)) for local authorities carrying out their LAQM duties. LAQM itself forms a key part in the UK Government's and the Devolved Administrations' strategies to achieve the air quality objectives. This Guidance applies in England, Scotland and Wales. Separate Guidance will be published for Northern Ireland later in the year.

## Role of Progress Reports

- 1.02 Progress Reports have been introduced into the LAQM system following a detailed evaluation of the first round of local authority review and assessment<sup>1</sup>. Discussions were held with a wide range of local authorities. A need was identified to develop a longer-term vision for both LAQM and the review and assessment process. The process was seen to be too stop-start, with most Local Authorities completing their first round of review and assessment and then doing little for several years until the next round. This did not encourage the integration of LAQM into the routine work of Local Authorities.
- 1.03 The evaluation report recommended that *"careful consideration should be given to requiring an annual LAQM report instead of less frequent review and assessment reports. This would avoid the current stop-start situation affecting many authorities. It would help ensure continuity in resourcing air quality within local Authorities so as to maintain the capacity and skills required to manage LAQM. Such a report should provide both a review and update on air quality issues, including information on developments that might affect air quality and the results of monitoring. It would ensure that changed circumstances*

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<sup>1</sup> Evaluation of the First Round of the Local Air Quality Management Process, Report for Defra, March 2002, available at [www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/laqm/eval/index.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/laqm/eval/index.htm)

*requiring a detailed assessment were identified early and acted upon without delay. The proposal should be developed further and consulted on with Local Authorities.”.* This recommendation was developed further by Defra and the Devolved Administrations, and the current concept of Progress Reports, to be prepared in years when authorities are not carrying out their 3 yearly Updating and Screening Assessment or carrying out a Detailed Assessment, was introduced in the policy and technical guidance documents (LAQM.PG(03), LAQM.PG(S)(03) and LAQM.TG(03)). These guidance documents were widely consulted upon, and the longer-term vision, which included Progress Reports was welcomed<sup>2</sup>.

- 1.04 Progress Reports should assist the local authorities with the LAQM process in a number of ways – see Box 1.1. This in turn should help local authorities implement LAQM and thereby bring about improvements in air quality.

#### Box 1.1: How Progress Reports can assist local authorities

by helping retain a profile for LAQM within the authority, including the retention of staff with a knowledge of air quality issues

by providing a means for communicating air quality information to members and the public

by maximising the usefulness and interpretation of the monitoring effort being carried out by the local authority

by maximising the value of the investment in monitoring equipment

by making the next round of review and assessment that much easier, as there will be a readily available up-to-date source of information

by helping local authorities respond to requests for up-to-date information on air quality

by providing information to assist in other policy areas, such as transport and land use planning

by providing a ready source of information on air quality for developers carrying out environmental assessments for new schemes

by demonstrating progress with implementation of air quality Action Plans and/or air quality strategies

by providing a timely indication of the need for further measures to improve air quality, rather than delaying until the next full round of review and assessment

- 1.05 Progress Reports are not designed to represent a further Updating and Screening Assessment, although, **authorities are reminded that if at any time they identify a risk of an air quality exceedence then they should proceed to a Detailed Assessment** and not delay until the next full round of review and assessment<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Response available at: [www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consult/laqm/pdf/laqmpg02response.pdf](http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consult/laqm/pdf/laqmpg02response.pdf)

