

Annual Progress Report (APR)



2025 Air Quality Annual Progress Report (APR) for Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

In fulfilment of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995, as amended by the Environment Act 2021

Local Air Quality Management

26th (June, 2025)

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

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Executive Summary: Air Quality in Our Area

Air Quality in the Western Isles

This report considers local air quality management in the Western Isles, examining relevant policies and technical guidance documents.

Air quality is a major environmental health risk in the UK. A person's health can be affected by short-term, high pollution episodes and by long-term exposure to lower levels of pollution. There are many things we can do that can make a big difference to emissions and communicating effectively with the public about air pollution and what action can be taken can help improve people's health and ultimately save lives.

As in previous submissions there are no significant changes and no new air pollution sources have been identified. The Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan (Adopted Plan) 2018 demonstrates a shift in transport infrastructure to incorporate new footpaths and more cycle routes in and around settlements and improve cycle storage at new public buildings, community facilities, schools, major business premises and flatted dwellings. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (CNES) will support the provision of electric car charging points in new developments.

Passive diffusion tube monitoring for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) was carried out in 2022 and the results are reported in this document. The results show that the pollutant levels were below the action levels.

CNES works closely with SEPA and has in place a Development Strategy which considers environmental impacts on the local authority area and transport infrastructure. SEPA have a monitoring station on Lewis as part of the (VEN) Volcanic Emission Network

<https://www2.sepa.org.uk/VolcanicEmissionsNetwork/Dashboard.aspx?id=Lewis>

The monitoring station monitors for Particulate Matter (PM) and Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂), but the data can only be classed as indicative as the PM monitors have not been certified and the SO₂ data has not been verified.

There are currently no air quality issues within this local authority area. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar experienced a cyber-attack in November 2023 and a lot of information has been lost. There may be information unavailable for reporting within the annual progress report because of this.

Actions to Improve Air Quality

The report concludes that detailed assessments are not required for any pollutant. There have been no AQMA's declared within the local authority area

Local Priorities and Challenges

For the coming year CNES will not be carrying out any monitoring of pollutants. Further monitoring will be undertaken if there are any new developments proposed that warrants air quality monitoring however it is expected that in 5 years' time further monitoring will be undertaken to verify that there are still no air quality issues in the area.

Our Local Authority experienced a cyber-attack on 7th November 2023 and lost a significant amount of data, this is an ongoing challenge for us in trying to retrieve information.

How to Get Involved

The public can access further information on air quality by emailing eh@cne-siar.gov.uk the Council experienced a cyber-attack in November 2023 and the website is currently being rebuilt.

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1 Local Air Quality Management

This report provides an overview of air quality in the Western Isles during 2024. It fulfils the requirements of Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) as set out in Part IV of the Environment Act (1995), as amended by the Environment Act (2021), and the relevant Policy and Technical Guidance documents.

The LAQM process places an obligation on all local authorities to regularly review and assess air quality in their areas, and to determine whether or not the air quality objectives are likely to be achieved. Where an exceedance is considered likely the local authority must declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and prepare an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) setting out the measures it intends to put in place in pursuit of the objectives. This Annual Progress Report (APR) summarises the work being undertaken by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar to improve air quality and any progress that has been made.

Table 1.1 – Summary of Air Quality Objectives in Scotland

Pollutant	Air Quality Objective Concentration	Air Quality Objective Measured as	Date to be Achieved by
Nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂)	200 µg/m ³ not to be exceeded more than 18 times a year	1-hour mean	31.12.2005
Nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂)	40 µg/m ³	Annual mean	31.12.2005
Particulate Matter (PM ₁₀)	50 µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 7 times a year	24-hour mean	31.12.2010
Particulate Matter (PM ₁₀)	18 µg/m ³	Annual mean	31.12.2010
Particulate Matter (PM _{2.5})	10 µg/m ³	Annual mean	31.12.2021
Sulphur dioxide (SO ₂)	350 µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 24 times a year	1-hour mean	31.12.2004
Sulphur dioxide (SO ₂)	125 µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 3 times a year	24-hour mean	31.12.2004
Sulphur dioxide (SO ₂)	266 µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 35 times a year	15-minute mean	31.12.2005
Benzene	3.25 µg/m ³	Running annual mean	31.12.2010
1,3 Butadiene	2.25 µg/m ³	Running annual mean	31.12.2003
Carbon Monoxide	10.0 mg/m ³	Running 8-Hour mean	31.12.2003

