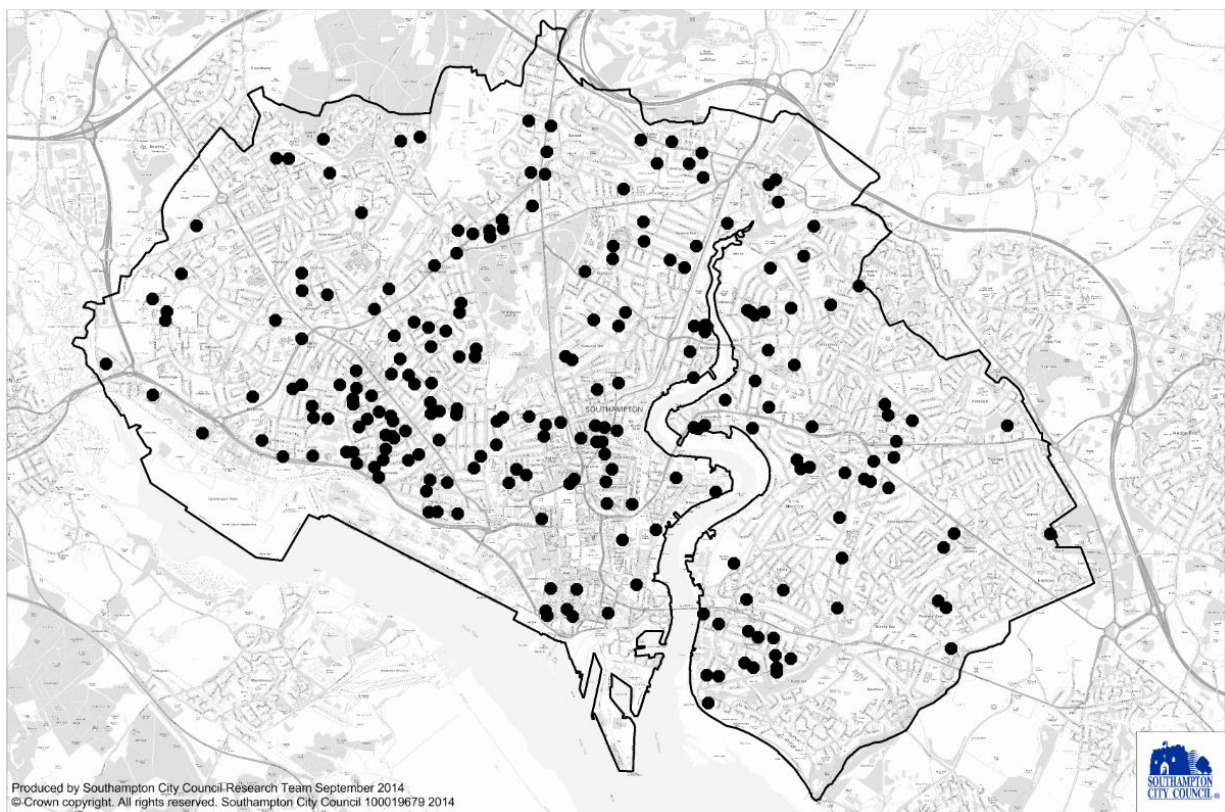


Scrutiny Inquiry – Air Quality

Air quality in Southampton – A resident's perspective**Survey results****Introduction**

To gather views on air quality in the city a survey canvassing resident's views was undertaken for the scrutiny inquiry. The survey ran from Thursday 7th August 2014 to Friday 5th September 2014 and received 298 responses from across the city (figure 1). The number of responses received was in excess of expectations and gives a clear indication that people are interested about air quality in Southampton.

