



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

www.gov.uk/defra

Local air quality management review
Summary of responses and government reply
December 2013

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1. Purpose of Consultation

In 2013 the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) proposed 4 options to improve local air quality management in the UK and increase focus on measures to improve air quality. The Government subsequently ran a consultation to ensure it understood the implications of the proposed options for change. The Consultation ran from 12th July to 30th August 2013, although late responses were accepted until 13th September due to August being a holiday season for many.

2. Geographical extent

The consultation applied to England only. Scotland held a consultation on its own proposals for change and Wales and Northern Ireland are considering what changes may be needed in their administrations.

3. Impact Assessment

An Impact Assessment (IA) was prepared to support this consultation and can be found at: https://consult.defra.gov.uk/communications/https-consult-defra-gov-uk-laqm_review .

4. Summary of responses

There were 232 substantive responses in total, of which the main groups were as follows:

- Local Authorities – 133 responses
- Organisations (including environmental groups) - 82 responses
- Individuals (excluding campaign responses) - 17 responses

Campaigns/Petitions – over 18,000 emails were received from the following campaigns:

- 38 degrees – approx. 17,500 emails
- Biofuelwatch – approx. 600 emails
- Unidentified campaign emails (but with similar wording) – approx. 150

Note on the weighting of petitions and campaign responses: Over 18,000 communications were recorded but not acknowledged individually, as per Government policy. Where materially substantive points were raised in addition to the standard text, these were recorded separately for inclusion in the overall summary of responses. In order not to

skew the results of the consultation it is normal practice for campaign responses to be treated as a single, numerical response. Responses to consultations are not votes.

5. Responses to individual questions

The following section summarises the responses to each of the 18 questions posed by the consultation. The summary includes responses submitted online and by post/email .

Due in part to the huge volume of responses received, the summary report identifies the key themes (i.e. what most people said), together with relevant insights and innovative ideas to help inform policy.

Closed questions – where questions were quantitative in nature (e.g. tick box responses) numerical data (usually in the form of a graph or table) has been downloaded from the Citizen Space website and presented as part of the statistical summary for the relevant question. Where responses submitted outside of Citizen Space were materially different, these were recorded and analysed separately. Because of the nature of category-based questions a separate comments box was included in the consultation document so that respondents could quantify their answer, or propose an alternative.

Open questions – for qualitative-based questions, a broad analysis has been made as to the key issues raised, including (where feasible) a numerical estimate of those for and against the proposal, how many offered alternatives, the breakdown of respondents by group, etc. Where it was felt the statistics gave a false sense of accuracy (especially in nuanced responses), these have been omitted. You should refer to the summary of responses for each question in order to get a fuller measure of the views expressed.

The following summary of responses is structured as follows:

- 1) Summary of the Aim (there were four aims in the consultation)

Aim 1 Local action focused on what is necessary to support air quality improvements to benefit public health and to work towards EU air quality standards

Aim 2 Local government and other stakeholders are clear on their roles and responsibilities and work together to improve air quality

Aim 3 Local authorities have simple reporting requirements with less bureaucracy and time to concentrate on actions to improve air quality and public health

Aim 4 Local authorities have access to information about evidence based measures to improve air quality, including on transport and communications

- 2) A statistical overview of each question

- 3) Summary of the key views expressed, themes and overall consensus
- 4) Summary of preferred Option per aim (there were four options in the consultation):

Option 1	Business As Usual with limited changes
Option 2	Concentration on Action Planning and focuses reporting
Option 3	Alignment with EU requirements to meet air quality limit values
Option 4	Separate local air quality management duties do not exist

Part 1

Part 1 of the consultation concerned the aims of the review and the options most closely associated with their delivery. Questions 1-4 were concerned with Aim1.

AIM 1 Local action focused on what is necessary to support air quality improvements to benefit public health and to work towards EU air quality standards

Question 1 - What are your views on whether we should consolidate EU and National Air Quality Objectives and how this might best be achieved?

High level statistics

- 95.6% responded to this question .

Key themes

Responses have been grouped into key themes relevant to each question. Below we have set out these themes along with some quotations from respondents which help illustrate the views expressed.

There was general view that the differences (mainly in timescales for delivery) between nationally set LAQM objectives and EU standards had been a source of confusion, not

only for air quality practitioners but for the public at large, many of whom have had difficulties understanding the differences between the systems, especially in regards to reporting compliance to the EU.

Most respondents were broadly in favour of consolidation but one which would allow flexibility for local authorities to pursue local hotspots (i.e. outside of Defra's assessment of compliance with the limit values set down in the EU Ambient Air Quality Directive 2008/50EC (henceforth known as the 'Directive') and to retain relevant health-based objectives, such as 15 min Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂), which are not part of the Directive.

Reasons for supporting consolidation

Those who supported consolidation between EU and national standards or objectives did so for often similar reasons, the key one being that it would promote consistency and simplify the current approach.

They also felt that having a single set of standards to work towards made better sense for regulators, politicians and the public.

It was also argued that having local authorities explicitly work towards the EU standards was a way to raise the profile of LAQM and increase transparency (at local government and public level).

How to consolidate?

Respondents suggested that consolidation should be a largely regulatory matter, requiring subsequent changes to existing policy and technical guidance. A number of suggestions were put forward on how to consolidate, including:

- Remove the existing suite of LAQM objectives and fully adopt the EU standards (a few saw this as preferential to simply aligning LAQM to the 2010 Air Quality Standards Regulations) .
- Align but retain LAQM as a separate standard. This would allow scope for additional pollutants (e.g. 15 min mean SO₂ objective) to remain at national/local level, but remove those objectives which are viewed as no longer essential (such as 1, 3 butadiene).
- Produce a single "The Air Quality Objectives/Standards EU Alignment Regulations"

Do not support

Those who disagreed with the proposal to consolidate did so because this was seen as a weakening of local air quality management (and by definition, local public health) in favour of a more broad-based EU approach. It was suggested that consolidation brought with it potential risks and concerns for local authorities. Key issues to note:

- Where to measure? The Directive describes how the compliance assessment for limit values should be undertaken, including providing detailed criteria on where to locate measurement stations. The prescriptive criteria which apply to limit value assessment are necessarily different from the approach taken for the purpose of local air quality management, and seek to provide a national assessment of compliance with the standards. They do not require the assessment of micro-scale, hot-spot environments. Assessment for the purpose of local air quality management focuses on measuring air quality where there is 'relevant exposure'.

Questions were asked as to whether local assessment would have to comply with the EU criteria for location of stations and whether exceedances of objectives would still be based on locations which have relevant exposure for the averaging period of the objective, or both.

It was also asked what the impact would be on locally identified 'hotspots' outside those identified by the national assessment.

- Implications for local monitoring: The compliance assessment for EU limit values is undertaken by Defra using the methods set out in the Directive. Respondents thought that this would undermine the value of local authority monitoring and result in a lack of evidence to drive improvements. The consultation did not discourage local monitoring or modelling, but many were concerned that if local measurements had to be of Directive quality, using Directive methods, then many local authorities, particularly those with limited resources, might stop LAQM based monitoring altogether.
- Mandatory vs. non-mandatory: Under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995, local authorities have a duty to review air quality 'from time-to-time' and to work towards meeting air quality objectives. The government, however, is responsible for meeting limit values set down in the Directive and associated legislation. Respondents were concerned that consolidation could place new responsibilities/pressures on local authorities to meet limit values when they might not be in the best position (practically and financially) to achieve compliance.
- The threat of EU fines: A number of authorities, who were opposed or uncertain on consolidation, commented that that should local authorities be bound under the same conditions as EU law, this would increase the likelihood that they could be fined for breach of EU limit values.
- Objectives mismatched: These are covered in greater detail in Question 2, but consolidation raised the issue of how, and in what capacity, local authorities could help deliver EU obligations on PM2.5 (for instance, most authorities are not set up to evaluate PM2.5), as well as how other non-EU standards, such as the 15 minute mean SO2 objective (currently in force over several AQMAs for health-based reasons), would be retained.

- Powers: The wording of the Environment Act 1995 already qualifies the extent to which local authorities can reasonably be expected to improve air quality, by the wording 'work in pursuance of air quality objectives'. It was therefore commented that consolidation to strengthen LAQM would have to provide additional powers for local authorities, including a strengthening of partnership working between different tiers of government (e.g. county/district) and between Departments in authorities. Many respondents also commented that even with additional powers, the issues of transboundary pollution, the limited control local authorities had over nationally-managed road networks and local bus and freight companies, meant that many could not reasonably do more than they were doing now.

Question 2 - What are your views on the range of objectives local authorities should work towards and whether or not these should be reduced?

High level statistics

- 95.6% responded to this question

Key themes:

Most argued that the decision to retain or remove any particular objective should be made in respect to its impact on human health, achievability, and for how many years the objective had been met. There was a caveat that some flexibility be built into the system, so that where local evidence showed a problem with a particular pollutant, the authority should be free to deal with it.

The majority of respondents supported retaining SO₂, including the 15 min mean SO₂ objective (for which several AQMAs have been declared). It was argued that there were well founded health grounds for maintaining the SO₂ 15 min objective, despite the fact that this objective was not reflected in the Directive.

PM_{2.5}: A significant number of respondents wanted PM_{2.5} to be included within LAQM because of the serious (and well documented) impact fine particles have on human health. (Question 3 addresses the issue of how best local authorities can help meet PM_{2.5} targets). PM_{2.5} was often included as one of the three pollutants of highest concern – NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}. Some advocated that local authorities should only concern themselves with these pollutants.

Many commentators thought that local authorities could make a contribution to reducing levels of PM_{2.5} (or at the very least work towards such reductions). It was felt that without local help, the government would be hard pressed to meet its requirement to reduce urban background concentrations by 15% by 2021.

Most respondents did not think it would be necessary for local authorities to assess or monitor levels of PM2.5 locally. Rather it was thought that this pollutant could be assessed through Defra's national assessment. On the other hand, some thought that local monitoring and assessment would help target areas where fine particles were a particular hazard to human health.

Neutral

A number of respondents argued for the current range of objectives to be retained, as they were considered appropriate, and in any case, the system allowed that no action be taken on pollutants that were not at risk of being exceeded. A few advocated updating the present set of objectives – e.g. supplanting PM10 with PM2.5.