2 Actions to Improve Air Quality

2.1 Air Quality Management Areas

Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) are declared when there is an exceedance or likely exceedance of an air quality objective. After declaration, the authority must prepare publish and implement an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) within the shortest possible time and no later than 12 months of the date of AQMA Designation Order. The AQAP must set out measures the local authority intends to put in place in pursuit of the objectives within the shortest possible time Measures should be provided with milestones and a final date for completion. The action plan itself should have a timescale for completion and for revocation of the AQMA. Where measures to reduce air pollution may require a longer timescale an action plan shall be reviewed and republished within five years of initial publication and then five-yearly thereafter.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar currently does not have any AQMAs. We are currently working on an Air Quality Strategy. This has not been completed due to the significant workload for officers at this time.

2.3 Implementation of Air Quality Action Plan(s) and/or measures to address air quality

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar does not have an Air Quality Action Plan in place but is working towards completing an Air Quality Strategy. The following plans and strategies are in place in the Western Isles:

- Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Climate Change Strategy 2022 – 2027
- Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy 2024 - 2029
- Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan 2018
- Outer Hebrides Local Transport Strategy 2020 – 2030
- Outer Hebrides Active Travel Strategy 2018

Table 2.1 – Progress on Measures to Improve Air Quality

Measure No.	Measure	Category	Expected/Actual Completion year	Organisations Involved	Measure Status	Funding Status	Key Milestones	Progress	Barriers to implementation
1	Outer Hebrides Active Travel Strategy	Alternatives to private vehicle use Transport Planning and infrastructure	2021-2025	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	In progress	Partially funded through Sustrans, difficulty as annual so difficult to plan accordingly	By 2030 – Scotland's Active Travel Framework vision is that communities will be based around people, with walking and cycling used primarily for short everyday journey's	A delivery plan will be developed with targeted interventions specific to each island, to deliver the aims and objectives of this strategy based on the needs and requirements of each community. Employee in place dealing with Active Travel	Cycling by Design Guide urban focused doesn't consider rural roads
2	Local Development Plan	Policy Guidance and Development Control	Plan adopted in 2018	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	In progress	N/A	To encourage and facilitate sustainable economic growth and help build confident and resilient communities, the Plan will provide planning policy that delivers long term benefits to the communities of the Outer Hebrides	Sets out a vision and spatial strategy for the development of land in the Outer Hebrides over the next 10-20 years	High building costs and lack of access to mortgages

3	CNES Climate Change Strategy	Policy Guidance and Development Control	2022-2027	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	In Progress	N/A	Encouraging Climate Change to be integral to everything we do Decarbonising own estate, assets and services	Climate Change Working Group has been set up and work is ongoing	Lack of funding and understanding to achieve net zero
4	Outer Hebrides Local Transport Strategy	Transport Planning and Infrastructure	2020-2030	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	In Progress	N/A	Electric charge points for new developments (building in infrastructure) Enhancing transport and travel throughout the area	Ongoing	Costs, ageing ferry fleet, Poor transport links

3 Air Quality Monitoring Data and Comparison with Air Quality Objectives

3.1 Summary of Monitoring Undertaken

3.1.1 Automatic Monitoring Sites

Comhairle Nan Eilean does not undertake any automatic (continuous) monitoring within the authority's area.

3.1.2 Non-Automatic Monitoring Sites

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar does not undertake any non-automatic (passive) monitoring of objective pollutants within the authority's area.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar undertook non-automatic (passive) monitoring of NO₂ at 5 sites during 2022. Table A.2 in Appendix A shows the details of the sites.

3.1.3 Other Monitoring Activities

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has not undertaken any monitoring activities in 2024.

3.2 Individual Pollutants

3.2.1 Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂)

Table A.4 in Appendix A compares the adjusted monitored NO₂ annual mean concentrations for the past five years with the air quality objective of 40 µg/m³ at non automatic monitoring sites.

Comhairle na Eilean Siar did not undertake any monitoring for NO₂ in 2024.

