# City of London Corporation Committee Report

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| **Committee(s):**<br>Port Health and Environmental Services Committee – For information<br>Health and Wellbeing Board – For information | **Dated:**<br><br>23/09/2026<br>23/09/2026 |
| **Subject:**<br>Air Quality Annual Status Report for 2025 | **Public report:**<br>For Information |
| **This proposal:**<br>• **Delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes**<br>• **Provides statutory duties** | Leading Sustainable Environment.<br>Providing Excellent Services.<br>Diverse Engaged Communities. |
| **Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?** | No |
| **If so, how much?** | N/A |
| **What is the source of Funding?** | N/A |
| **Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?** | N/A |
| **Report of:** | Katie Stewart, Executive Director, Environment |
| **Report author:** | Paul Bentley, Air Quality Officer |

## Summary

As part of its statutory duties for London Local Air Quality Management, the City of London Corporation is required to produce an Annual Status Report and submit the report to the Greater London Authority. The report is designed to detail the progress with the actions contained within the City Corporation Air Quality Strategy, and to present air quality monitoring data. A copy of the full report, which is produced using a prescribed template, is available on the City Corporation website. The report was approved by the Greater London Authority on the 13th of July 2026.

The City Corporation runs a dense and comprehensive air quality monitoring network. In 2025, data was collected using four nitrogen dioxide ($NO_2$) continuous monitors, three particulate $PM_{10}$ monitors, two particulate $PM_{2.5}$ monitors and one ozone monitor. $NO_2$ was also monitored at 79 additional locations in 2025 across the Square Mile using low-cost diffusion tubes.

Following a significant reduction between 2019 and 2020 there has been a levelling out in annual mean concentrations of $NO_2$. In 2025, 98% of all locations measured

met the national standard of 40µg/$m^3$ and 67% met the CoL 2030 Air Quality Strategy aim of 30µg/$m^3$.

Particulate matter, presented as $PM_{10}$ or $PM_{2.5}$, is made up of many sources, local, national and international. All three $PM_{10}$ monitoring sites have complied with the national standard since 2017. In 2025, $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations at Farringdon Street and The Aldgate School continued to meet the new national standard of 10µg/$m^3$. This is ahead of the 2040 UK deadline.

## Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the contents of the Air Quality Annual Status Report for 2025.

## Main Report

### Background

1. The City of London Corporation has a statutory duty to assist the Mayor of London and the UK Government in taking action to reduce levels of air pollution so that concentrations of pollutants meet health-based standards. The City Corporation also has a responsibility to protect public health.

2. A five-year Air Quality Strategy (AQS), 2025-2030, was adopted in January 2025. This outlines actions that will be taken to fulfil the City of London Corporation's statutory responsibility under the London Local Air Quality Management (LLAQM) framework, and for reducing the health impact of air pollution within the Square Mile.

3. As part of the LLAQM framework, an Annual Status Report is submitted to the Mayor of London. The report outlines progress towards actions in the City Corporation AQS and provides the results of air quality monitoring undertaken over a seven-year period. A copy of the full report, which is produced using a prescribed template, is available in the Members Room and on the Air Quality Reports section of the City Corporation website.

### Air Quality Data

4. In 2025, monitoring data was collected using continuous monitors at:
   - Four nitrogen dioxide ($NO_2$) sites
   - One ozone site
   - Three particulate matter ($PM_{10}$) sites
   - Two particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$) sites

5. These monitors provide hourly readings with near real-time data made available to the public via two websites; Air Quality in England and Air-Aware. The annual average data is presented in Table 1.

6. Concentrations of air pollution are compared to health-based standards. The national standards for $NO_2$ and particulate matter are taken from those originally

laid down by the European Union. These standards were based on 2005 World Health Organisation Air Quality Guidelines. The Guidelines were updated in 2021 and, in most cases, tightened. The new Guidelines have not resulted in changes in domestic legislation, but they have been used to inform the aims of the City Corporation Air Quality Strategy.

