

Appendix 7.1 Air Quality Legislation, Policy and Guidance

1. Legislation

1.1. Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010

This UK legislation implemented the requirements of the ambient air quality directive and set legally binding limit values for air quality with respect to human health and vegetation. The Air Quality Standard Regulation 2010 (HM Government, 2010) transposes 2008 Ambient Air Quality Directive 2008/50/EC (EU, 2008). It consolidates and replaces previous ambient air quality legislation. The Regulations were subsequently updated in 2016 (The Air Quality Standards (Amendment) Regulations 2016).

1.2. The Environment Act 1995, amended 2021 and The Environmental Targets (Fine Particulate Matter) (England) Regulations 2023

Part IV of the Environment Act 1995, as amended by the Environment Act 2021, places a duty on the Secretary of State for the Environment to develop, implement and maintain an Air Quality Strategy (AQS) with the aim of reducing atmospheric emissions and improving air quality. The Environment Act 2021 requires the AQS to be reviewed at least every five years and create a progress report annually.

The latest AQS for England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland was published in 2023 (Defra, 2023), provides the framework for ensuring the air quality limit values are complied with based on a combination of international, national and local measures to reduce emissions and improve air quality. This includes the statutory duty, also under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995, for local authorities to undergo a Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) process. This requires local authorities to regularly and systematically review and assess air quality within their boundaries against these objectives and appraise development and transport plans against these assessments.

In areas where air quality objectives are not likely to be met by the relevant target date, local authorities are required to declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and develop an air quality action plan (AQAP) in pursuit of the air quality objectives. The national air quality objectives (AQO) relevant to this assessment, as defined by the Air Quality (England) Regulations 2000, are detailed in Table 6.2 (HM Government, 2000).

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The Environment Act was amended in 2021, requiring the government to set new targets for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}). The subsequent Environmental Targets (Fine Particulate Matter) (England) Regulations 2023 (HM Government, 2023) set the following targets:

- Annual mean PM_{2.5} concentration of 10 µg/m³ by 2040; and
- At least a 35% reduction in population exposure of PM_{2.5} by the end of 2040.

The Environment Act 2021 requires the publication of an Environmental Improvement Plan every five years, with progress against the set targets reported on annually. The Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 (Defra, 2023) sets the following interim target for PM_{2.5}:

- Annual mean PM_{2.5} concentration of 12 µg/m³ by 2028; and
- At least a 22% reduction in population exposure of PM_{2.5} by the end of 2028.

2. Local & Regional Policy

2.1. Manchester Core Strategy (2012)

The Manchester Core Strategy Development Plan (MCC, 2012) is the primary strategic planning document in the City's Local Development Framework. It outlines the council's vision for Manchester from 2012 to 2027 and sets out planning policies that aim to help the city achieve the Local Development Framework's vision.

The Manchester Core Strategy Development Plan has adopted a number of policies relevant to air quality, including the following:

Policy EN 16 (Air Quality)

'The Council will seek to improve the air quality within Manchester, and particularly within Air Quality Management Areas, located along Manchester's principal traffic routes and at Manchester Airport. Developers will be expected to take measures to minimise and mitigate the local impact of emissions from traffic generated by the development, as well as emissions created by the use of the development itself, including from Combined Heat and Power and biomass plants.'

'When assessing the appropriateness of locations for new development, the Council will consider the impacts on air quality, alongside other plan objectives. This includes cumulative impacts, particularly in Air Quality Management Areas.'

Policy EN 7 (Energy Infrastructure opportunities)

Policy EN 7 sets out a general presumption in favour of low and zero carbon decentralised energy schemes, subject to a number of considerations.

Policy DM 1 (Development Management)

Policy DM 1 outlines the key parameters that should be addressed as part of the planning proposal, those relevant to Air Quality include:

'Effects on amenity, including privacy, light, noise, vibration, air quality, odours, litter, vermin, birds, road safety and traffic generation. This could also include proposals, which would be sensitive to existing environmental conditions, such as noise.'