Question 3 - What contribution can local authorities make in reducing emissions and/or concentrations from PM2.5 pollution? Please provide examples, where appropriate.

High level statistics

- 93.9% responded to this question

Key themes

Most respondents to this question were keen to cite numerous examples on how to mitigate air pollution. It was also commented, that many local authorities, through implementing Action Plan measures to reduce NO2 and PM10, would also help reduce PM2.5.

Most understood the value of involving local authorities in helping reduce PM2.5 due to the potential health impacts associated with fine particles. Actions targeted specifically at PM2.5 would require better knowledge of the nature (sources) and extent of elevated PM2.5 concentrations at national and local level. The introduction of the Public Health Outcomes Framework (PHOF) and the transfer of public health responsibilities to local authorities also meant that the health impacts of PM2.5 were increasingly important to local public health stakeholders and members of the public. Therefore, a number of respondents said they would welcome guidance on how to reduce emissions/concentrations within a local authority area.

Measures/Contributions

The following list is a snap-shot of some of the key measures proposed by respondents. Where PM2.5 is mentioned specifically in a response, these measures are listed separately.

General measures/contributions:

- Active discouragement of diesels through proactive enforcement of vehicle emissions standards for cars and buses, and awareness raising campaigns.
- Responsible fleet procurement and management – e.g. nationally enforced age limit for Public Service Vehicles (PSVs).
- Reduce car journeys within towns and cities, and improve sustainable travel options.
- Incentivise the uptake of clean fuels.
- Better controls over biomass burning and installations.
- Requesting low emission strategies for new developments.

Measures to tackle PM2.5:

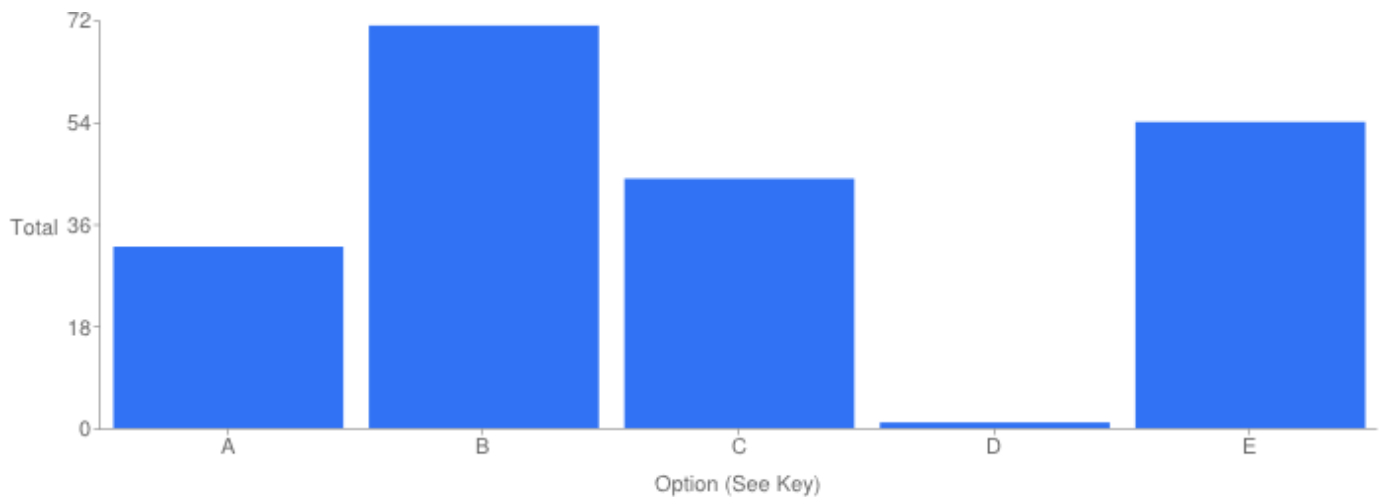
- Implement protocols for PM2.5 reduction through a package of measures such as: Low Emission Zones for city/town centres; planning restrictions (i.e. suitable mitigation) on polluting activities such as incinerators upwind of AQMAs; implementation of sustainable low emission transport
- PM2.5 particularly associated with diesel vehicles and Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) – therefore, curbs/controls on HGV through-traffic in town/city centres would help, including weight restrictions on trucks; on the spots emissions testing (at the tailpipe) with fines for the worst polluters.
- A key national measure to control PM2.5 would be for car manufacturers to reduce particulate matter from diesel vehicles and from vehicle brake and tyre wear.
- Utilise planning process to ensure PM2.5 levels are taken into account in new developments – e.g. include special particulate eating plants, green walls, green roofs, construction dust mitigation etc.

Question 4 - Which option will best help to support Aim 1?

High level statistics

- 91.7% responded to this question

Table of "Best option to support Aim 1"



Key

- A** Option 1 (18%) Business As Usual with Limited Changes
- B** Option 2 (39%) Concentration on Action Planning and focused reporting
- C** Option 3 (24%) Alignment with EU requirements to meet air quality limit values
- D** Option 4 (0.5%) Separate local air quality management duties do not exist
- E** Not Answered (30%)

Key themes

A number of respondents argued that Question 4 was weighted in favour of respondents choosing Option 3, as this was the option most clearly focused on aligning or integrating local air quality efforts with those at the EU reporting level. Notwithstanding this, overall responses favoured Options 1 to 3 or variations thereof, with Option 2 being the statistical favourite. A quarter of respondents did not state a preference, citing, in the main, confusion over the options pertinent to the aim, or stating simply that they did not agree with the aim in the first place.

Views on AIM 1: To reiterate, AIM 1 is: Local action focused on what is necessary to support air quality improvements to benefit public health and to work towards EU air quality standards.

Superficially, most respondents agreed with the laudability of Aim 1, but on closer inspection were concerned about the lack of gradation, with its somewhat ambiguous phrase 'work towards'. A few felt that the focus should be on public health, not a 'tick box' approach to help meet EU air quality standards. One reworded suggestion for Aim 1 was: 'Local action focussed on what is necessary to support air quality improvement to benefit public health'.

Some respondents felt that all four aims of the review were misplaced, declaring that there should be a single, overriding aim along the lines of: giving local authorities the tools necessary to support air quality improvements in order to benefit public health.

Options preferred – and why

Option 1: The Business As Usual option was supported by approximately 18% for the following key reasons:

- Remains the best way to help and galvanise local authorities to improve public health.
- Allows local authorities to retain justification for implementing measures that benefit local air quality and health but also help achieve EU standards.

Option 2: Approximately 39% of respondents felt that Option 2 was the best way to deliver Aim 1. Key reasoning included:

- Sufficient scope within Option 2 to support both local air quality improvements (and public health) and work towards achieving EU limit values.
- More accurately reflects the role needed to protect the health and welfare of local residents.
- Builds on and strengthens Option 1.

Option 3:

- Technically Option 3 supports Aim 1 best in respect of consolidation although many respondents had reservations on this Option which are dealt with in later questions

Option 4:

- No one opted for this Option as the best way to deliver Aim 1.

Variations proposed to deliver Aim 1.

Variations and alternative approaches were encouraged in the consultation and many offered views on the benefits of conjoined options (especially Option 2 & 3).

Option 2 + plus (i.e. with aspects of Option 3 included):

- Option 2 already builds on and adds to the components of Option 1. To further strengthen Option 2, elements of Option 3 could be combined. Many respondents referred to this as Option 2 + (plus). Popular components of a possible merger were:
 - To include the consolidation element of Option 3 and commensurate amendment of the Air Quality (England) Regulations.
 - Remove the requirements for Updating and Screening Assessments (USAs) in favour of a shorter, more-focused, public facing report.

Main concerns over options to deliver AIM 1.

Option 1:

- Does not address the current imbalance between assessment (i.e. over-diagnosis of the problem) and action to achieve real, quantifiable change.
- Would be less effective in delivering EU air quality standards.
- Does not focus resources on Action Planning as efficiently as it could.
- Similar to current arrangements and therefore unlikely to result in any substantive changes.

Option 2:

- Would not see LAQM consolidated or integrated with EU reporting requirements, which many saw as a way to raise the profile of LAQM.

Option 3:

While this was the second most popular option for delivering Aim 1, it usually came with caveats – i.e. very few chose Option 3 in its entirety. Particular concerns raised were:

- Rationale for removing the need to declare AQMAs – it was not made clear how such a removal could or would benefit air quality and hence public health.
- The assumption that local authorities would be free to take action at hotspots outside national assessment was seen as insufficient to secure action to address local hotspots, as many local authorities would interpret the statement as an invitation to reduce their local air quality management commitments.
- Concerns over the ability to undertake local modelling if the only measurement data to calibrate it was the national AURN network.

Option 4:

Nearly all were of the view that this option would likely see a worsening of air quality.

Questions 5-8 were concerned with Aim 2.

AIM 2 Local government and other stakeholders are clear on their roles and responsibilities and work together to improve air quality

Question 5 - What are your views on how cooperation between different tiers of local authorities can be supported?

High level statistics

- 92.2% responded to this question

Key Themes

A number of respondents argued that greater clarity on the roles and responsibilities of different agencies in Air Quality Management was needed. This clarity should extend across agencies such as Highways Agency, Public Health England, County Council and the Environment Agency. Many respondents have also argued this would benefit greatly from statutory guidance.

There was also a general view amongst respondents that cooperation between County, District and Town councils was not working as effectively as it could in regards to Air Quality Management.

Responses from Unitary authorities highlighted that they also had cooperation difficulties between different departments, despite not having to deal with different tiers of government.

A further reoccurring theme was the fact that Air Quality does not feature in the latest draft Strategy published by many local Health and Wellbeing boards, which the respondents feel needs to be included.

Cooperation

The majority of responses indicated that cooperation between different tiers of local government was not effective. The difficulties arise, it has been argued, when it comes to funding of measures to tackle poor air quality, as well as where the different tiers of government had different priorities.

It was mentioned by a number of responses that difficulties were not helped, with air pollution appearing to be a low priority in local transport plans.

The responses which argued that cooperation between the tiers of local government worked well suggested the successful cooperation was due to a statutory basis and long standing relationships that had been built over time.