7. The data is presented alongside both the national standards (UKS) and the City Corporation AQS aims for comparison. The existing annual average national standard for $PM_{2.5}$ is 20µg/m$^3$. Given the health impact of $PM_{2.5}$, the UK government adopted a new $PM_{2.5}$ standard of 10µg/m$^3$ to be achieved by 2040.

*Table 1: Air Pollution Monitoring Data, values expressed as annual averages and in µg/m$^3$*

| Location | Pollutant | UKS | AQS Aim | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **The Aldgate School** | $NO_2$ | 40 | 30 | 33 | 22 | 23 | 23 | 22 | 20 | 22 |
| **The Aldgate School** | $PM_{10}$ | 40 | 15 | 19 | 16 | 16 | 17 | 15 | 16 | 18 |
| **The Aldgate School** | $PM_{2.5}$ | 10 | 10 | 12 | 12 | 11 | 12 | 10 | 9 | 10 |
| **Upper Thames St.*** | $NO_2$ | 40 | 30 | 74 | 45 | 46 | 52 | - | - | - |
| **Upper Thames St.*** | $PM_{10}$ | 40 | 15 | 27 | 24 | 19 | - | - | - | - |
| **Bell Wharf Lane** | $NO_2$ | 40 | 30 | - | - | - | - | 32 | 30 | 28 |
| **Bell Wharf Lane** | $PM_{10}$ | 40 | 15 | - | - | - | 20 | 17 | 16 | 19 |
| **Beech Street** | $NO_2$ | 40 | 30 | 62 | 29 | 31 | 41 | 36 | 37 | 33 |
| **Beech Street** | $PM_{10}$ | 40 | 15 | 22 | 18 | 15 | 17 | 15 | 15 | 18 |
| **Farringdon Street** | $NO_2$ | 40 | 30 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 34 |
| **Farringdon Street** | $PM_{2.5}$ | 10 | 10 | 12 | 12 | 11 | 13 | 10 | 9 | 10 |

* The Upper Thames Street monitors were relocated to Bell Wharf Lane due to changes to office accommodation and an issue with electricity supply.

8. Over the past 20 years, there has been a long-term decline in air pollution in the Square Mile. There was a significant drop in concentrations of $NO_2$ between 2019 and 2020/21 due to the impact of the country's response to the COVID 19 pandemic. In 2022 a rebound in concentrations at roadside monitoring sites was experienced, but not to pre-pandemic levels. In 2025 the four monitoring sites met the national standard of 40µg/m$^3$.

9. $PM_{10}$ concentrations continue to meet the national standard of 40µg/m$^3$ at each of the three monitoring sites. Concentrations of $PM_{2.5}$ have met the national standard of 10µg/m$^3$ to be achieved by 2040 since 2023.

10. Compared to 2024, 2025 resulted in higher $PM_{10}$ and $PM_{2.5}$ annual mean concentrations, and slightly higher $NO_2$ concentrations at The Aldgate School. During early 2025 elevated concentrations were recorded across London resulting in two distinct pollution episodes. These were driven by several cold, high pressure weather systems resulting in increased use of domestic wood burning and heating and a polluted air mass from continental Europe.

11. Local Authorities do not have a statutory duty to measure or take action relating to ozone, however, ozone levels are monitored at the Guildhall to assist with public health messaging. The national standard for ozone is 100µg/m$^3$ expressed as an 8-hour average, not to be exceeded more than ten times a year. In 2025

there were 21 8-hour periods greater than 100µg/$m^3$, therefore the national standard was exceeded.

12. In contrast to $NO_2$ and PM, there are no major emission sources of ozone. It is a secondary pollutant that once formed, can travel long-distances. The vast majority of ozone at ground level is formed in the air from reactions between other pollutants in the presence of ultraviolet light (sunlight).

13. In addition to the four continuous monitors, $NO_2$ is also monitored at 79 additional locations in the Square Mile using low-cost diffusion tubes. In 2025 97% of these sites met the national standard of 40µg/$m^3$. The following monitoring sites exceeded the national standard and work is in progress to establish what action can be taken to reduce concentrations:

    - Upper Thames Street, outside Walbrook Wharf.
    - Cannon Street, opposite the main entrance to Cannon Street station.