Figure 1. –Location of Southampton survey respondents (by postal code)

**Methodology**

The survey was promoted through the following sources: -

- Hosted on the Southampton City Council consultation webpage
- The Community News and Events newsletter (5,417 subscribers)
- The Communities Facebook page (1,009 likes)
- The Communities Twitter account (2,972 followers)
- The Members Bulletin (Southampton City Council Councillors)
- Southampton Friends Forum (Green spaces volunteers in Southampton)
- The Weekly Bulletin for Southampton City Council staff
- 1,850 contacts on the Southampton City Council's Communities database (incl. Voluntary Organisations, Community groups and individual residents)

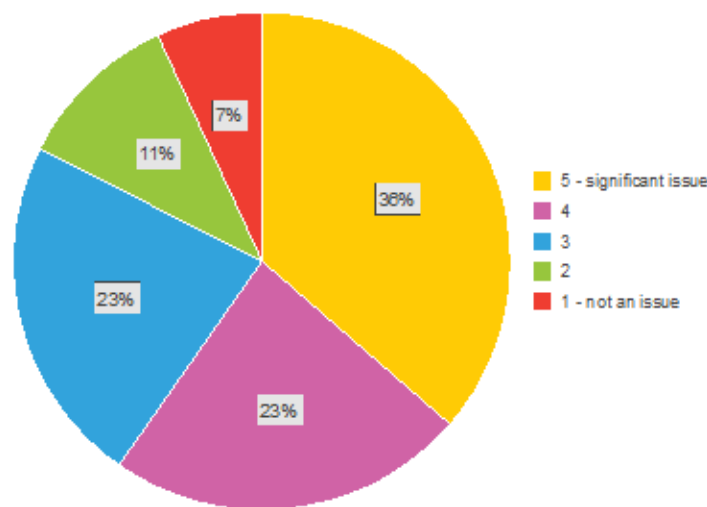
Findings

Whilst recognising the limitations of the survey due to its self-selecting nature, the following findings have been identified.

Question.1 – What are your views on air quality in Southampton?

291 respondents gave their view on air quality in Southampton and were asked to represent their view on a sliding scale, 5 being a significant issue, 1 being not important. 