Key Obstacles to joint working (and how to overcome them)

The responses explored a wide range of obstacles to joint working. There was general consensus that cooperation between different tiers of local authorities broke down when each tier had different priorities, as well as funding difficulties for measures to tackle air quality. Furthermore, a few responses highlighted the problem Local Authority Environmental Health departments faced, when having “ownership” of an AQ hotspot, but lacking the tools with which to directly deal with it.

Further obstacles were the omission of AQ in the draft strategies published by local Health and Wellbeing boards, as well as a local of integration of air quality information/guidance within Transport and Planning Action Plans.

The suggestions of how to overcome these obstacles all agreed that more clarity was needed on the roles and responsibilities of different agencies in AQ management such as Highways Agency, Public Health England, County Council and the Environment Agency. Furthermore it was stated that the duty to cooperate across the tiers needed to be more clearly stated. A large number of responses argued that statutory guidance covering this would be helpful.

Better coordination and consideration of air quality work at a regional and national level was also highlighted by responses. This would aid better cooperation. Many responses expressed frustration that the Local Transport Plans and the National Planning Policy Framework had no requirement to address air quality, which would help District Authorities, who have the burden of compliance with AQ targets but limited control over meaningful transport changes which are county council controlled. Local Transport Plans especially should include public health as a goal as it was, argued, that all too often transport was seen as “how can we help cars move quicker”, with less thought given for the health impacts on local residents.

Another solution explored by a few responses suggested that the National Government should convene air quality partnerships – similar to waste partnerships, to improve cooperation. A similar suggestion argued that there should be a county wide Air Quality Action Plan with overarching strategic county wide actions combined with localised actions where necessary and practicable, so that local issues are still recognised and addressed. Other responses stated there should be clear statutory roles set out within the Local Air Quality management Framework

There were also suggestions that there should be a National Air Quality Action Plan which included actions on the Highway Agency with regards to the national motorway and major trunk road network.

Question 6 - Do you have evidence of where joint working has been effective and what has helped to achieve this or where it has been less effective in supporting action to improve air quality?

High level statistics

- 85.0% responded to this question

Key Themes

A large number of responses touched upon the lack of co-operation between not only tiers of government but also relevant stakeholders and organisations which leads to ineffective meetings, poor implementation of action plans and subsequently no improvement in local air quality. Many responses did touch upon the progress achieved when there is cooperation and joint working, including, sharing goals and targets and understanding the roles each has to play.

Evidence of effectiveness (and why)

The majority of responses referencing effective joint working all touched upon the importance of getting representatives from all relevant departments (from all tiers of government), external bodies, and local organisations to form a group. The group would consist of air quality officers, transportation officers and high way officers from local authorities, and well as officers from passenger transport executives playing an important role.

The purpose of these groups varied, but in the main they helped to inform public health policy; develop public information on changes on air quality and health effects; and ensure the message of why air quality is important was spread effectively. The reason such groups had worked was put down to cooperation to meet shared goals. For example, linking the public health impact of air quality, to transport issues such as road safety and cycling and walking.

A number of responses indicated that they had successfully bid for funds (some through Defra grants) as a result of joint working between multiple parties (e.g. Environment Protection Team, Community Services and Transport Planning Officers). This had helped to establish close working relationships and had led to greater understanding of air quality issues reflected in planning permissions and strategy plans.

Evidence for ineffectiveness (and why)

The vast majority cited the inability to influence strategies of external bodies which has a long term effect on air quality levels on local areas. Furthermore it was argued that there was no incentive for Transport Planners to engage with Air Quality professionals which

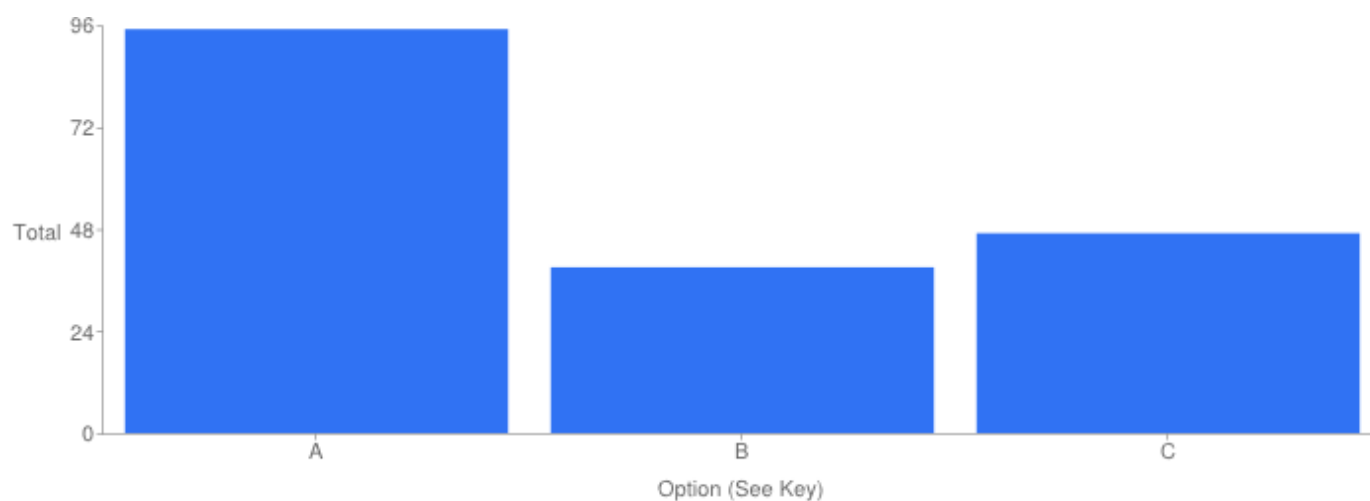
leads to a lack of knowledge and understanding of the issues by the Transport Officers. A link can also be made to the apparent need to raise the profile of air quality needs locally.

Question 7 - Do you think there is a need to review the allocation of responsibility for air quality between District and County authorities?

High level statistics

- 92.2% responded to this question

Table of "review allocation of responsibility between County/District"



Key

A Yes (53%)

B No (22%)

C Not Answered (26%)

Key Themes

The responses showed a wide range of views regarding whether there is a need to review the allocation of responsibilities.

A handful of responses indicated that there should be more responsibility at County level.

A large number of responses indicated there should be more responsibility at District level.

The majority of responses indicated that there was no need to re-arrange the current distribution of responsibility, but instead clarify where the responsibilities lie, if necessary by Guidance.

Yes

There have been suggestions that there is a need to strengthen the requirement at County level to support the local authorities in addressing local air quality issues that have been identified. This would then aid District Authorities in implementing local air quality management measures.

Many responses expressed the view that there should be more responsibility allocated to District authority. It was argued that the expertise in air quality lies within the District tier, as they are best placed to understand and action necessary changes within their area and jurisdiction.

No

The vast majority of responses argued it is not the allocation of responsibility that needs to be investigated but instead provide clarity what the responsibility was through statutory guidance. This also included County responsibilities with regards to Local Transport Plans, and statutory duty for other parties to implement the measures that can help the District Authorities.

Other

Others pointed to mitigating factors such as there being no obligation on County Highway authorities to implement recommended air quality action plan measures. It was suggested that it was of greater importance to provide all the stakeholders with the powers they need to maximise their contributions to local air quality management.

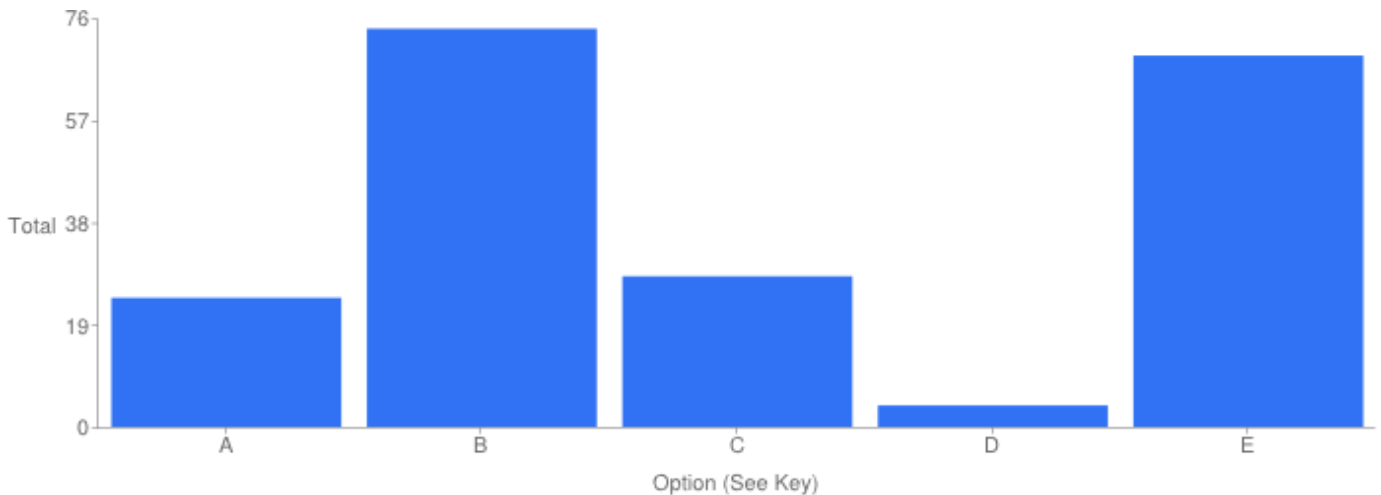
Finally, a few suggested that the national strategy would benefit by providing an understanding what the responsibilities were for each tier, and how they were able to help one another.

Question 8 - Which option will best help to support Aim 2?

High level statistics

- 87.8% responded to this question

Table of "Best option to support Aim 2"



Key

- A** Option 1 (13%) Business As Usual with limited changes
- B** Option 2 (41%) Concentration on Action Planning and focused reporting
- C** Option 3 (16%) Alignment with EU requirements to meet air quality limit values
- D** Option 4 (2%) Separate local air quality management duties do not exist
- E** Not Answered (38%)

Key Themes

A large number of responses argued that none of the options outlined in the consultation would help in achieving Aim 2, as the options are perceived to merely reduce the responsibilities, not make the responsibilities clearer. A number of responses commented that the issue of ensuring Transport Planners work with Air Quality professionals has not been addressed. It was also argued that what is required is new guidance together with updated legislation to ensure that air quality actions can be implemented.