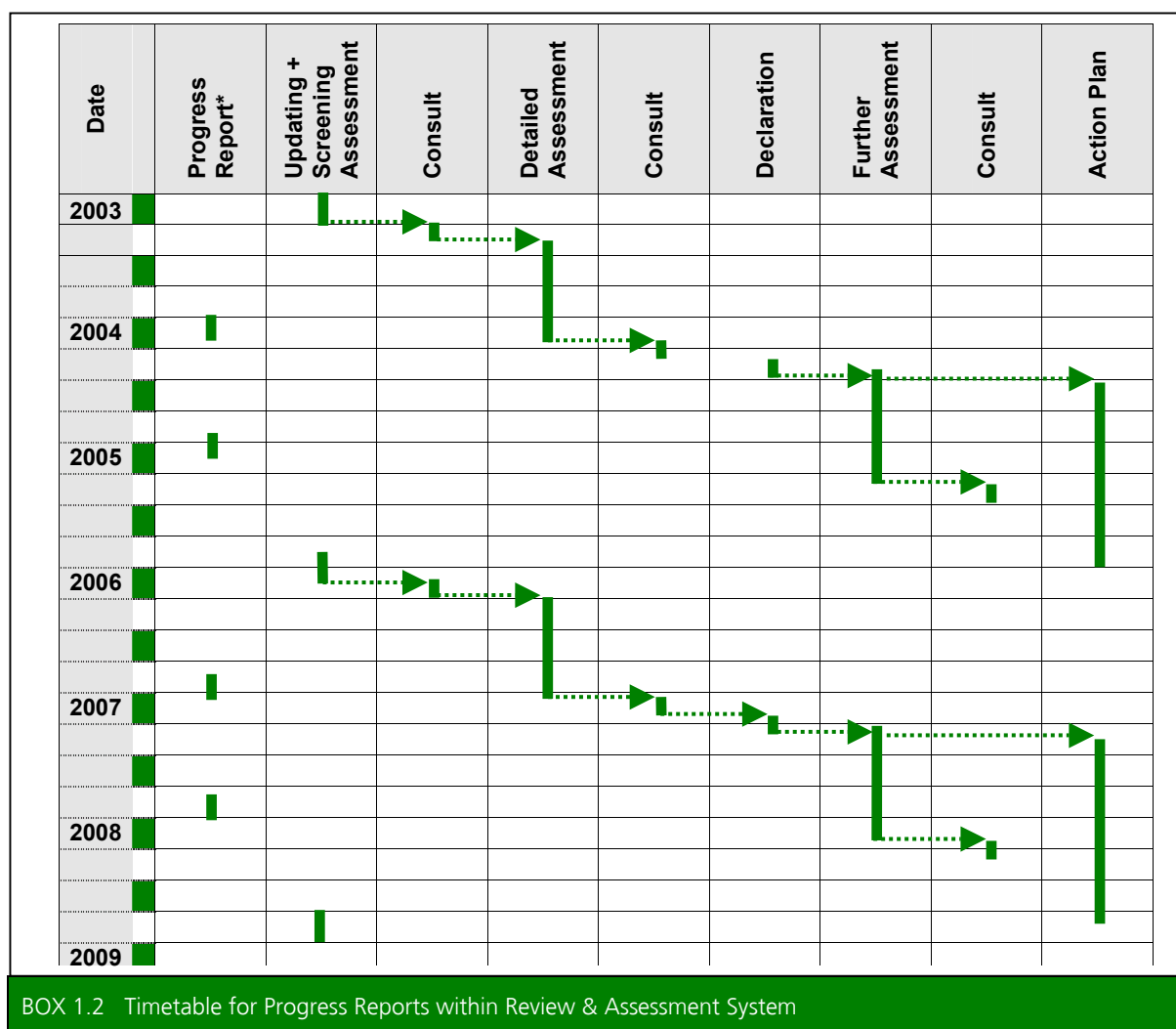
<sup>3</sup> See paragraph 1.66 in LAQM.PG(03).

## When are Progress Reports required?

- 1.06 Progress Reports are designed to ensure continuity in the LAQM process. They thus fill the gaps between the three yearly requirement to carry out a review & assessment of air quality. The timetable is illustrated in Box 1.2. **Progress Reports are only required in years when the authority is not carrying out an Updating and Screening Assessment or a Detailed Assessment<sup>4</sup>.** Other specific requirements for Progress Reports are:
- the due date is the end of April in the relevant year;
  - in the case of Northern Ireland a separate timetable is being followed;
  - in the case of London authorities, the first Updating and Screening Assessments, for those authorities preparing Action Plans, is not due until December 2003. These authorities will therefore not be required to prepare a Progress Report in 2004. They will though be required to prepare a Progress Report by April 2005, even if they have prepared a Detailed Assessment during 2004;
  - Progress Reports **will** be required in years in which Further Assessments are being carried out.

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<sup>4</sup> This Statement is based on a calendar year for Updating and Screening Assessment and a year running from May to April for Detailed Assessments.



\* This timetable for Progress Reports does not apply in Northern Ireland, nor in London in 2004. It also does not apply for any authority carrying out a Detailed Assessment in 2003/4 and 2006/7.