3.2.2 Particulate Matter (PM₁₀)

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar does not undertake monitoring for PM₁₀

3.2.3 Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5})

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar did not undertake monitoring PM_{2.5}

3.2.4 Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂)

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar did not undertake monitoring for SO₂ in 2024.

3.2.5 Carbon Monoxide, Lead and 1,3-Butadiene

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar did not undertake monitoring for Carbon Monoxide, Lead and 1,3-Butadiene in 2024.

4 New Local Developments

The Stornoway harbour improvement works are to take place over a 20-year period. Work commenced in 2022. There is an Environmental Impact Assessment that has been carried out. It found that there would be little impact on air quality (Affric, Stornoway Deep Water Port – Environmental Impact Assessment Report Vol.1, December 2020)

The deep-water port is now complete and allows large cruise ships to dock in the harbour. There are plans to improve the road connecting the deep-water port to the A896 but works have not started yet.

Scottish and Southern Energy are planning to upgrade the main power lines between Lewis and Harris in 2025, this will involve helicopter movements across the islands to access the sites. It is not expected that this will have an adverse impact on air quality in the area. There have been no other new local developments identified within the Western Isles that may affect air quality.

4.1 Road Traffic Sources

There are no new road traffic sources as specified and no significantly changed traffic flows in the Western Isles.

4.2 Other Transport Sources

There are no new transport sources identified in this report.

4.3 Industrial Sources

There are no new or proposed industrial sources in the Western Isles.

4.4 Commercial and Domestic Sources

There are no new commercial or domestic sources in the Western Isles.

4.5 New Developments with Fugitive or Uncontrolled Sources

There are no new developments with fugitive or uncontrolled sources identified.

5 Planning Applications

There are a number of planning applications that could impact on air quality in the Western Isles in future.

The Stornoway Harbour Redevelopment Works are to be ongoing until 2042. Each phase will undergo an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) where issues such as air quality will be assessed.

Planning Permission for a Hydrogen Fuel Station (24/00474/PPD) at Creed Enterprise Park, Lochs Road, Isle of Lewis is going through planning at the moment. Access to the application can be done by emailing the Planning Team at planning&design@cne-siar.gov.uk the online planning portal is still unavailable on our website since the cyber-attack in 2023.

The electricity interconnector between the mainland of Scotland and the Western Isles has been approved. This project is required to connect onshore and offshore wind in and around the Western Isles to the GB transmission system, maximising the significant renewable potential of the Western Isles, adding capacity for new connections and reducing the island's reliance on diesel-powered electricity generation ([Western Isles HVDC Link Project - SSEN Transmission](#))

There are a number of elements to this including:

- High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) Converter Station and an Alternating Current (AC) Substation located near Stornoway.
- Circa 4km of underground HVDC cable from the new HVDC converter station and AC substation to the landfall at Arnish Point, Stornoway
- 81km of HVDC subsea cable from Arnish Point, Stornoway to Dundonnell on the Scottish mainland

These elements will be discussed in future progress reports as plans are progressed.

6 Conclusions and Proposed Actions

6.1 Conclusions from New Monitoring Data

There was no new monitoring data in 2024.

6.2 Conclusions relating to New Local Developments

Any new Stornoway Harbour Redevelopment Works may impact on air quality. For any proposed works summaries of any environmental impact assessment (EIA) will be included in future progress reports. The latest EIA for the works is “Stornoway Deep Water Port – Environmental Impact Assessment Volume 1, Non-Technical Summary, December 2020”.

The granting of the new electricity interconnector and associated works may have an impact on air quality within the Western Isles. There are large sub-stations proposed as part of the work, these may have the potential to increase public exposure to air pollution due to the number of vehicle movements likely during the construction phase. EIA’s will be reported in future progress reports.

6.3 Proposed Actions

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar does not have any evidence to support creating an AQMA in the Western Isles.

The Local Authority’s next course of action is to submit the next Air Quality Annual Progress Report.

