

A Clean Air Strategy for Southampton 2019-2025



Clean air is essential for good quality of life, yet every day people living in our urban centres can be exposed to potentially harmful levels of pollutants.



Southampton City Council is committed to improving the city's air quality. Reducing emissions and air pollution now will have lifelong, lasting benefits for the city's population, remove barriers to further economic development and make the city a more attractive place to work, live and visit. Improvements in air quality can deliver ongoing improvements in public health and wellbeing. To protect our residents' health we want to make the city's air as clean as we can.



The Council cannot improve air quality on its own. This strategy details the key ways in which we will work together with our partners to make improvements to air quality across the city.

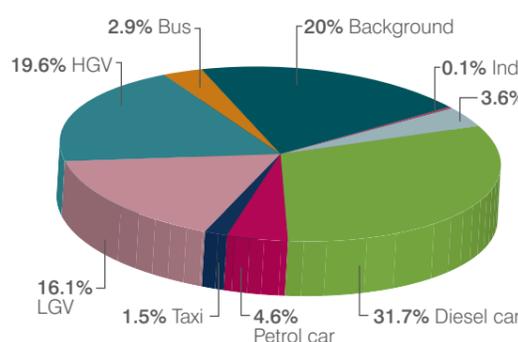
AIR QUALITY IN SOUTHAMPTON

- There are many different pollutants that can affect the quality of the air we breathe. Nitrogen dioxide and Particulate Matter are the main concern in the UK.
- The negative effects of exposure to air pollutants occur at every stage of life, from early stages of development through to old age. Those with existing cardiovascular and respiratory disease are most at risk, but a wide range of health effects have been linked to the wider population including stroke, heart disease, obesity, lung cancer and asthma. Reducing the health impacts of local air pollution is identified as a priority by Public Health England in its Strategic Plan (2016 to 2020).
- The Council have been monitoring key pollutants in the city including nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter, ozone and sulphur dioxide over the last 20+ years. This data has been enhanced by air quality modelling exercises to determine pollutant levels across the city.
- The Council has a statutory duty to assess and review air quality in its area and make reasonable efforts to achieve statutory thresholds. Ten Air Quality Management Areas have been identified in the city where specific actions are required to improve NO₂ levels.
- In the UK, between 28,000 and 36,000 deaths are currently estimated as a result of exposure to air pollution (COMEAP, 2018). Costs to society, business and NHS services due to poor air quality exceed £20 billion a year (Royal College Physicians, 2016).
- Exposure to particulate matter alone is currently estimated to attribute to 110 deaths in Southampton each year.
- Road transport is one of the most significant contributors to pollution across the city. Industry, port operations and background pollution are also significant in certain areas of the city.
- Diesel cars are the highest contributors to nitrogen oxide emissions in Southampton of the road transport sector.
- Air Quality is a consideration for the Planning Authority and the Council is obliged to ensure that impacts on air quality are taken into account when approving developments.

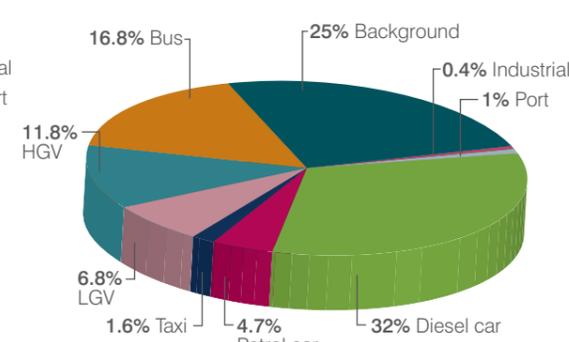
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

- The Council is committed to improving Southampton's air quality, reducing health impacts, and fulfilling our legal obligations.
- We will aspire to satisfy World Health Organisation air quality guideline values and by 2025 we want to see nitrogen dioxide levels of 25 µg/m³ as the norm in our city.
- The Council will continue to develop and implement measures as part of the city's Air Quality Action Plan and Local NO₂ Plan to deliver and facilitate improvements in air quality.
- We will adopt a Green City Charter that will establish a commitment to deliver a range of environmental improvements including improved air quality. We will encourage and support city stakeholders to do the same.