## The format and content of Progress Reports

- 1.07 The format for the Progress Report is left to the authority to determine. In those cases where the authority is already producing a regular air quality report, then it may be appropriate to amend this report to cover the requirements of a Progress Report.
- 1.08 This guidance sets out the **minimum reporting requirements** for Progress Reports that form part of the review and assessment process. It also discusses **useful optional elements** that could be included in Progress Reports. For those authorities implementing air quality Action Plans, there is a separate requirement to prepare annual Progress Reports. It is **strongly advised that authorities needing to report progress on Action Plans produce a single Progress Report covering both the review and assessment and Action Plan reporting requirements.**

- 1.09 When preparing their reports, authorities should bear in mind that **the overall aims should be to report progress on implementing local air quality management, and progress in achieving, or in many cases maintaining, concentrations below the air quality objectives.**

## What to do with Progress Reports?

- 1.10 On completion, local authorities should submit their Progress Reports to the Secretary of State, the Mayor of London, the Scottish Executive or the National Assembly for Wales, as appropriate, for consideration. They may choose how wide they wish to circulate these reports, but it would be good practice to make copies available to the public, local stakeholders, the Agencies and other local authority departments for information.
- 1.11 Defra and the Devolved Administrations will appraise the reports to confirm that they follow the minimum requirements set out in Guidance and that progress is being made with working towards meeting the air quality objectives or maintaining concentrations below the objectives.

## Support for preparation of Progress Reports

- 1.12 Local authorities are encouraged to make full use of the five Helpdesks funded by Defra and the Devolved Administrations, when preparing their Progress Reports. Contact details are provided in Box 1.3. Before contacting the Helpdesk the authority should check with the frequently asked questions (FAQs) sections of the websites to see whether their question has already been addressed.
- 1.13 Use should also be made of the Air Quality Archive ([www.airquality.co.uk](http://www.airquality.co.uk)), which houses monitoring data collected as part of the national monitoring networks, as well as a number of tools to help the review and assessment process. This is available at [www.airquality.co.uk](http://www.airquality.co.uk).
- 1.14 Useful examples of Progress Reports will be posted on the Review & Assessment website once they become available.

**Box 1.3: Helpdesks for Local Authorities**

Helpdesk	Operated by	Contact Details
Review &	Air Quality Consultants Ltd. and	0117 344 3668

<b>Assessment</b>	University of West of England	<a href="mailto:aqm-review@uwe.ac.uk">aqm-review@uwe.ac.uk</a> <a href="http://www.uwe.ac.uk/aqm/review">www.uwe.ac.uk/aqm/review</a>
<b>Monitoring</b>	NETCEN	01235 463356 <a href="mailto:aqm.help@aeat.co.uk">aqm.help@aeat.co.uk</a> <a href="http://www.airquality.co.uk">www.airquality.co.uk</a>
<b>Emissions</b>	NETCEN	01235 463356 <a href="mailto:aqm.help@aeat.co.uk">aqm.help@aeat.co.uk</a> <a href="http://www.airquality.co.uk">www.airquality.co.uk</a>
<b>Modelling</b>	Casella Stanger	020 7902 6119 <a href="mailto:modelhelp@stanger.co.uk">modelhelp@stanger.co.uk</a> <a href="http://www.stanger.co.uk/airqual/modelhlp">www.stanger.co.uk/airqual/modelhlp</a>
<b>Action Plans</b>	Casella Stanger	020 7902 6130 <a href="mailto:actionplanhelp@stanger.co.uk">actionplanhelp@stanger.co.uk</a> <a href="http://www.stanger.co.uk/airqual/actionplan">www.stanger.co.uk/airqual/actionplan</a>

## CHAPTER 2: Minimum Requirements

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### Introduction

- 2.01 The overall aims of the Progress Report should be to:
- report progress on implementing local air quality management;
  - report progress in achieving, or in many cases maintaining, concentrations below the air quality objectives;
- 2.02 It is considered these aims can best be achieved by addressing two matters:
- new monitoring results;
  - new local developments that might affect local air quality;

This chapter provides guidance on what is expected under each of these headings.

### New monitoring results

- 2.03 Most local authorities are carrying out some form of air quality monitoring in their area. Some have been doing so for many years. In certain cases this supplements data that are available from national network sites. **The Progress Report should provide a summary of all available monitoring data in a format suitable for comparison with the relevant air quality objectives.** For example nitrogen dioxide data should be reported as annual mean concentrations, and where possible as the number of exceedences of the 1-hour objective value of 200  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ . Reporting full hourly data, or full monthly data for diffusion tubes, is not necessary.
- 2.04 To maximise the value of air quality monitoring, careful attention should be paid to the type of equipment used and the locations where the monitors are placed, as well as the QA/QC and data verification procedures. Detailed guidance on these issues is provided in Appendix 1 to LAQM.TG(03), and reference should be made to this when setting up and operating monitoring equipment. Particular matters to take account of when preparing and assessing monitoring results are set out in Box 2.1.