106 (36%) of those respondents felt that air quality is a significant issue. Whereas in contrast 20 (7%) respondents felt that air quality is not an issue in the city. (Figure 2). From the remainder of the 291 respondents, 68 (23%) had chosen 4, 66 (23%) had chosen 3 and 31 (11%) respondents had chosen sliding scale point 2. More than half (59%) of the respondents selected the higher points on the sliding scale (4-5).

Figure 2. – Q.1 what are your views on air quality in Southampton?



Question.2 – Which of the following do you feel contribute to air quality in Southampton?

Respondents were then asked to select sources of pollution they feel contribute to Southampton’s air quality. There were a total of 293 responses to this multiple choice question, which resulted in respondents identifying that cars, Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs), industry, buses and shipping and other port based activities as contributors to the city’s air quality (Figure 3 and Figure 4). There were fewer respondents (80) who felt that both pollutants from outside the city and background pollution (e.g. household boilers) are also contributing to the air quality in Southampton.

Figure 3.- Q.2 which of the following do you feel contribute to air quality in Southampton?

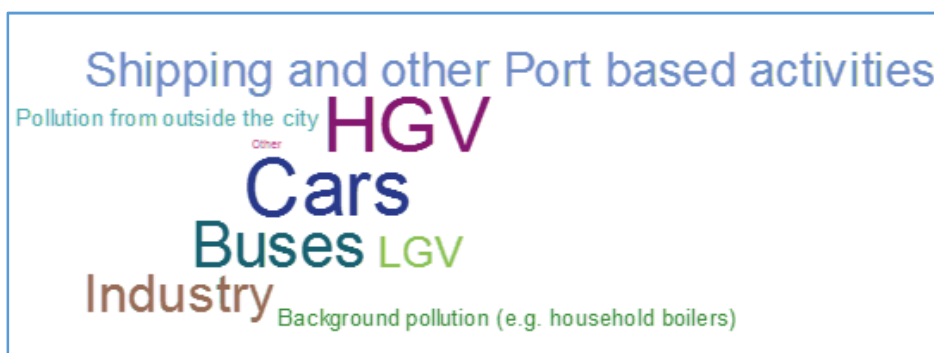
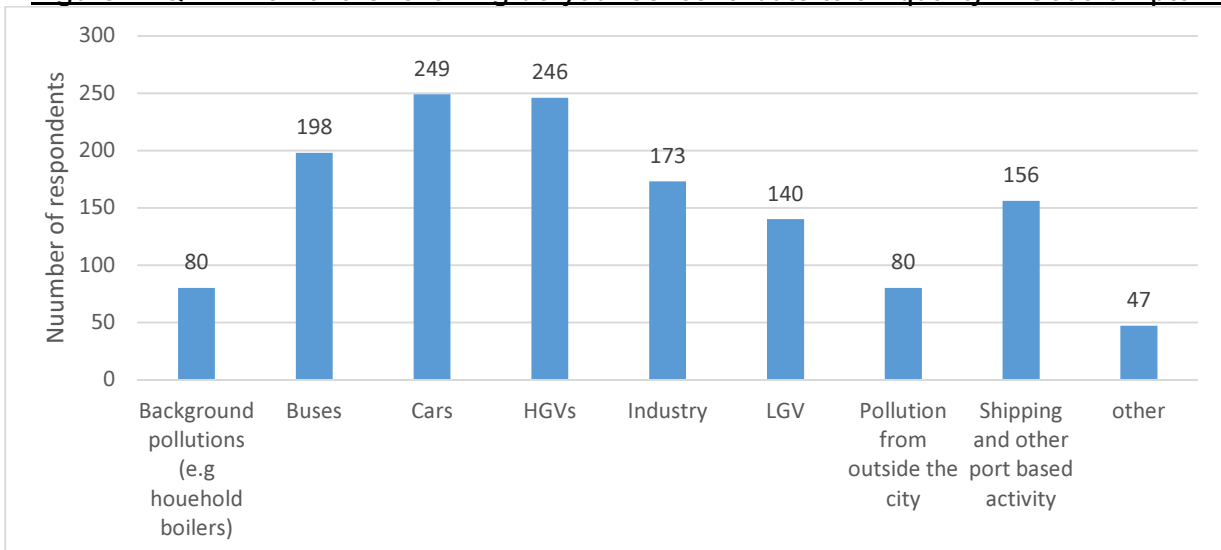