The vast majority of responses indicated that Option 2 would most successfully achieve Aim 2. However, the majority of the responses that selected Option 2 added that this Option would only work if it included a duty on other tiers and agencies, and a methodology for understanding the links between the two sets of Objectives.

Some respondents argued that option 4 would provide most clarity as Local Authorities would no longer have duty. However most considered Option 4 would not help local governments and other stakeholders to improve air quality.

Option 1 was considered by a large number of responses to simply continue the status quo.

Many respondents compared Option 2 to Option 3, pointing towards either Option 2 as being better suited to achieving Aim 2, or for an amalgamation of 2 and 3. It was argued that this would reduce the reporting burden, but not completely remove it from a local

authority. Alongside this there should be an increase focus on action planning, with key areas, such as Transport & Public Health, working more closely to improve air quality.

Questions 9-13 were concerned with Aim 3.

AIM 3 Local authorities have simple reporting requirements with less bureaucracy and more time to concentrate on actions to improve air quality and public health

Question 9 - What are your views on the current air quality reporting requirements for local authorities and how they could be simplified?

High level statistics

- 91.7% responded to this question

Key themes:

There was common agreement that current reporting is generally bureaucratic (e.g. unnecessary duplication of data/reports) and burdensome, especially for local authorities that do not have any exceedances. Present reporting requirements were also considered time consuming and expensive.

Many argued in favour of limiting or removing the 3 year cycle of Updating and Screening Assessment reports (or USAs) and replacing with an annual Progress Report (with differing information depending on whether a local authority had an AQMA or not; for example as many AQMAs are declared as a result of traffic, traffic patterns should be reviewed and updated regularly).

Only a small number of respondents argued in favour of retaining the current reporting regime, citing, in the main, the need to keep air quality issues in focus, for senior management and politically. Another consideration was that the reporting regime had, over the years, built up a valuable and detailed map of local air pollution. Therefore while some streamlining was welcome (as in the removal of Further Assessments), detailed reporting should continue as it would benefit public health, developmental control and action planning measures.

Concerns were raised in relation to the reporting regime proposed under Option 3 (i.e. reporting progress only in nationally assessed exceedance areas), which a number of respondents felt would downgrade local authority involvement in air quality management and divert resources elsewhere. Many felt that for local reporting to have any value (whether simplified or not) robust local monitoring data was necessary – any move away from this (as was feared would happen under Option 3) would significantly undermine the

LAQM process. Many commentators said that it was wrong to assert that by streamlining reporting requirements, the savings obtained (if indeed there would be any) would automatically translate into improved actions on the ground. Without essential air quality and pollutant source information through local monitoring (pre and post action plan), the capability to deliver effective measures would also be severely hampered.

How reporting could be simplified or improved?

A number of proposals were put forward, including:

- Adopt a tiered approach – i.e. if local air quality is good (e.g. no exceedances) then an annual report should suffice (rising to 2 x half-yearly reports in the event of a worsening of air quality, or at more frequent increments if necessary)
- Allow for optional reporting for those that do not have an air quality problem? Few supported this, believing that local authorities should keep abreast of air quality in their areas, and maintain engagement with the public.
- Some respondents were very specific in what should be reported on. A key consideration was that improving underlying data would translate into improved reporting. Key suggestions were:
 - Report NO₂ maximum hourly mean and PM₁₀ maximum daily mean rather than just the number of exceedances.
 - Include NO₂ hourly mean time series charts in the reports for the entire calendar year to show the measurements.

Updating and Screening Assessments (USAs) - remove but have requirement to assess new sources retained (e.g. in annual report). A general view was that USAs had only a limited role now in providing further information of significance, as the local air quality picture across the country was well established.

Progress Reports – strong support for retaining these as an annual or regular report, which should include an assessment of new and potential sources, as well as an Air Quality Action Plan Progress Report (AQAPPR) within the annual report. Action Plan Progress reports should demonstrate how well the implementation of actions is progressing, along with outcomes. The report should be constructed in such a way that it is of use to local Public Health partners.

Several commentators suggested that reporting should be less onerous for local authorities without AQMAs.

Detailed Assessments – keep but extend to include what would have been covered in Further Assessments.

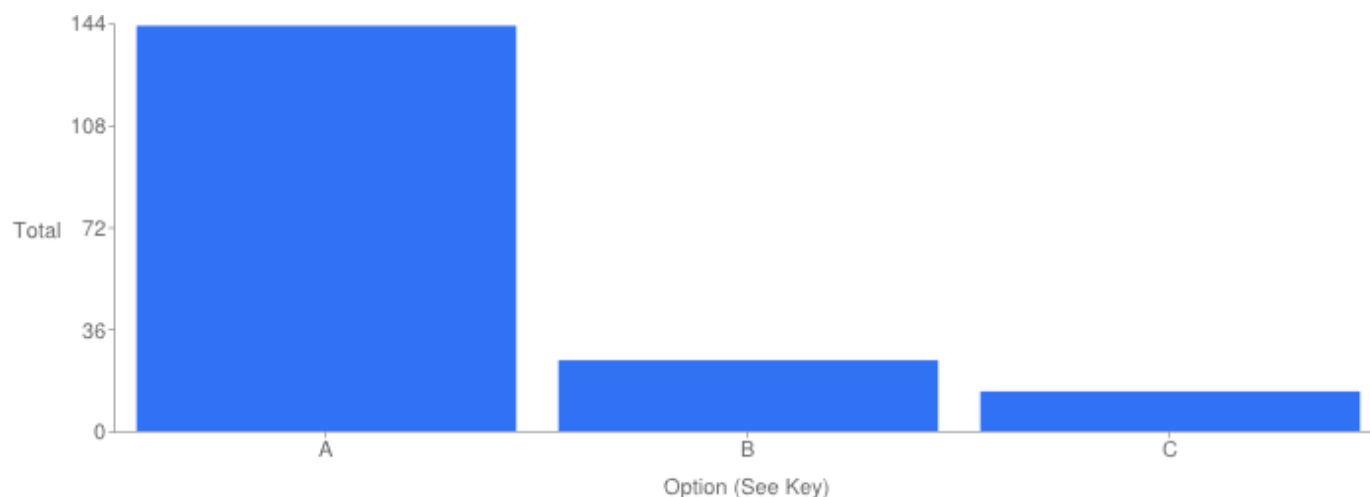
Further Assessments – only a few called for their retention. Defra has already consulted on proposals to remove the requirement for further assessments and this was supported. This will go ahead via the Repeals Bill.

Question 10 - Do you think there is a need for a more public facing local air quality report which provides an annual review of action taken to improve air quality?

High level statistics

- 97.2% responded to this question

Table of "Need for an annual local air quality report"



Key

- A Yes (79%)
- B No (14%)
- C Not Answered (8%)

Key themes

There was clear support for a more public facing local air quality report. Common views were:

- Raising awareness through a non-technical report would help engage the local public, especially in understanding the impact on air quality from developments, as well as improving local accountability.
- It was also thought that because air quality was less “visible” than in the past a public-facing report was a way to help support air quality and health practitioners to raise its profile and deliver benefits more effectively.

What should be in the report?

Suggestions and views for what should be included:

- Plain English
- Relate air quality issues to everyday lives of the citizens
- Types of behaviour modification required, especially by 'at risk' groups such as asthmatics, COPD patients etc.)
- Report to show evidence of how the local authority is addressing the problem.
- Must be focused on local air quality - not simply reporting on EU-wide objectives.
- A separate public report is a good idea but should not be at the expense of bespoke, technical reports (albeit for a more scientific audience).
- Local report should be based on locally gathered information rather than solely national information/mapping, etc. as local data was said to have more relevance (especially in relation to local hot spots).
- A three-yearly public report would be more beneficial than a yearly one as it would fit with the Local Authority Action plans, Local Transport Plans etc. Having the reports all come out at the same time would be a more effective distribution of information.
- Should be associated with relevant health reports
- For the public, the key areas to include in the report should be: What is pollution? Where does it come from? What are the health effects? What are the pollutants of concern in my area – what is being done about it? What can you (i.e. public/business) do/change to improve things? Include simple health data, statistics on local hospital admissions/deaths linked to respiratory issues, highlighting links between air quality and health.
- Include actions dealing with EU exceedances and local pollution issues (backed up by locally gathered data), otherwise the validity of the report might be questioned (e.g. could be viewed as propaganda).
- A template to standardise the report (and the type of information in it)
- Would be best if the report sat within the Director of Public Health's Annual Report

Who said No?