## What to include in the Report

2.05 When reporting the monitoring data the following should be included where possible:

- a map showing the monitoring locations. It may be possible to refer to a map in a previously published document, as long as it is readily available, e.g. published on the web;
- summary tables of concentrations that allow ready comparison with the objectives, e.g. annual mean values for nitrogen dioxide for the measurement year.
- plots showing trends in concentrations, e.g. plots of annual mean nitrogen dioxide concentrations for the last ten years;

Box 2.1: Matters to take into account when preparing Progress Reports	
1	When presenting automatic monitoring data, it should be made clear whether the results have been ratified. Information on data capture should also be provided.
2	Where data are available for less than 9 months, then they should be adjusted to provide an estimate of the annual mean using the procedure set out in LAQM.TG(03) (Box A1.3, page A1-16).
3	To help understand the results, the type of monitoring site should be specified (see Appendix A in Annex 1 to LAQM.TG(03) for definitions). For roadside sites the distance from the kerb should be provided. For industrial sites the distance to the source(s) should be specified. This information could be provided as an Appendix to the report.
4	Where nitrogen dioxide diffusion tube data are provided, then it should be made clear whether the results have been adjusted for laboratory bias. Where they have been adjusted, brief details should be provided of the adjustment factor used and its source. Details should also be provided of the laboratory being used, the tube preparation method and the exposure period.
5	Summary information should be provided on QA/QC. This can be by way of a reference to a previously published document, so long as the document is still readily available, e.g. a Stage 3 report published on the web.
6	Where results are presented for new monitoring sites, then a description of the sites should be provided. This should include the reason they were set up, e.g. do they represent worst-case relevant exposure locations?
7	When describing sites, it should be made clear whether they represent relevant exposure. For instance, if the site is kerbside, it would be appropriate to say that "the nearest relevant exposure is residential properties set back 5 m from the kerb.
8	For short-term objectives, e.g. 1-hour for nitrogen dioxide, the results should be presented as number of hours (or 15-mins for sulphur dioxide, or days for PM <sub>10</sub> ) above the objective value. This should only be done where data capture is >90% of a full year. If data capture is <90% or monitoring is for less than a full year, then it is only appropriate to present the results as percentiles. The following percentiles roughly equate to the objectives: 99.8 <sup>th</sup> percentiles for 1-hour nitrogen dioxide; 99.9 <sup>th</sup> percentiles for 15-min sulphur dioxide; 99.7 <sup>th</sup> percentiles for 1-hour sulphur dioxide; 99.2 <sup>nd</sup> percentile for 24-hour sulphur dioxide; and 90 <sup>th</sup> percentile for PM <sub>10</sub> .

- 2.06 The Progress Report should draw attention to:
- results for new monitoring sites and whether they reveal any new information about air quality;
  - evidence of any trends over recent years. Care should be exercised in discussing trends, as changes in concentrations occur from year to year due to weather conditions. It is normal practice to only consider a trend as being significant when five years worth of data are available;

## New local developments

- 2.07 This section should deal with changes that have taken place which may affect air quality. The items to include are:
- new industrial processes, e.g. Part A, A2 or B processes;
  - large new developments, especially those that will change traffic flows. This need only include developments that have been granted planning permission;
  - new landfill sites, quarries etc., that have been granted planning permission.
- 2.08 The Progress Report should log these changes so that they can be considered more thoroughly during the next full round of review and assessment.

## CHAPTER 3: Optional Elements

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### Introduction

3.01 The guidance on the contents of a Progress Report in Chapter 2 is designed to provide the minimum information to demonstrate to stakeholders the progress that is being made in addressing air quality issues within the local authority area. The Progress Report provides, however, an ideal opportunity to report on other aspects of the authority's work on air quality. Possible elements that could be added to Progress Reports are:

- progress on implementation of action plans;
- an assessment of the monitoring data in relation to likely exceedences of the objectives;
- progress on local air quality strategies;
- an assessment of new developments that have received planning permission;
- a listing of planning applications that have the potential to affect local air quality;
- progress on implementing those elements of the local transport plan (local transport strategies in Scotland) that might affect air quality.

There may be other areas of local interest that the authority also wishes to incorporate into its Progress Report.

### Implementation of Action Plans

3.02 Although local authorities can submit separate Progress Reports on Actions Plans, they are strongly advised to combine the two reports into one 'Air Quality Progress Report'. The role of action plan Progress Reports was originally set out in the Policy Guidance, LAQM.PG(03) and LAQM.PG(S)(03). It is to help ensure that local authorities implement the measures within their action plan to the timescale indicated within the plan.