Figure 4. Q.2 which of the following do you feel contribute to air quality in Southampton?



In addition to the above, 47 respondents selected the other category. 14 of those respondents felt that the airport and associated aircraft contribute to the city’s air quality. 7 respondents identified the aroma of sewage as a contributor, the respondents also shared that they felt those smells were coming from Riverside Park and the Millbrook, St Deny’s and Woolston Sewage Works. 4 respondents thought that bonfires (commercial, domestic and allotments) contribute to poor air quality and there were 2 respondents who feel that smokers contribute to air quality in the city.

Question.3 – Which of the following do you feel is the most significant contributor to air quality in Southampton?

When respondents were asked what they felt is the most significant contributor to air quality in the city, cars (44%) were the most popular choice (figure 5), followed by HGVs (20%) and industry and shipping and other port based activities (10%). For ease of reference, the same question was cross analysed with respondent postal code and then plotted (figure 6). Predictably, there was a correlation between concerns about levels of pollution from the ports and sewage works and the views of those living nearest these locations.

Figure 5. Q.3 which of the following do you feel is the **most significant** contributor to air quality in Southampton?

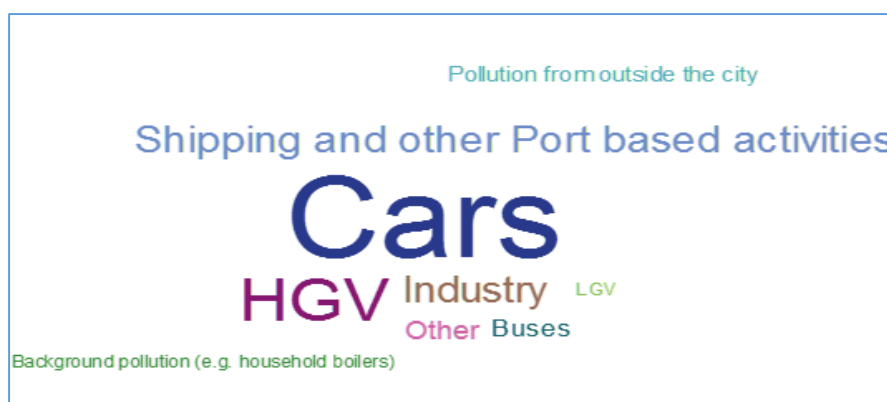
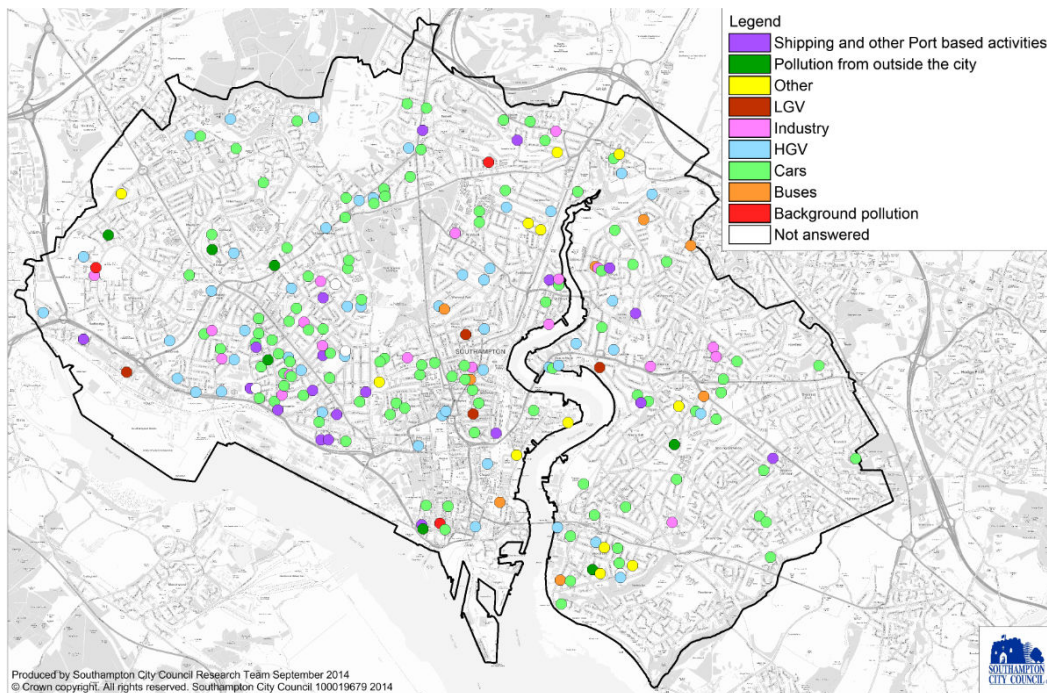


Figure 6. Q.3 Cross analysis - which of the following do you feel is the most significant contributor to air quality in Southampton by respondent postcode



Question. 4 – What do you think can be done to improve air quality in Southampton?

Due to the detail contained within the responses to this question, the findings are shown at the end of this report.

Question. 5 – In recent years, do you feel that air quality in Southampton has changed?

294 respondents answered the question and, as shown in figure 7, 173 (59%) felt that air quality has worsened. Only 12 (4%) respondents felt that it has improved, 52 (18%) respondents simply do not know, 57 (19%) respondents felt that the air quality in the city has remained the same in recent years. Figure 8 shows the respondents by postcode, those who felt that air quality had worsened over recent years, are evenly spread across the city. A few respondents with respiratory conditions such as asthma raised the point that they felt their condition has worsened either in recent years or since moving into the city.

Figure 7. Q.5 In recent years, do you feel that air quality in Southampton has changed?