A small number of respondents were opposed to a single annual report. Key reasons were:

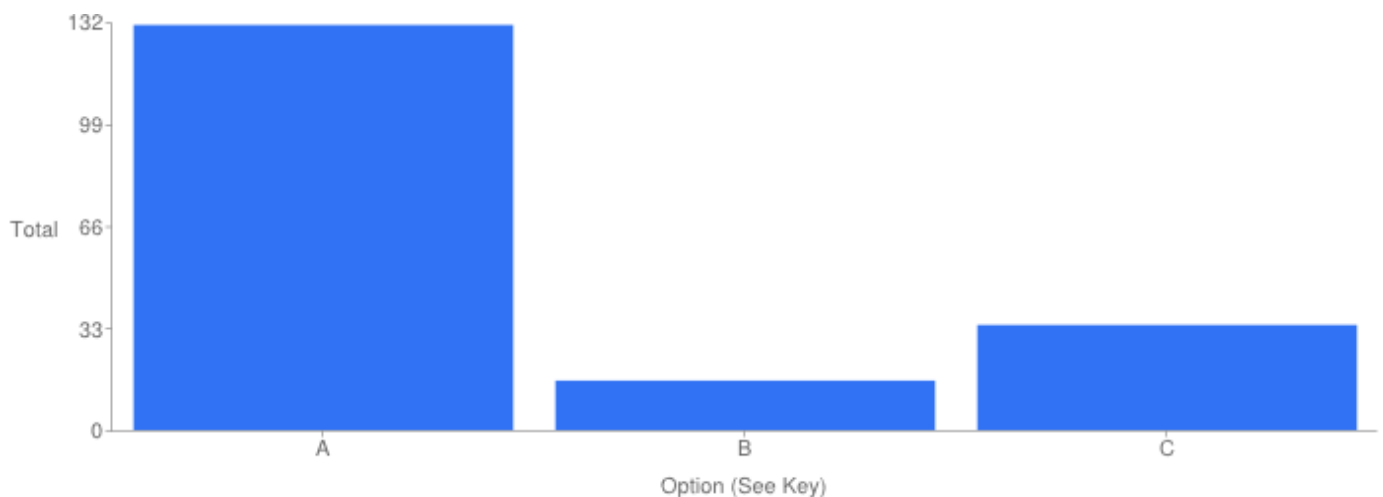
- Government reports (especially ones sanctioned by the national government) are all too often seen as propaganda – hence any information, however well intentioned, might be disregarded. A way around this might be to utilise other media outlets to spread the news.
- A number argued that reports should be communicated to the public under the current arrangements. Present reports included an executive summary for the lay reader – anyone with a real interest in LAQM would want the level of detailed data that is already part of the current report.
- Others argued that the present reports were already written in an accessible manner (i.e. public facing); however, there was room for simplification of text.
- We would just be adding yet another report to already over-burden authorities.

Question 11 - Do you think there is a need for a better line of sight between local reporting on air quality and what we report to the EU about local action?

High level statistics

- 91.1% responded to this question

Table of "Need for better line of sight between local/EU"



Key

- A** Yes (73%)
- B** No (9%)
- C** Not Answered (19%)

Key themes

Clear consensus on improving 'line of sight' but some issues over what such reporting would mean in practice, especially if it just involved local authorities reporting on EU exceedances in their areas, as opposed to local hot spots as well. Some local authority respondents were not clear why local hotspots did not appear in reports to the EU and thought this did not give a full picture of air quality in a particular area. This also made it difficult to argue for improvements if EU standards appeared to be met despite local hotspots. Most authorities thought that since not all local actions were reported to the EU a consolidated approach that included local and national action would be helpful.

Key views were:

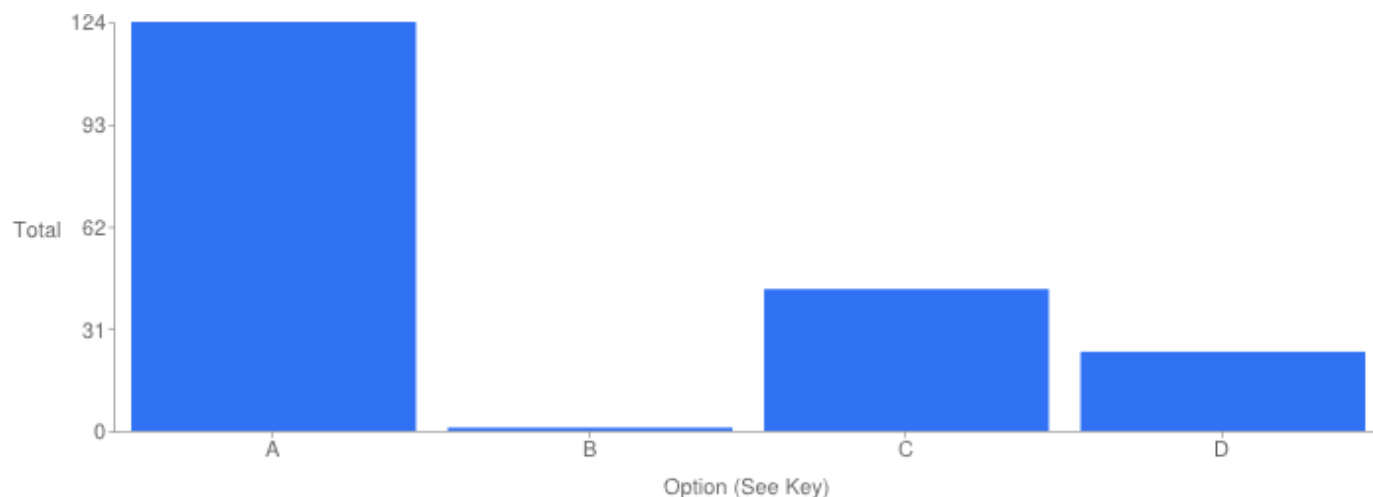
- Local knowledge and experience is currently under-utilised nationally. A national report that included more detailed figures from polluted areas, and actions taken, would help highlight successful policies, many with cross-UK and cross-EU membership applicability.
- Important to coalesce the two systems where feasible, at the very least to better communicate to the public/stakeholders the differences between nationally reported assessment data and local monitoring.
- A more realistic approach might be for reporting to EU to remain at the national level, but supplemented to a greater degree by local authority information/data.

Question 12 - Do you think the current arrangements for AQMAs should be retained or should they be removed and/or local authorities given more flexibility in applying them?

High level statistics

- 95.6% responded to this question

Table of "retain AQMAs or not"



Key

- A** Retain (69%)
- B** Remove (0.5%)
- C** Greater flexibility in applying them (24%)
- D** Not Answered (13%)

Key themes

There was clear support for retaining Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). The key reason was that having these gave local authorities influence over planning and development policies. This ensured that consideration of air pollution mitigation was taken into account in proposals and also at construction sites, etc. An AQMA acted as a frame for identifying an area of concern and was something the public and politicians could use to support action to improve air quality or to require mitigation from developments.

There was no substantive support for their removal.

Approximately 25% support for adopting a more flexible approach to declaration and revocation of AQMAs.

Retain – key comments:

- AQMA help highlight problem areas.
- Removal could lead to a lessening of public health protection.
- Planning and development policy makers will only often consider air quality if it falls within (or at least near) an AQMA. Paragraph 124 of the NPPF states: “Air quality: planning policies should sustain compliance with and contribute towards EU limit values or national objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of AQMAs, and the cumulative impacts on air quality from individual sites in local areas. Planning decisions should ensure that any development in AQMAs is

consistent with the local action plan” AQMAs also play an important role in controlling emissions from a wide range of industrial activities, which are subject to the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010. It applies in all locations including AQMAs.

- AQMAs should be retained to help build continuity and expertise in local government.
- Almost all AQMAs across the UK are declared for NO₂, which reflects the national picture – i.e. we are currently having difficulties in meeting NO₂ limit values. AQMAs are an important way to focus action on areas in exceedance and help meet public health obligations locally and nationally.
- AQMAs require a high standard of evidence and remain the strongest legal designation for air quality upon which development control and transport decisions can be justified.

Remove – there was no substantial support for this. Many argued that removing AQMAs would lead to expensive mistakes or inaction that would have a detrimental effect on Defra’s ability to improve air quality and achieve EU compliance. It would also make the control of planning and development very difficult if not impossible.

Greater flexibility (for or against)

Simplification of current system was seen by a number of respondents as a positive step, providing it did not diminish air quality management

For flexibility:

- For practical reasons, it was thought that a degree of flexibility had already crept into the system, particularly in regards revocation or the merging and enlargement of existing AQMAs.
- It was said that we need to consider the public health relevance of AQMAs, especially in light of the Public Health Outcomes Framework (PHOF) – e.g. are AQMAs based on the attainment of objectives a true reflection of public health criterion when pollutants might have impacts below that? The breach of an EU limit value does not translate to a health effect that can be meaningfully communicated to the public. In other words, exceeding a limit value/objective should not be the sole criteria for declaring an AQMA. Particulate matter, for instance, has been shown to be harmful to human health even at low values.
- AQMAs benefit air quality beyond their boundaries – e.g. through emission standards stipulations for bus partnerships.

Against flexibility:

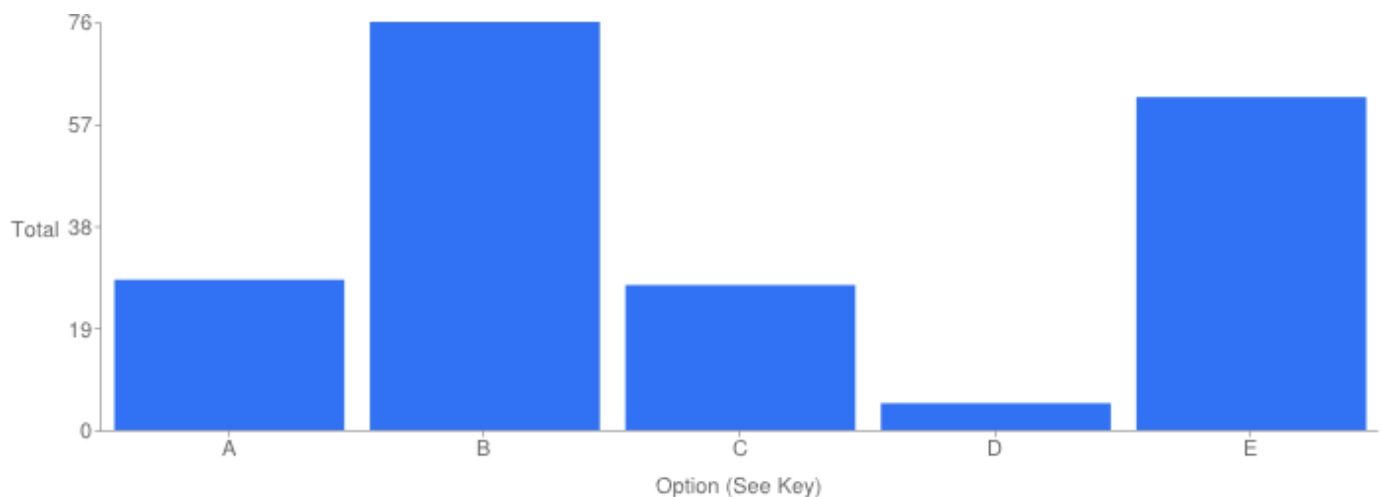
- A few considered flexibility unfeasible in relation to the declaration process of an AQMA, which they thought should remain as a scientific/technical matter. Also, concerns were raised over the issue of consistency in declaring AQMAs depending on the degree of flexibility allowed – for example – would national Government still be concerned about local air quality breaches or only EU breaches. Also, there would ideally be consistency between local authorities – agreement on what were regarded as relevant receptors would give greater credibility to AQMAs declared for local hotspots, especially where they were very localised, such as covering only the front or rear of a particular property.
- Current flexibility allows for isolated, small AQMAs, which affect only a single road junction or property. This was thought to be a poor response to air quality exceedances, which are by nature cross boundary or due to causes arising over a wider area. Therefore, flexibility needed to be considered carefully.

