

PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF THE OUTCOMES OF THE UPDATING AND SCREENING ASSESSMENT FOR LOCAL AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN ENGLAND: A COMPARISON BETWEEN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS

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Local air quality management (LAQM) is the process by which air quality control is being carried out in England. The key element in the LAQM regime is a review and assessment process of air quality in the local authority's area of jurisdiction. In 2003 the Government suggested a new two stages prescriptive approach to air quality review and assessment substituting a three stages approach used in 1999-2001. This approach comprises an Updating and Screening Assessment (USA) and a Detailed Assessment (DA) stage. The majority of local authorities across England (except London) have completed their USA of the review and assessment process. This paper evaluates the technical and managerial practices of the local authorities across England during the USA. It explores issues and concerns raised by the local authorities in the second round of review and assessment. In addition, it includes a comparison between urban and rural air quality management practices during this round of review and assessment. Results are presented from a questionnaire survey of environmental health professionals of the 320 local authorities in England conducted in August 2003. A 42% response rate was achieved during this survey. From the local authorities that responded to the questionnaire, it appears that 47% are proceeding to DAs for combinations of pollutants - nitrogen dioxide, PM10, sulphur dioxide and benzene.