3.03 It suggested in LAQM.PG(03) and LAQM.PG(S)(03) that the report should simply list the measures within the action plan, including the timescales by which they are due to be implemented, and then give an update on progress in terms of their implementation.

- 3.04 Defra and the DAs also expect local authorities to include some comments within the Action Plan Progress Report detailing, where possible, the impact the measures have had/are having on local air quality. A revised suggested layout for the action plan element of a Progress Report is therefore provided in Box 2.2. **Local authorities in England and Wales should note that this layout supersedes that set out in Appendix B of LAQM.PG(03)].** Defra and the DAs expect local authorities to have regard to this layout when completing their Action Plan Progress Reports and the action plan element of the Air Quality Progress Report in the future.

**Box 2.2: Recommended format for action plan report**

Action plan measure/target	Original timescale	Progress with measure	Impact on air quality	Comments
e.g. Publicity Campaign on walking/cycling	August 2002	Introduced on time and due to run 6 months	Long term aim to reduce road traffic and hence emissions.	Leaflets available in all public places. Exhibition stands in main shopping centres. Campaign linked to work with schools/universities on sustainable travel
e.g. Park and Ride Scheme (state which area in the authority)	To be fully implemented by June 2004	On schedule to be implemented by June 2004	Small reduction ~ 5% for NO <sub>x</sub> along route due to use of Euro IV buses.	Scheme being taken forward with support from transport planners.

## Assessment of monitoring data

- 3.05 The minimum requirement as set out in Chapter 2 is to report monitoring data and trends over recent years. It will also prove helpful to project the measured concentrations forward to the objective years, using the guidance in LAQM.TG(03) (Boxes 2.3, 3.3,4.3, 6.6, 6.7, 6.8 and 8.7)<sup>5</sup>. This will provide early warning of likely exceedences that may not have been previously identified.
- 3.06 Authorities may also find it helpful to report monitoring data for pollutants not covered by the regulations, for example, ozone or polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH).

<sup>5</sup> A calculator tool is available to carry out these calculations on the website [www.airquality.co.uk](http://www.airquality.co.uk), under Local Air Quality Management : LAQM Tools : Year Adjustment Factors

## Local air quality strategies

- 3.07 The LAQM Policy Guidance (LAQM.PG(03) and LAQM.PG(S)(03)) strongly recommends that all authorities, particularly those that have not had to designate AQMAs or do not expect to designate an AQMA in future, but who have areas close to the exceedence levels, should consider drawing up a local air quality strategy.
- 3.08 Progress Reports provide the opportunity for the authority to report on the development of its strategy, or where the strategy is in place to report on progress with implementation of any specific measures within the strategy.

## New developments with planning permission

- 3.09 The minimum requirement as set out in Chapter 2 is to compile a list of new developments that have planning permission. It will also prove helpful to collate details of the air quality assessment that accompanied the planning application, and to check that it has been carried out to the standards appropriate for a Detailed Assessment. If no air quality assessment was submitted it may be appropriate to carry out a screening assessment to establish whether there is a risk that any of the objectives might be breached as a result of the new development. This can make use of the guidance in LAQM.TG(03) and the tools on the LAQM website ([www.airquality.co.uk](http://www.airquality.co.uk)). This assessment might identify a need to proceed to a Detailed Assessment.

## Planning applications

- 3.10 The land use planning system is recognised to play an integral part in improving air quality (LAQM.PG(03) and LAQM.PG(S)(03)). This requires close co-operation between planners and environmental health officers. Some local authorities have developed procedures to help ensure that planning applications that might have impacts on air quality are forwarded to the environmental health department for comment.
- 3.11 Updating and Screening Assessments and Detailed Assessments should take account of planning applications that have been approved, but not those in the pipe-line. Progress Reports, on the other hand, provide the opportunity to log planning applications for new developments to give a picture of areas where changes may take place and where combined impacts from several developments may become important.
- 3.12 The information provided in a planning section of the Progress Report could therefore include a list of the major developments under

consideration that might affect air quality. Such a list could be based on those applications for which an air quality assessment was being provided or for which an air quality assessment had been requested.

## Implementation of local transport plans and strategies

- 3.13 The majority of air quality issues in the UK relate to emissions from the road transport sector. Measures to improve air quality on a local scale are thus closely related to the local transport plan (LTP) or strategy (LPS). Local authorities could choose to make a reference within the Progress Report to those measures within the LTP or LPS that specifically relate to bringing about air quality improvements. Authorities in England and Wales could also report on any other measures aimed at addressing transport-related air quality issues that have not been (or will not be) reported in the LTP Annual Progress Report.