Question 13 - Which option will best help to support Aim 3?

High level statistics

- 87.2% responded to this question

Table of "Best option to support Aim 3"



Key

- A** Option 1 (16%) Business As Usual with limited changes
- B** Option 2 (42%) Concentration on Action Planning and focused reporting
- C** Option 3 (15%) Alignment with EU requirements to meet air quality limit values
- D** Option 4 (3%) Separate local air quality management duties do not exist
- E** Not Answered (34%)

Key Themes

Opinions on Aim 3:

Cutting back on reporting requirements was supported by most respondents. However, many did not see the link between simplified reporting and more action on the ground. Several commented that a better driver for improving action would be for greater financial resources for air quality action plan measures.

Option 2 was the most popular choice for the following key reason:

- Reducing paperwork would free up officer time, which could potentially feed into faster and improved focus on actions to improve air quality. One caveat to this was that the savings in reducing bureaucracy would likely be smaller than envisaged.

Option 3: A small number of respondents preferred this option, agreeing that it would result in a significant reduction in reporting requirements for local authorities and still retain focus on identifying local priorities. Supporters of option 3 also saw it as striking a balance between reporting and action but were keen to stress that savings in resources/time would not apply to County Councils, who have control over key transport policy.

Whilst superficially reducing burdens some respondents were concerned that under Option 3 local authorities would have to quantify measures without the background information many of them currently collect. LAQM reports currently provided to Defra are for a variety of end users, including the public. Without this information being available, a lot of time could be spent processing requests for information.

Option 4: There was very little support for this option because, while it was the option that would result in the most significant reduction in reporting requirements, there was a risk that without a statutory duty for LAQM, local authorities (especially those with financial pressures) would cut back on air quality mitigation measures to the detriment of public health.

Not answered. Some felt that none of the options strongly supported Aim 3, preferring to offer a variation (see Options section).

Questions 14-15 were concerned with Aim 4.

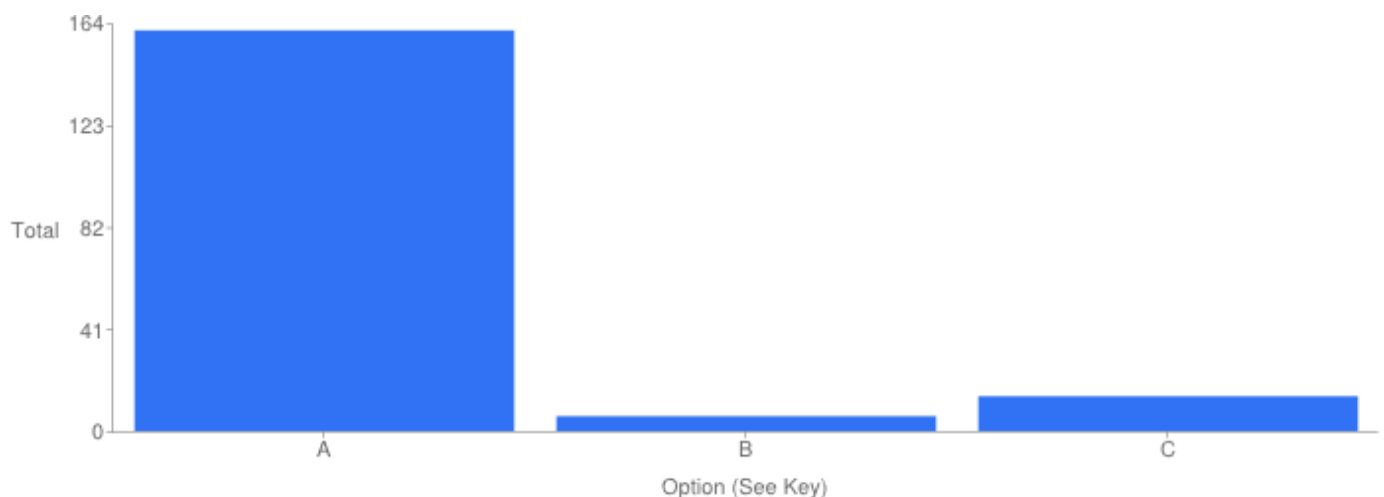
AIM 4 Local authorities have access to information about evidence based measures to improve air quality including on transport and communications

Question 14 - Would the availability of information on evidence based measures to improve air quality or reduce exposure help in developing local action plans?

High level statistics

- 95.6% responded to this question

Table of "availability of evidence based measures - helpful or not"



Key

- A** Yes (89%)
- B** No (3%)
- C** Not Answered (8%)

Key themes

An overwhelming majority of responses indicated that the availability of information on evidence based measures to improve air quality or reduce exposure, would help in developing local action plans.

Provision of detailed examples would make it easier to develop a range of measures applicable to each local authority. There would be better focus within an action plan - measures would be more attainable with demonstrable air quality improvements.

It was also argued that LAs would be more willing to pursue measures to improve air quality if they were provided with information about their effectiveness. It was suggested that cost benefit analysis should be provided with the information made available on measures.

One idea frequently mentioned was having access to a national website, where LAs could centrally upload action plans. Another idea put forward was for a checklist of proven measures, where LAs could pick what would be the most appropriate measure for their area. This could then result in the simplification of Air Quality Action Plans.

A similar suggestion was a detailed and regularly updated library that included all of the guidance and information - easily found online. This could provide LAs with “real life” examples of the implementation of air quality improvement measures. It was also argued that the information needed to be tailored and aimed at the relevant departments (e.g. Transport Planning, Planning, etc.), to ensure these had the information in the form they were best able to use.

Question 15 - Do you have examples of good practice on the implementation of measures to improve air quality or to communicate on air quality?

High level statistics

- 80.0% responded to this question

Key themes

A number of good practice examples were proposed, especially on communication themes. These included:

- Using local media, resident meetings and attendance at Council meetings through the AQMA declaration and Action Planning process to engage and ensure stakeholder views were evaluated and built into action planning.
- Adopting air alert type services; this can be delivered cheaply via multiple media. [Reports have shown high customer satisfaction with these services. Joint-partnerships have been especially useful, especially in meeting costs – e.g. the joint work done by local councils and NHS to set up regular monitoring at the local level by community groups. Apart from being inexpensive, this has also been proven to be a red-tape free means of gathering data whilst at the same time keeping people informed.]
- Developing local air quality strategies in partnership with other local authorities. One example of this involved a joint strategy which considered several measures, including the involvement of schools, to create signs for transport schemes to

promote healthy living, reduce car journeys, reduce speed, etc. Further options undertaken included traffic lights re-phasing, change in priority of road systems, improving public transport and encouraging car sharing.

We will review all the examples proposed as part of the next steps in this work.

Part 2

Part 2 of the consultation dealt with the Options.

Questions 16-18 covered the options, which are summarised below:

	Title	In Summary
Option #1	Business As Usual with limited changes	<p>Retain separate local air quality regulations</p> <p>Maintain review and assessment reporting cycle, but remove the need to carry out Further Assessments</p> <p>Review the need for continued assessment and reporting on objectives that have been met</p>
Option #2	Concentration on Action Planning and focused reporting	<p>Change focus from review and assessment to action planning. Through reducing reporting requirements – e.g. annual local air quality report to replace Updating and Screening Assessment (USA Report) cycle but local authorities still assess local air quality on regular basis.</p> <p>Reduced and more focused reporting – e.g. shorter annual local air quality report to replace larger 3 year cycle of reporting and progress reports</p> <p>As with Option 1, Further Assessments would no longer be required.</p>
Option #3	Alignment with EU requirements to meet air quality limit values	<p>All of Option 2 plus Local authorities no longer required to carry out detailed assessments or to make/amend AQMAs.</p> <p>consolidate and amend Air Quality (England) and Air Quality Standards Regulations so that local authorities work towards compliance with EU air quality limit values and targets where there is scope for action at the local level</p> <p>No reporting requirements on local hotspots outside of the national assessment of EU air quality standards but a stronger interest and reporting on local measures which help to improve air quality and bring us closer to compliance with EU air quality standards</p> <p>Local authorities would focus on action planning and public health and report on measures taken to improve air quality and these are included in reports to EU on compliance where quantified.</p> <p>As with Option 1, Further Assessments would no longer be required.</p>

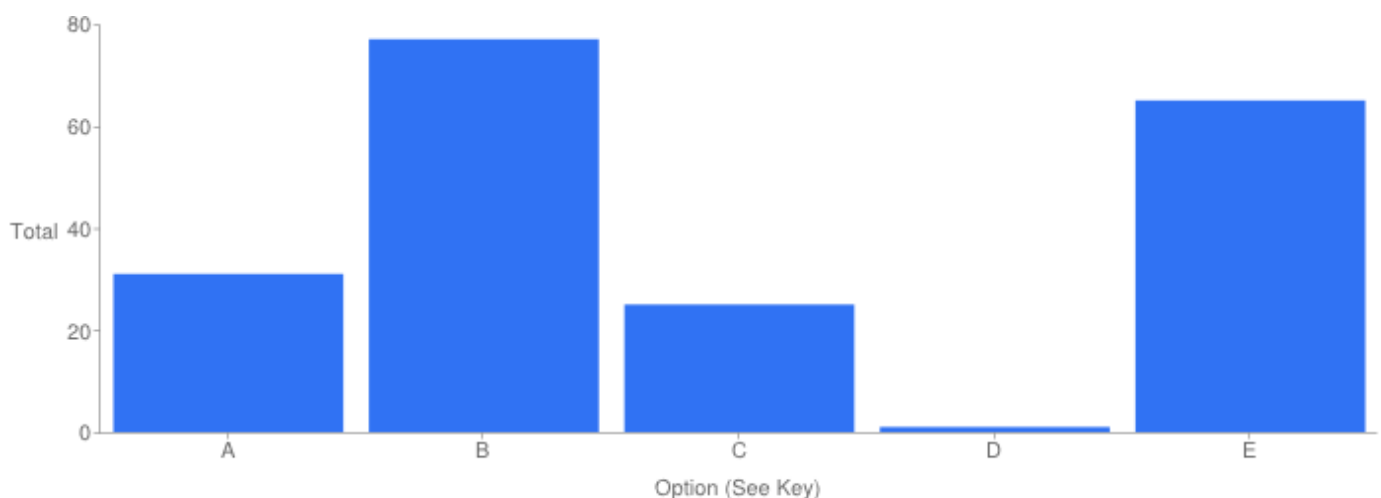
Option #4	Separate local air quality management duties do not exist.	<p>No separate LAQM duties but local authorities would still have to take account of air quality when appraising transport and development proposals and policies</p> <p>Provisions for LAQM in the Environment Act would be repealed along with Air Quality England Regulations.</p> <p>Air Quality Standards Regulations amended as per Option 3</p> <p>No specific duties on local authorities to assess or report on air quality locally – greater reliance on national assessment to judge risks arising from transport and development proposals</p>
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Question 16 - Which option do you think is most likely to improve local air quality management and why? Do you have an alternative approach?