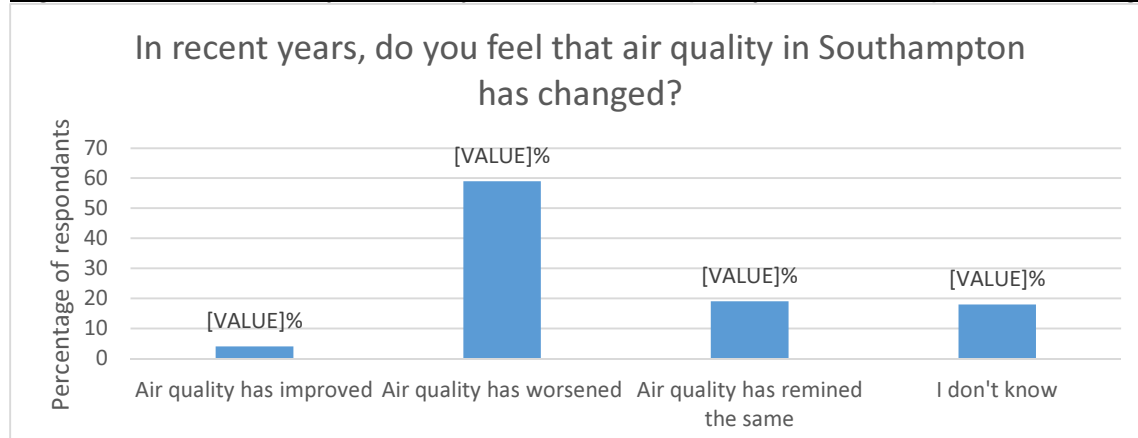
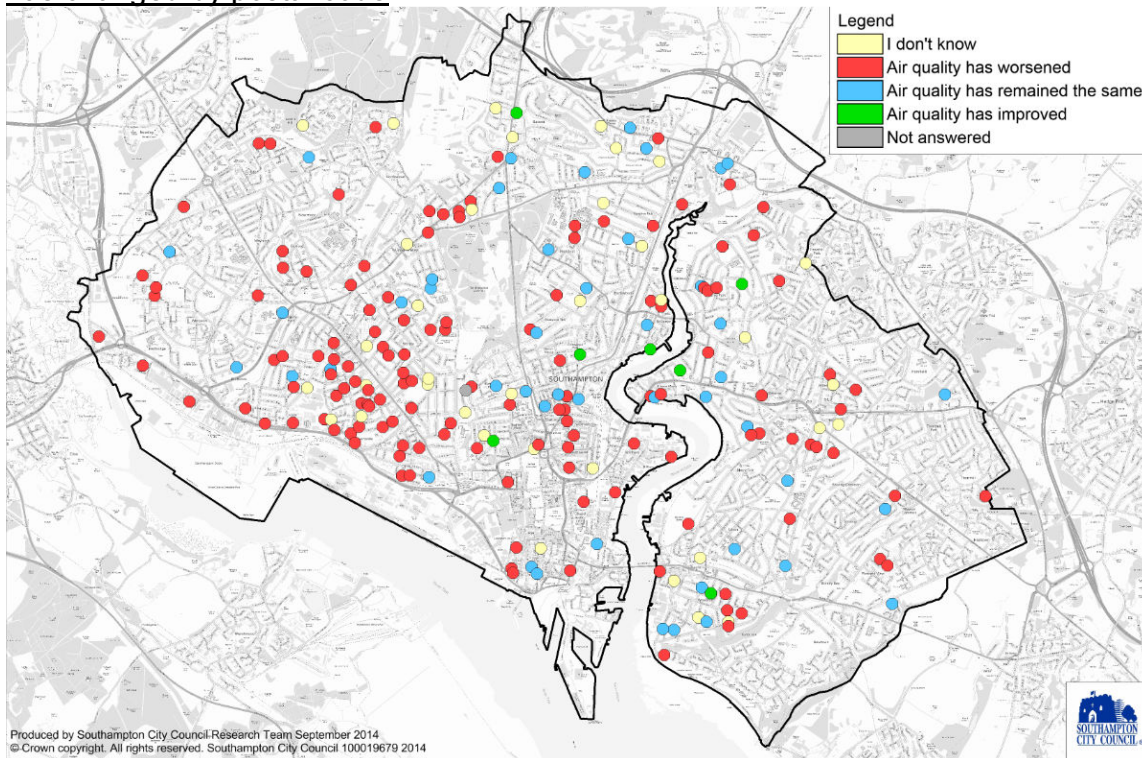