- *Design for health*
- *Vehicular access and parking*
- *Effects relating to biodiversity, landscape, archaeological or built heritage.*
- *Green infrastructure including open space, both public and private.'*

2.2. Addendum to Manchester Core Strategy (2024)

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) launched the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document (PfE) (GMCA, 2024) to create a comprehensive, long-term strategy for sustainable growth across nine Greater Manchester districts: Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford, and Wigan. This plan aims to promote sustainable development, support infrastructure development, provide housing and

employment and protect environmental assets. The Manchester Core Strategy was updated in March 2024 to align with the Places for Everyone Plan. This ensures that local policies in Manchester are consistent with the regional strategy.

Amendments in Manchester Core Strategy that are relevant to Air Quality include:

CS Policy EN16 Air Quality

Section to be replaced:

‘, and particularly within Air Quality Management Areas, located along Manchester’s principal traffic routes and at Manchester Airport’ from the first sentence:

Replaced by PFE Policy JP-S5: Clean Air

1. *‘Policy JP-S5: Clean Air A comprehensive range of measures will be taken to support improvements in air quality, focusing particularly on locations where people live, where children learn and play, where there are impacts on the green infrastructure network and where air quality targets are not being met, including:*
2. *Locating and designing development, and focusing transport investment, so as to reduce reliance on forms of transport that generate air pollution;*
3. *Determining planning applications having regard to the most recent development and planning control guidance published jointly by the Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM) and Environmental Protection UK (EPUK), and the most recent IAQM Guidance on the Assessment of Dust from Demolition and Construction, or relevant successor guidance, including the requirement for developers to submit construction management plans as appropriate;*
4. *Requiring applications for developments that could have an adverse impact on air quality to submit relevant air pollution data so that adverse impacts on air quality can be fully assessed and development only permitted where they are acceptable and/or suitable mitigation can be provided;*
5. *Restricting developments that would generate significant point source pollution such as some types of industrial activity and energy generation;*
6. *Significantly expanding the existing commercial network of electric vehicle charging points, both for public and private use, including as part of new developments;*
6. *Implementing the Clean Air Plan and associated measures;*
7. *Facilitating the more sustainable distribution of goods within the urban area, including through accommodating urban consolidation centres and urban distribution centres that use ultra -low-emission vehicles, and local delivery facilities to reduce repeat delivery attempts;*
8. *Designing streets to avoid trapping air pollution at ground level, including through the appropriate location and scale of buildings and trees;*
9. *Controlling traffic and parking within and around schools, early years sites and other locations that are particularly sensitive to air quality;*
10. *Promoting actions that help remove pollutants from the air, such as enhancing the green infrastructure network and using innovative building materials that capture air pollutants; and*

11. *Development should be located in areas that maximise the use of sustainable travel modes and be designed to minimise exposure to high levels of air pollution, particularly for vulnerable users.'*

2.3. The Greater Manchester Strategy

The Greater Manchester Strategy 2021-2027 (GMCA, 2021) is the GMCA's plan for recovery and renewal following the pandemic. It provides a clear direction of travel for the city-region, focused on those areas where all parts of the conurbation need to work together to achieve the shared vision of Good Lives for All: that Greater Manchester is a great place to grow up, get on and grow old; a great place to invest, do business, visit and study.

With regards to improving the environmental conditions of GM, particularly air quality, the following statement is made in the strategy:

Greater Manchester's system-wide priorities:

'We will create a carbon neutral Greater Manchester by 2038, with better air quality and natural environment.'

2.4. GMCA 5-year Environment Plan 2025-2030

The 5-Year Environment Plan (GMCA, 2024) sets out the long-term vision and immediate actions for the environment. The plan sets out that improving air quality and thereby enhancing health, wellbeing and quality of life is one of GMCA's eight aims. The plan also outlined key priorities for improving air quality and reducing emissions caused by travel, including reducing the necessary travelling distance, increasing public transport and active travel, phasing out fossil fuelled vehicles, establishing a zero-emission bus fleet and decarbonising road freight transport.