High level statistics

- 88.3% responded to this question

Table of "Best option to support LAQM delivery"



Key

- A** Option 1 (17%) Business As Usual with limited changes
- B** Option 2 (43%) Concentration on Action Planning and focused reporting
- C** Option 3 (14%) Alignment with EU requirements to meet air quality limit values
- D** Option 4 (0.5%) Separate local air quality management duties do not exist
- E** Not Answered (36%)

Despite the fact that statistically option 2 was the most supported the survey, very few respondents supported any one of the options in their entirety.

There was strongest support for an option between 2 and 3 which retained statutory duties for local authorities, recognised the value of local monitoring and assessment.

There was support for an option which helped to reduce reporting burdens but retained a statutory requirement for reporting on local air quality. Most preferred this to be annual reporting but some suggested a longer time frame of e.g. 18 months to two year reporting.

There was some support for alternative options proposed by, for example, Environmental Protection UK (EPUK). The main themes for these were to streamline reporting requirements but retain local monitoring and assessment (and to retain separate LAQM and EU standards). Some respondents also proposed the introduction of a Commission for Air Quality or Office for Air Quality which would provide independent oversight of air quality matters.

A number of respondents also highlighted the need to review and update the Air Quality Strategy 2007, which was considered to be out of date and a priority for review before changing local air quality management

Most respondents thought that Option 3 went too far in reducing reporting and the role of local monitoring and risked a down grading of local air quality management and action to improve air quality as a result.

Many respondents thought that the options focused too much on the role of local authorities when there was a need for stronger national action and for a stronger role for highway authorities or the highways agency

Many respondents highlighted the need to have public health as the underpinning for action and rejected Option 3 on the basis that it would confuse local action through moving the focus on to exceedances which might not reflect local hotspots and exposure.

There was very little support for Option 4 (see also responses to question 18).

Comments on the Options

Option 1 had some support but was generally seen as not moving significantly beyond business as usual.

Option 2 had significant support. In particular it was seen as reducing reporting burdens but retaining some degree of local autonomy and also importantly local monitoring and assessment. This option also retained the requirement for AQMAs.

There was only limited support for Option 3. This had the advantage of providing a clearer link to EU requirements but did not obviously support local monitoring or assessment of air pollution. It was commented by several respondents that the national assessment was by its nature too coarse to provide an understanding of local hotspots and therefore was not sufficient to support local air quality management.

Many respondents also commented that in addition to changes to local air quality management there needed to be stronger leadership from Government on improving air quality. It was also necessary for Government to play a leading role in influencing fleet make up and emission standards especially in relation to dieselisation. Respondents also thought that any option chosen must ensure that Highways authorities and the Highways Agency had a clear role. This was not obvious from any of the options.

Question 17 - Are any of the options and their proposed changes to regulation, guidance and reporting likely to adversely impact on air quality, and if so to what extent?

High level statistics

- 82.2% responded to this question

Key themes

Respondents expressed reservations about all 4 of the options described in the consultation document.

Option 3 (the Government's preferred option) and option 4 were consistently mentioned as raising concerns and where the only options mentioned as being of concern for the largest write in campaign.

Some respondents considered that none of the options were suitable and would lead to a reduction in action to improve air quality

Comments made on Option 1 – Business As Usual with limited changes

Option 1 was generally seen as not likely to achieve significant improvements or to reduce bureaucracy or help in shifting the focus towards action planning and measures and away from reporting and diagnosis.

A small number of respondents chose this option as the safest outcome for protecting local air quality management as it meant that statutory duties remained as currently.

Comments made on Option 2 – Concentration on Action Planning and focused reporting

This was seen as likely to have the least adverse impact on air quality management. However, some commentators did suggest that it retained too much reliance on "statutory monitoring processes" and did not allow flexibility in the use of indicative monitoring and regional monitoring. It was also commented that this option might not provide strong

enough alignment with EU requirements and therefore might not help to raise the profile of local air quality management in the way Option 3 might.

Comments made on Option 3 – Alignment with EU requirements to meet air quality limit values

A large number of respondents were concerned that this option would have significant adverse impacts on local air quality. In particular: it was thought that the removal of a statutory duty to report on local air quality outside the national assessment would lead to a reduction or even collapse in local air quality monitoring.

Option 3 proposed that whilst local authorities would retain a duty to review and assess local air quality they would only be required to report on measures to improve air quality where these related to exceedances identified through the national assessment of air quality. This was seen as downgrading the importance of local monitoring and assessment and the importance of public health impacts arising from local hotspots. The national assessment whilst suitable for assessing air quality at national level was not seen as suitable for having a local understanding of air quality and was not helpful for deciding on and evaluating measures.

It was also commented that reducing the statutory duties for reporting would more than likely lead to a loss of local expertise and understanding of air quality. This would have a detrimental impact on the ability of local authorities to implement appropriate measures and to evaluate their effectiveness.

Option 3 proposed that resources saved from reporting could be transferred into action planning. It was commented that the amount of resources saved by this was in fact relatively small. It was also considered that it would be naive to believe any resources saved would be transferred as expected. Most respondents thought it was more likely that the savings would be recouped and used on other priorities.

Option 3 proposed that it would no longer be necessary for local authorities to declare AQMAs although they could continue to identify air pollution hotspots for planning and development purposes and also for action planning. All respondents that commented on this stated that this duty should be retained. In particular it was commented that AQMAs had an important status in planning and development terms and also in highlighting the need for local action to improve air quality.

Overall it was thought that whilst Option 3 was intended to increase the focus on measures to improve air quality it would in fact have the reverse effect. That is, it would lead to less pressure on local government to improve air quality, and worsening local air quality and public health as a result. Reliance on the national assessment would also undermine local decision making and localism.

Comments on Option 4 – Separate local air quality management duties do not exist

Option 4 was seen as likely to have the most adverse impact on air quality. For further comments on Option 4 see the summary of responses to Question 18.

Question 18 - Assuming no local air quality management requirements existed, as proposed in Option 4, to what extent would local incentives and pressures from public health and amenities be sufficient to support local action to improve air quality?

High level statistics

- 89.4% responded to this question

Key themes

The vast majority of responses rejected Option 4, and argued strongly that under this option there would be no local incentive or pressure from public health and amenities to sufficiently support local action to improve air quality. The responses argued that with increasing resource pressures on local government, local air quality would be subject to cuts or even disbanded, if air quality management requirements were removed.

The responses also argued that where any pressure for action might exist the extent of this would vary between locations, due to the extent of public knowledge on air quality issues, local political priorities (e.g. employment, policing, safety, redevelopment), and political will.

The responses highlighted the importance of government assistance to fund air quality monitoring, reporting, or the implementation of actions. Local Authorities are unlikely, it has been said, to be able to fund the service themselves, leading to less information about local air quality issues. This would result in poorer air quality, and an inability to adhere to national and European targets.

Overall, all the responses indicated that there would be insufficient pressure or local incentives for Local Air quality Management to continue if the requirements were removed. The responses highlighted the need for the drive to come from central government on ensuring Local Air Quality Management continues effectively.

There were no responses providing any support or examples in favour of Option 4.

6. Overview of responses from campaigns and petitions

Campaign letters used a standard template, with occasional variations and personal remarks. The substance of the letters remained the same though. The focus of the campaigns and petitions revolved mainly around the risk identified as part of the Government's preferred Option 3, which many believed would diminish local monitoring, as reporting would only be required on hotspots identified through national assessment for the purposes of complying with EU air quality limit and target values.

We identified 3 campaigns:

1. 38 degrees – approx. 17,500 emails
2. Biofuelwatch – approx. 600 emails
3. Unidentified campaign emails (but with similar wording) – approx. 150

Example Template (38 degrees campaign)

Dear Air Quality Consultation,

Please don't push through damaging changes which remove all responsibility for local authorities to measure air quality and declare where it is a problem (options 3 and 4 in your consultation).

I think it's important that I am able to find out what the air is like in my local area. And as usual it's the poorest who will suffer the most - poorer areas have dirtier air and certain groups are more vulnerable to the health impacts. These changes would leave poorer people, and particularly children, paying the price

Air pollution causes 29,000 early deaths a year in the UK – more than obesity and alcohol combined. It causes heart attacks, strokes, respiratory disease and children living near busy roads have been shown to grow up with underdeveloped lungs. It's just not true that taking away duties to measure pollution would lead to more action on air quality. In reality the changes would mean that we would know less about the air we breathe and so less will be done to improve it.

7. London specific system for LAQM (proposals put forward) and other comments

A number of London-based respondents highlighted the particular challenges facing the capital and that a case could be made for a London-specific air quality management system. In essence, because of the transboundary nature of London's air pollution, the importance of joint-working between local authorities was especially important.