14. The two sites are within 2.5m of the kerb, and both are in complex street canyon environments. Upper Thames Street experiences the highest traffic volume within the Square Mile with approximately 30,000 vehicles per day passing the monitoring site, and on Cannon Street approximately 15,000 vehicles per day pass the monitoring site. Additional monitoring on both road-links complies with the $NO_2$ national standard of 40µg/$m^3$ therefore the elevated concentrations are extremely localised.

15. The data for all locations is presented in the Annual Status Report and summarised in Appendix 1.

**Progress with Actions**

16. The Annual Status Report includes a brief update, where relevant, on each action in the City Corporation AQS. Examples of actions taken during 2025 are as follows:

    - The $NO_2$ monitoring network was reviewed, with new monitoring sites established on Cannon Street and Upper/Lower Thames Street.
    - A partnership was secured with the Environment Agency to install a new $NO_2$ continuous analyser at the Farringdon Street monitoring site.
    - Annual monitoring reports were produced for each school and nursery within the Square Mile.
    - Completed an indoor air quality project in conjunction with the London Borough of Hackney advising residents on the sources of indoor air pollution and how to minimise their exposure.
    - A revised Air Quality Supplementary Planning Document was drafted.
    - A series of air quality themed lessons were delivered to the pupils of the City of London Girls and City of London Boys schools.
    - Took action to discourage unnecessary vehicle idling:
        - Responded to complaints.

    - Membership of the pan-London Idling Action London group funded by the Greater London Authority.
    - Completed quarterly anti-idling patrols.
- Conducted 61 audits of construction sites to ensure compliance with the London low emission zone for non-road mobile machinery.
- Assessed all major planning applications for air quality impact.
- Inspected retail premises to ensure any wood sold complied with solid fuel regulations.
- Provided advice for restaurants on their responsibilities for complying with local smoke control regulations.
- Completed an assessment of the impact of standby generator use on local air quality.

**Corporate & Strategic Implications**

Strategic implications

17. Air quality policy and action is framed in the City of London Corporation Air Quality Strategy 2025 – 2030. It is supported by the Climate Action Strategy, Transport Strategy, Procurement Strategy, and draft City Plan 2040.

18. The work on air quality supports the following Corporate Plan Outcomes:

    - Leading Sustainable Environment
    - Providing Excellent Services
    - Diverse Engaged Communities

Financial implications

19. None

Resource implications

20. None

Legal implications

21. None

Risk implications

22. Air quality is listed as a departmental risk. Department risks are reviewed quarterly by the Environment Department Senior Leadership Team. Quarterly risk management update reports are presented to the PHES committee.

Equalities implications

23. Action to improve air quality has a positive impact on all sections of the population. The benefit is greatest for children and the elderly as they are more susceptible to the health impacts of air pollution. There is also a positive impact on individuals whose lives are affected by asthma and other respiratory and/or cardiovascular conditions.

Climate implications

24. There are a high number of synergies between reducing emissions of carbon and air pollutants. The implementation of the Air Quality Strategy will have a positive impact upon the climate in terms of reducing carbon emissions within the Square Mile. The Air Quality Team liaise with the Climate Action Strategy team to advise upon air quality implications, both positive and negative, of relevant projects.

Security implications

25. None

## Conclusion

26. The City Corporation has completed its 2025 Air Quality Annual Status Report and submitted it to the Greater London Authority for approval. This fulfils part of the City of London Corporation's statutory obligations for London Local Air Quality Management.

27. In 2025, the national standards for particulate matter, both $PM_{10}$ and $PM_{2.5}$, were met at all monitoring sites. Of 83 locations monitored for $NO_2$, two were above the national standard of 40µg/$m^3$.

28. Action to improve air quality is strongly supported across the organisation by a wide range of policies and strategies. This is most notable in planning policy, the Transport Strategy, and the Climate Action Strategy. The newly adopted Air Quality Strategy runs up to 2030, and within the five-year strategy cycle ambitious aims have been adopted to continue to reduce air pollutant across the Square Mile and improve the health of our communities.

## Appendices

29. Appendix 1 – Air Quality Annual Status Summary Report for 2025

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