2.5. GMCA Air Quality Action Plan

An air quality management area (AQMA) has been declared across the City of Manchester and encompasses all major roads within GM owing to exceedances of the annual mean Air Quality Objective for NO₂. Thereby an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) has been produced by the GMCA, which outlines the mitigation measures and strategic approach to improve air quality within the city and surrounding boroughs (GMCA / TfGM, 2016). The seven targeted actions aimed at improving air quality, and specific mitigation measures, are outlined below:

- **Actions for Managing New Development:** *Creation and management of a database of significant planning application and related air quality assessments.*
- **Actions for Freight Vehicles:** *Locations for potential distribution centres will be identified in the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework.*
- **Actions for Buses:** *Consideration and trial of a range-extender bus or other ultra-low emission vehicles, which can be implemented to the wider public transport strategy.*
- **Actions for Cycling:** *Improvement to the cycle networks focusing on safe green routes, away from areas of high pollution.*
- **Actions for Travel Choices:** *Appraisal of existing car sharing schemes and their impacts on modal shift. Use this information to expand existing schemes and inform future areas of focus.*
- **Actions for Car:** *Continual expansion of EV charging points through the Plugged-in-Places programme.*
- **Actions for Information and Resources:** *More resource and investment to the Great Air Manchester website.*

To report on the LAQM monitoring results and the progress of actions within the AQAP, an Annual Status Report (ASR) is produced in each calendar year in fulfilment of the statutory duties placed on local authorities under the Environment Act 1995.

2.6. GM Clean Air Plan

The ten GM local authorities have been instructed by the government to bring NO₂ pollution levels within legal limits through a Clean Air Plan (CAP) (GMCA, 2023).

Since 2018, GM has carried out a separate air quality monitoring survey for the launch of the CAP. Together with LAQM monitoring, the two monitoring schemes provide a more thorough picture of the air quality condition across GM.

3. Guidance

3.1. Planning Practice Guidance

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides guiding principles on how the planning process can take account of the impact of new development on air quality. The guidance outlines when air quality considerations could be relevant to the development management process. The PPG states:

- *'Whether air quality is relevant to a planning decision will depend on the proposed development and its location. Concerns could arise if the development is likely to have an adverse effect on air quality in areas where it is already known to be poor, particularly if it could affect the implementation of air quality strategies and action plans and/or breach legal obligations (including those relating to the conservation of habitats and species). Air quality may also be a material consideration if the proposed development would be particularly sensitive to poor air quality in its vicinity.'*

Where air quality is a relevant consideration the local planning authority may need to establish:

- *The 'baseline' local air quality, including what would happen to air quality in the absence of the development;*
- *Whether the proposed development could significantly change air quality during the construction and operational phases (and the consequences of this for public health and biodiversity); and*
- *Whether occupiers or users of the development could experience poor living conditions or health due to poor air quality.'*

The guidance also outlines the specific issues that may need to be considered when assessing air quality impacts. Relevant considerations include when a development would:

- *'Lead to changes (including any potential reductions) in vehicle-related emissions in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development or further afield. This could be through the provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure; altering the level of traffic congestion; significantly changing traffic volumes, vehicle speeds or both; or significantly altering the traffic composition on local roads. Other matters to consider include whether the proposal involves the development of a bus station, coach or lorry park; could add to turnover in a large car park; or involve construction sites that would generate large Heavy Goods Vehicle flows over a period of a year or more;*
- *Introduce new point sources of air pollution. This could include furnaces which require prior notification to local authorities; biomass boilers or biomass-fuelled Combined Heat and Power plant; centralised boilers or plant burning other fuels within or close to an air quality management area or introduce relevant combustion within a Smoke Control Area; or extraction systems (including chimneys) which require approval or permits under pollution control legislation;*
- *Expose people to harmful concentrations of air pollutants, including dust. This could be by building new homes, schools, workplaces or other development in places with poor air quality;*