As stated in the consultation document, air quality in the capital is already managed differently to some extent, with the Mayor of London having overall responsibility. London faces significant challenges over the coming years, most particularly around meeting limit values for NO₂ (the majority of exceedances for NO₂ are in the capital) and fine particles.

Some respondents proposed that a pan-London approach, in effect, making London (or the centre of London) a single authority for the purposes of air quality control, be adopted. To this end, it was felt that the current LAQM system could be tightened for London Boroughs in order to ensure, for example, buses and taxis (which cross borough boundaries) are cleaned up in a consistent fashion; and that statutory duties remain to 'work towards' meeting air quality objectives, with a requirement to continuously monitor air quality to support local and London-wide objectives.

Adopting a London-specific LAQM system was not part of the remit of the current review. However, **Defra will continue to work with the Mayor of London and key delivery partners to support a robust response to the challenges of air quality in the capital.**

8. Key conclusions and next steps

Aim 1 – Local Action focused on what is necessary to support air quality improvements to benefit public health and to work towards EU air quality standards

There was sufficient support for Defra to develop more detailed proposals for consolidating the Air Quality (England) Regulations 2000 and the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010. This would need to take account of:

- The extent to which local authorities should be expected to meet or work towards EU air quality standards
- The need to have clarity as to the role and relationship between Defra's national assessment of compliance with EU limit and target values, and locally derived air quality assessments.

As part of this, **Defra will review the range of air quality objectives that apply to local authorities, taking into account the relevance of these objectives for health protection, and the levels assessed in recent years.**

Aim 2 – Local government and other stakeholders are clear on their roles and responsibilities and work together to improve air quality

There were clear concerns that currently different tiers of authorities and even to some extent different departments within authorities do not work effectively for the benefit of local air quality. Whilst most respondents supported the current arrangements for district and unitary authorities to have responsibility for assessment of local air quality many also

recognised the key role that transport and planning authorities had in influencing air quality and in delivering improvements.

The Environment Act 1995 states that first tier authorities must cooperate with district tier authorities on the identification of measures to improve air quality and must be consulted upon plans. There is also clearly much in the way of good practice available to demonstrate what can be achieved by successful cooperation.

Defra will review the need for additional guidance on these duties as part of its review of guidance to local authorities in fulfilling their duties under the Act.

Aim 3 – Local authorities have simple reporting requirements with less bureaucracy and more time to concentrate on actions to improve air quality and public health

There was clearly support for a review of the reporting required in Local Air Quality Management. In particular there was support for removing the need for a three year updating and screening assessment of local air quality. There was also strong support for an annual report of local air quality which is public facing. This report should provide an overview of air quality across a local authority and a report of progress with actions to improve air quality.

There was some support for providing flexibility in reporting for local authorities that had no significant local air quality hotspots.

Defra will make proposals to introduce regular annual reporting on air quality for local authorities, taking into account comments made and following further discussions with stakeholders on the content of such reports.

There was support for clarity on the purpose of local and national air quality assessment, and for local actions to be valued and represented both within and without nationally identified exceedance areas.

There was overwhelming support for retaining AQMAs as a frame for defining the extent of a locally designated exceedance and where actions to improve air quality should be focused. However, there was also support for having some flexibility in applying these, especially for areas where exceedances or exposure was relatively low.

Defra will take account of the support for retaining AQMAs and will also review guidance on declaration/revocation procedures in order to reduce administrative burdens, taking into account matters of health impacts through exposure to air pollution and scope for measures.

Aim 4 – Local authorities have access to information about evidence based measures to improve air quality, including on transport and communications

There was clear support for producing and increasing access to information on evidence-based measures, including on transport and communications. A number of examples were cited, especially on communication schemes.

Defra will continue to explore (with delivery partners and stakeholders) way of improving and disseminating evidence-based measures, including supporting innovative schemes. We will revise official guidance to coincide with the implementation of changes to the LAQM system, likely in mid-late 2015.

Options – conclusions:

There were no clear favourites among the 4 options, with many calling for an amalgamation of the best elements of each option, particularly #2 & 3 or putting forward alternatives.

Defra will explore all alternatives with key delivery partners in the early part of 2014, the outcome of which will inform a second consultation (in mid-late 2014) on regulatory changes and guidance.

Annex 1 – List of respondents

Adur District and Worthing Borough Councils
AECOM Limited
Air Monitors LTD
Air Quality Consultants Ltd
Air Quality Data Management (AQDM)
AMEC Environment and Infrastructure UK Ltd
Air Quality Bulletin (AQB)
Ashford Borough Council
Association of Greater Manchester
Atkins
Aviation Environment Federation (AEF)
Aylesbury Vale DC
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Basildon BC
Bath & North East Somerset Council
BC King's Lynn & West Norfolk
Bedford Borough Council
Birmingham Friends of the Earth
Birmingham City Council
Birmingham City Council Conservative Group
Blackpool Council
Bradford on Avon Preservation Trust
Brent Friends of the Earth
Brentwood BC
Bricycles
Bridge End Action Group
Brighton & Hove City council
Bristol City Council
Bristol, Gloucester, Somerset & Wiltshire AQ and Environmental Protection Working Group (BGSW)
British Heart Foundation
Broxtowe Borough Council
Buckfastleigh Community Forum

Bureau Veritas
Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Cambridge City Council
Camden Council
Canterbury City Council
CAQU Cornwall College
Caroline Lucas MP
Carplus
Carter Knowle and Millhouses Community Group
Castle Point BC
Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH)
Chelmsford City Council
Cheltenham Borough Council
Cheshire West and Chester Council
Chesterfield BC
Chiltern District Council
Citizen Action
City of Bradford
City of Lincoln Council (on behalf of Lincolnshire Environmental Protection Liaison Group)
City of London Corporation
City of York Council
Clean Air in London (CAL)
Client Earth
Colchester Borough Council
Cornwall Council
Coventry City Council
Crawley Borough Council
Darlington Borough Council
Dartford Borough Council
Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council
Dudley MBC
East Cambridgeshire District Council
East Devon District Council
East Herts Council
Eastleigh Borough Council
Elmbridge Borough Council

Energy UK
Environment Agency
Environmental Health Lancashire
Fareham Borough Council
Freelance Consultant
Friends of the Earth (Jenny Bates)
Gas Field Free Mendip
Gedling Borough Council
Gravesham Borough Council
Greater London Authority (GLA)
Greater Manchester
Green Party (Keith Taylor, MEP for the South East of England)
Greendor
Harlow District Council
Harrogate Council
Healthy Air Campaign
Healthy Air Leicester and Leicestershire
Heathrow Airport Ltd
Henley in Transition
Herefordshire Council
Hertfordshire County Council
Hilltop Action Group
Horsham District Council
Huntingdonshire District Council
Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM)
Ipswich Borough Council
Isle of Wight Council
Joint Merseyside Air Quality Group
Kent & Medway Air Quality Partnership (K&MAQP)
Kings College London
Kingston upon Hull City Council
Kirklees Council
Lancashire County Council
Lancaster City Council
LB Barking and Dagenham
LB Kensington and Chelsea

LB Lewisham
LB of Brent
LB of Camden
LB of Croydon
LB of Haringey
LB of Hounslow
Leeds City Council
Leicester City Council
Leicester Friends of the Earth
Leicestershire and Rutland Air Quality Forum
Leicestershire County Council
Lewes District Council
Liberal Democrat Councillors in L B Camden
Living Streets
London Assembly Liberal Democrat Group
London Assembly Environment Committee
London Borough of Barnet Council
London Borough of Islington
London Borough of Richmond upon Thames
London Borough of Waltham Forest
London Councils
London Sustainability Exchange
Low Carbon East Oxford
Luton Council
Maidstone Borough Council
Maldon council
Member of Charlton Village residents association
Mendip District Council
Mid Sussex Environmental Health & Building Control
Middlesbrough Council
Milton Keynes Council
Network for Clean Air / Clean Air UK
Newark and Sherwood District Council
Newcastle University
Norfolk Local Air Quality Management Group
North Devon Council

North East Air Quality Group
North Hertfordshire District Council
North Lincolnshire Council
North West Leicestershire District Council
North Yorkshire County Council
Northampton Borough Council
Nottingham City Council
Ove Arup and Partners Ltd
Oxford City Council
Peter Brett Associates LLP
Public Health England
Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
Rochford Council
Rotherham MBC
Rugby Borough Council
Runnymede Borough Council
Rushcliffe Borough Council
Rushmoor Borough Council
Saffron Walden & District Friends of the Earth
Salisbury City Council
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Sarah Hodgson Consultancy
Sefton MBC
Sevenoaks District Council
Sheffield East End Quality of Life initiative
Shropshire Council
South Gloucestershire Council
South Lakeland District Council
South Northamptonshire Council
South Oxfordshire DC
South Ribble Borough Council
South Yorkshire Local AQ Officers
Southampton City Council
Southern Water
Southwark Council
Spelthorne BC

St. Botolphs Area Business Association
Stockton on Tees Borough Council
Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Stop Stansted Expansion
Suffolk AQ Group
Surrey CC
Sussex Air
Sustran
Swale Borough Council
Tameside MBC Manchester
Tendring Council
Thames Valley Environmental Protection Advisory Group
The Air Quality Management Resource Centre at the University of the West of England (UWE)
The Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM)
Thurrock Council
Tonbridge and Malling Council
Transport Research Laboratory/Transport and Travel Research Ltd
Tunbridge Wells Council
UK Health Forum
United Kingdom Without Incineration Network (UKWIN)
Uttlesford Council
Uttlesford Local Strategic Partnership
Wakefield Metropolitan District Council
Wandsworth Council
Warrington Borough Council
Warwick district council
Wateringbury Parish Council
Waveney District Council and Suffolk Coastal District Council
Waverley Council
West Berkshire and Wokingham Shared EH Service, West Berkshire Council
West Somerset Council
West Yorkshire Low Emissions Strategy
Westminster City Council
Wiltshire Council
Winchester City Council
Wolverhampton City Council

Worcestershire Regulatory Services

WRAP - Wight Residents against Pollution

York Environment Forum

Yorkshire and Humberside Pollution Advisory Group

Yorkshire and Humber Public Health England Centre

Campaign and Petition emails:

38 Degrees

Biofuelwatch

Email campaign with local MPs copies in (similar wording to above campaigns)