Appendix A: Monitoring Results

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has no automatic monitoring sites

Table A.1 – Details of Non-Automatic Monitoring Sites

Site ID	Site Name	Site Type	X OS Grid Ref	Y OS Grid Ref	Pollutants Monitored	In AQMA? Which AQMA?	Distance to Relevant Exposure (m) ⁽¹⁾	Distance to kerb of nearest road (m) ⁽²⁾	Tube co-located with a Continuous Analyser?	Tube Height (m)
1	Seaview Terrace, Stornoway	Kerbside	581217	62229	NO ₂	No	2	2	N	2.5
2	South Beach Street, Stornoway	Roadside	582077	63875	NO ₂	No	1	3	N	2.5
3	Perceval Square, Stornoway	Kerbside	582089	63888	NO ₂	No	4	4	N	2.5
4	Arnish Point	Roadside	581860	63810	NO ₂	No	1	2	N	2.5
5	Barony Square, Stornoway	Urban Background	582149	637514	NO ₂	No	1	1	N	2.5

Notes:

(1) 0m if the monitoring site is at a location of exposure (e.g. installed on/adjacent to the façade of a residential property).

(2) N/A if not applicable.

Table A.2 – Annual Mean NO₂ Monitoring Results: Non-Automatic Monitoring (µg/m³)

Diffusion Tube ID	X OS Grid Ref (Easting)	Y OS Grid Ref (Northing)	Site Type	Valid Data Capture for Monitoring Period (%) ⁽¹⁾	Valid Data Capture 2024 (%) ⁽²⁾	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
1	581217	62229	Kerbside	95	1			5.14		
2	582077	63875	Roadside	95	2			14.59		
3	582089	63888	Kerbside	75	3			11.44		
4	581860	63810	Roadside	95	4			3.36		
5	582149	637514	Urban Background	95	5			4.41		

☒ Annualisation has been conducted where data capture is <75% and >25% in line with LAQM.TG22

☒ Diffusion tube data has been bias adjusted

☒ Reported concentrations are those at the location of the monitoring site (bias adjusted and annualised, as required), i.e. prior to any fall-off with distance correction

Notes:

Exceedances of the NO₂ annual mean objective of 40 µg/m³ are shown in bold.

NO₂ annual means exceeding 60 µg/m³, indicating a potential exceedance of the NO₂ 1-hour mean objective are shown in **bold and underlined**.

Means for diffusion tubes have been corrected for bias. All means have been “annualised” as per LAQM.TG(22) if valid data capture for the full calendar year is less than 75%. See Appendix C for details.

(1) Data capture for the monitoring period, in cases where monitoring was only carried out for part of the year.

(2) Data capture for the full calendar year (e.g. if monitoring was carried out for 6 months, the maximum data capture for the full calendar year is 50%).

There was no monitoring carried out in 2024.

Appendix C: Supporting Technical Information / Air Quality Monitoring Data QA/QC

New or Changed Sources Identified Within Comhairle nan Eilean Siar During 2024

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has not identified any new sources relating to air quality within the reporting year of 2024.

Additional Air Quality Works Undertaken by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar During 2024

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has not completed any additional works within the reporting year of 2024.

Glossary of Terms

Abbreviation	Description
AC	Alternating Current
AQAP	Air Quality Action Plan - A detailed description of measures, outcomes, achievement dates and implementation methods, showing how the LA intends to achieve air quality limit values'
AQMA	Air Quality Management Area – An area where air pollutant concentrations exceed / are likely to exceed the relevant air quality objectives. AQMAs are declared for specific pollutants and objectives
APR	Annual Progress Report
AURN	Automatic Urban and Rural Network (UK air quality monitoring network)
CNES	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DMRB	Design Manual for Roads and Bridges – Air quality screening tool produced by Highways England
DT	Diffusion Tube
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
FDMS	Filter Dynamics Measurement System
GB	Great Britain
HVDC	High Voltage Direct Current
LAQM	Local Air Quality Management
NO ₂	Nitrogen Dioxide
NO _x	Nitrogen Oxides
PM ₁₀	Airborne particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 10µm (micrometres or microns) or less
PM _{2.5}	Airborne particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 2.5µm or less
QA/QC	Quality Assurance and Quality Control

SO ₂	Sulphur Dioxide
VEN	Volcanic Emission Network

References

Affric, Stornoway Deep Water Port-Environmental Impact Assessment Report, Vol.1 Non-Technical Summary, December 2020

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Climate Change Strategy 2022 – 2027

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