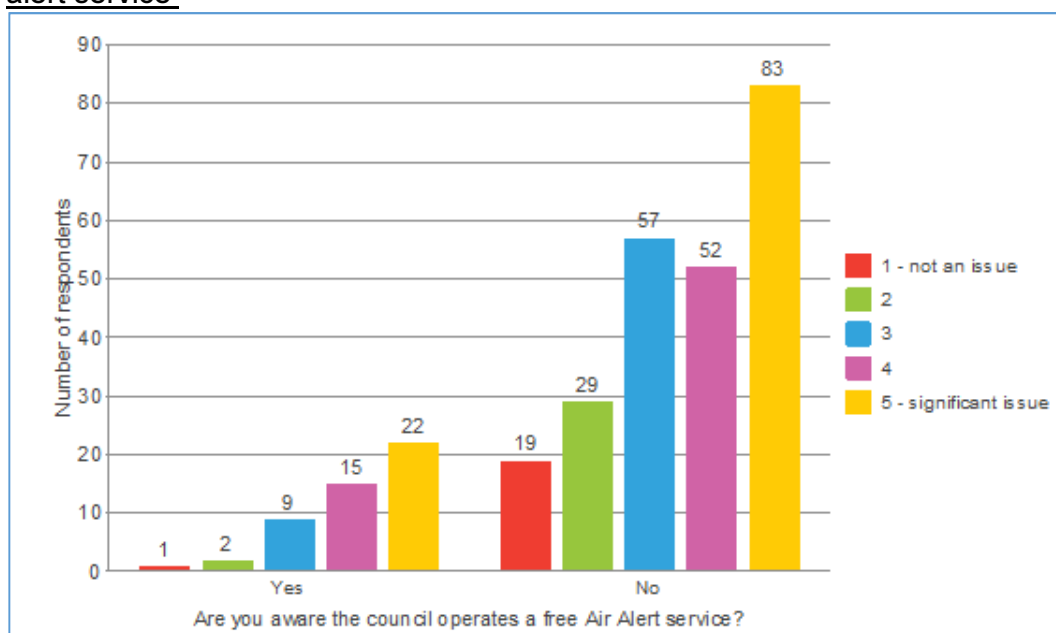
Figure 8. Q.5 Cross analysis -In recent years, do you feel that air quality in Southampton has changed by postal code



Question. 6 – Are you aware the Council operates a free Air Alert service?

Air Alert is a free service that sends out messages direct to registered users informing them about air pollution levels in their area. Out of the 285 respondents who answered the question asking if they were aware the Council operates its Air Alert service, 245 (83%) were not aware that the Council operates such a service. Interestingly, 83 out of those 245 respondents (figure 9) who were not aware of the Air Alert service had answered that they felt air quality in Southampton is a significant issue to them.

Figure 9. – Cross analysis – ‘Views on air quality in Southampton by awareness of the air alert service’



Question. 4 – What do you think can be done to improve air quality in Southampton?

The survey asked respondents to share ideas on ways to improve air quality in Southampton. A total of 238 out of the 298 respondents gave feedback. A wide variety of suggestions were received, covering a range of issues. A summary of the responses is shown below.

Public Transport

The most popular suggestion on how to improve air quality in the city, 26% respondents, was related to public transport. Respondents felt there is a need for bus and train companies to review their fares, networks and improve their services as a whole. Respondents felt that by making Public Transport more appealing for residents, this would in turn lead to improving air quality in the city. Included in the comments, were suggestions around improving the bus fleet by making buses more environmentally friendly for example running them on LPG (Liquid Petroleum Gas) or electricity. A respondent said that the Council should also make their own fleet more environmentally friendly by introducing electric vehicles and to install more electric charging ports for cars in the city. A few respondents suggested installing a tram or other public transport in the city centre, which could also be used by the docks and through to Shirley High Street. One respondent said that taxis should be prevented to using the inner town area.

Park and Ride

Another popular suggestion, identified by 23% respondents, is for the Council to introduce a Park and Ride service in the city. Respondents suggested possible sites to locate it and Oxford City's Park and Ride scheme was recommended as being good practise. One respondent shared that whilst modal shift schemes such as 'My Journey' are very good, for it to happen on a large scale then it could only happen through a Park and Ride scheme. Another suggested a small scale Park as this Ride would encourage car sharing, the use of public transport and more cycling. One respondent stated that car parking fees should be increased to make it less cost effective to drive.

Cycling

16% of the respondents made suggestions around cycling. The results show how passionate respondents were about improving and introducing new cycling routes, to encourage more residents to use this form of transport. The annual Sky Ride event that takes place in the city was praised and one respondent had mentioned Southampton should implement a similar event on a more permanent basis similar to Bristol's 'Make Sunday's special' and Bogota's 'Open streets' schemes. Respondents suggested introducing a cycle hire scheme in Southampton.

Lowering speed limits

Several respondents who felt that lowering speed limits to 20mph, either across the city or in residential areas, it would help improve air quality across the city. One respondent suggested that the Council need to lower the speed limit on the Avenue to 30mph and introduce road markings (south of Burgess Road) to help calm traffic. Many respondent's made comments about the number of traffic light systems in the city and that this should be looked at because traffic must keep flowing. One respondent shared that the Council should not be afraid to trial new traffic schemes and another suggests improving the coordination of road works and added that the Romanse system is poor and both need improvements.