- *Give rise to potentially unacceptable impacts (such as dust) during construction for nearby sensitive locations;*
- *Have a potential adverse effect on biodiversity, especially where it would affect sites designated for their biodiversity value.'*

Guidance also details how air quality impacts can be mitigated, stating that mitigation should be spatially specific, dependent on the proposed development, and proportionate to the likely impact. The following examples of mitigation are given:

- *'Maintaining adequate separation distances between sources of air pollution and receptors;*
- *Using green infrastructure, in particular trees, where this can create a barrier or maintain separation between sources of pollution and receptors;*
- *Appropriate means of filtration and ventilation;*
- *Including infrastructure to promote modes of transport with a low impact on air quality (such as electric vehicle charging points);*
- *Controlling dust and emissions from construction, operation and demolition; and*
- *Contributing funding to measures, including those identified in air quality action plans and low emission strategies, designed to offset the impact on air quality arising from new development.'*

3.2. IAQM land-use planning & development control: planning for air quality

This document from EPUK and the Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM) provides detail on the consideration of air quality within the land-use planning and development control processes (IAQM, 2017). The guidance provides an approach to determining significance of air quality impacts, which takes account of the percentage change in concentrations relative to the relevant air quality objective. The guidance also provides a screening approach to determine whether emissions from road traffic generated by a development have the potential for significant air quality impacts.

3.3. IAQM Demolition and Construction Dust Guidance

Guidance on the assessment of dust from demolition and construction has been published by the IAQM. The guidance provides a methodology to determine the dust emission magnitude and provides a series of matrices to determine the risk magnitude of potential dust sources associated with construction activities. This allows for the identification of appropriate mitigation measures that are defined within further IAQM guidance.

3.4. Defra Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance ('TG22')

The Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance (TG22) (Defra, 2022) is designed to support local authorities and air quality professions in carrying out their duties under the Environment Act 1995 as amended by the Environment Act 2021. The guidance sets out what local authorities should do and the legal duties they must comply with to improve local air quality. It supports evidence-based action planning for public health and well-being by updating existing air quality tools and measures, outlining detailed air quality assessment methodology, and adding new products and supporting material to help assess the impact of measures (Manchester City Council, 2022).

3.5. MCC Air Quality and Planning Technical Guidance

One of the actions outlined in the GM air quality action plan is to develop air quality and planning guidance. The guidance document (MCC, 2022) aims to encourage developers to follow good practice and to mitigate impacts. It outlines the expectations of MCC with regards to air quality in the planning context for both the construction and operation of a development.

The guidance recommends following IAQM and EPUK guidance when assessing impacts associated with both construction and demolition. It also recommends usage of Defra's damage cost calculations (for additional pollutant population exposure emissions costs) for major developments and/or where there may be a cumulative impact.

4. PM_{2.5} Targets: Interim Guidance

The PM_{2.5} Targets: Interim Guidance was published in 2024 (Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs, 2024) and outlines some actions to be taken by applicants and local authorities in addressing the new PM_{2.5} target. Air quality assessment reports would need to include evidence of identifying key pollution sources within their schemes and proof of actions taken to minimise PM_{2.5} emissions.

With regards to the interim planning guidance relating to the new PM_{2.5} targets (as outlined in section 15.19), the Proposed Development during demolition includes the following measures to minimise PM_{2.5} emissions and exposure:

- During construction, best practice mitigation measures will be adopted to minimise PM_{2.5} emissions. The mitigation measures will be informed by the construction dust risk assessment in Appendix 7.2;
- During construction a Travel Plan will be in place for construction workers to promote and encourage use of sustainable travel to the EIA Site;