Low Emission Zone

It was also suggested that the Council should introduce a Low Emission Zone within the City Centre, which includes Canute Road, Platform Road, Town Quay Road, Western Esplanade and West Quay Road.

Planting trees

Furthermore, 7% of respondents suggested that by improving green infrastructure through planting more trees and investing in open spaces would help improve air quality in the city. One respondent shared that planting Silver Birches, known for their pollutant absorbing leaves, would help and that they could be planted in the most polluting areas of the city. Respondents suggested that trees could be planted around the docks, Millbrook Road and in Bevois Valley areas. Another respondent said increase planting near roundabouts and pavement and another suggests that the Council could do more publicity on educating residents to encourage more tree planting and to promote eco initiatives for residents to get involved with too. It was also suggested that bonfires on allotments, the burning of residential and commercial waste should all have tighter regulations.

High-efficiency particulate air filters

A respondent suggested that the Council could install kerbside HEPA (High-efficiency particulate air) filters to help reduce pollution.

Congestion charge

Respondents said that a congestion charge should be introduced in the city.

No idling

On the other hand, respondents feel that more could be done on the idling of vehicles by introducing 'no idling zones'. Islington Borough Council's 'Don't be idle campaign' was given as an example of best practise of an area having already initiated such a scheme.

Air Quality Monitoring Stations

A few respondents disagree with the removal of Air Quality Monitoring Stations and suggest they should be reinstated. Whereas, it was suggested that monitoring stations themselves could be made mobile. The mobilisation of monitoring stations would allow various sites across the city to be monitored more frequently.

Air quality information

There was also a suggestion for the Council to do more around publicising its free Air Alert service. There were also respondents who said the Council could be more proactive in feeding back air quality results to residents, one respondent said for these to be more accessible possibly in the form of a graph. Another suggested that a map could be produced showing the most polluted areas of the city allowing cyclists and pedestrians to avoid those areas and another suggested 'real time' alerting would be beneficial.

HGVs

Redirecting and restricting HGVs was suggested. This includes using certain routes in the city and introducing a curfew on HGVs in the city outside of 9-5pm. It is also suggested that more businesses in the city should be made to use the distribution centre at Nursling. There was a suggestion to ban HGVs from using Winchester Road, except those visiting business and that HGV use on Millbrook Road should be limited. One respondent recommended that HGVs should be instructed to meet a pollution standard similar to London and another suggested improvements to be made to HGV queuing areas.

The Port

Whilst respondents recognised that the port and its activities are a significant contributor to the local economy and a number made suggestions that the port should investigate in developing a way for ships to get electricity from the shore and not to use polluting on board generators. One respondent said better management of cruise ship timings is needed by limiting the number of ships docking at any one time.

Industry

There were respondents who suggested that the Council must restrict further hazardous and health harming industries in the city and another shared that Fawley Oil Refinery should have more stringent inspections. A respondent shared that the Council should introduce initiatives to encourage industries to want to make a change and reward businesses who are proactive in helping to reduce air pollution. In contrast to this, another respondent shared that there is a need to increase planning controls on industry and increase business rates for those which generate the most pollution.

Shirley High Street

On various occasions Shirley high street was highlighted as a 'pollution hot-spot', especially with buses. Some respondents felt that more could be done to improve this, such as redirecting some buses and reviewing schedules.

National Policy

A respondent shared that air quality is an issue for central government and that government need to implement nationwide plans to tackle polluting cars and HGVs. Another respondent shared that there should be a national 'hotline' phone number to enable the whistleblowing of polluting vehicles, which could then be followed up by professionals and another suggests that there is a clear need to apply standards on emissions on vehicles. Another respondent suggested that there should be higher taxes on homes with more than one car.

Culture Change

Finally, one respondent stated quite powerfully that a change of mind-set for all is needed in order to improve air quality in the city.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the number of responses received was in excess of expectations and gives a clear indication that residents across Southampton are interested about air quality. A high percentage of respondents felt that cars are the main contributor to air quality and that it has worsened in recent years.

Overall, the results of the survey have provided the Panel with additional evidence that can be used to challenge the consultees who are scheduled to attend future meetings of the inquiry and shape potential recommendations.