These charts illustrate the varied contributions to nitrogen oxide emissions across the city (2015)



Redbridge Road (Automatic monitor station)



Northam Road (Diffusion Tube location N144)

We have identified four priorities

PRIORITY	WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT
Improve air quality in the city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air pollution has an adverse effect on people's health. Reducing levels of pollutants below statutory levels and beyond is key to improving the health and wellbeing of Southampton's residents of all ages. • The threshold level for nitrogen dioxide (annual average) is exceeded in a number of key locations across the city and the Council has a statutory duty to make reasonable efforts to reduce levels below this. • If air quality does not improve it could become a significant barrier to further economic growth.
Supporting businesses and organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council cannot deliver improvements in air quality on its own - we will need to work with our local businesses and organisations to promote the benefits of change in term of both health and prosperity. • The Council will need to engage with residents, visitors, businesses and other organisations to encourage the use of low emission technologies, public transport and the take up of active travel such as cycling and walking.
Collaborating with communities and residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaner air in Southampton can only be achieved if individuals and organisations take responsibility and change their current behaviours. • These measures can provide direct benefits to the health and wellbeing of everyone in the city. If our residents and visitors embrace this positive message we can expect to see improvements sustained for future generations. • Our communities and residents will need support to ensure they are able to deliver the changes they want.
Promoting sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important that measures to improve air quality in Southampton are sustainable and do not create a negative impact elsewhere. This might happen if the most polluting vehicles are displaced from the city or alternative fuels are not from a sustainable source. • The Council will promote sustainable change – as well as making sure that, when providing advice and promoting change to others, it can demonstrate its own efforts and the positive differences it is making.

WHAT DO OUR RESIDENTS SAY ABOUT AIR QUALITY IN SOUTHAMPTON?

In 2018 a consultation was held on proposals for a Clean Air Zone

- 9,309 responses were received demonstrating the importance of air quality in Southampton.
- 75% of respondents felt air quality in Southampton was a fairly or very big problem 22% thought that air quality was not much of a problem or not a problem at all.
- Stakeholders suggested a wide range of measures that would be needed to help improve the city's air quality including promoting public transport, cycling and walking, traffic improvements, low emissions vehicles, and port improvements.



OUR CHALLENGES	OUR SUCCESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Air pollution is linked to many major health problems facing cities like Southampton. Estimates suggest that 5.8% of deaths in Southampton in 2017 were attributable to long term Particulate pollution alone. Those who live in deprived areas or have existing medical conditions are disproportionately affected by poor air quality. Between 2008/9 and 2012/13, Southampton has become relatively more deprived – of the 326 Local Authorities in England, Southampton is now ranked 67th (previously 72nd) most deprived. Southampton's port is the busiest cruise terminal and second largest container port in the UK. Its continued success is vital to the city's economy As a regional retail and economic centre, Southampton's economy is heavily reliant upon its transport links. In 2015 government identified SCC as one of the first five cities required to assess the need for a charging Clean Air Zone. We have since been able to demonstrate that we can achieve legal levels of NO₂ without using such penalties but, we need to ensure we do deliver that expectation, address the expectancy generated during the Clean Air Zone consultation process and manage the media attention connected with being one of the "first five cities". 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council introduced its first Air Quality Action Plan in 2007. At its last review, it identified 48 individual activities delivering improvements in local air quality. This will again be reviewed and updated to account for the latest developments and work undertaken by the council. Trends in nitrogen dioxide levels across the cities AQMAs are reported in the Council Strategy since 2012/13 in which time we have seen a gradual but steady improvement in concentrations. The city has a long established air monitoring network that provides robust data on current and historical pollution levels. Four continuous monitoring stations and 60+ passive sampling sites currently provide data on current levels and ongoing trends. Data is shared routinely on the council's website. Our air monitoring network has been able to demonstrate a steady improvement in the city's air quality since 2007. Both the existing Local Transport Plan and Local Development Plan recognise the health impact of air quality and identify how improvements can be achieved. The Council was amongst the first authorities to offer an Air Alert service. This is free to anyone but is particularly valued by those with respiratory illnesses who can be more sensitive to air pollution. The My Journey campaign has achieved significant success in promoting public transport and active travel choices across the city. Over the programme period car journeys have reduced by 3% and cycling has almost doubled. In 2018 the council started construction of an enhanced cycling infrastructure across the city. The Council is working closely with key partners and has assisted and supported local bus operators, port businesses and the University of Southampton in seeking and acquiring funding for activities to assess and improve air quality, including £2.7m to retrofit 145 operational buses with accredited emission reduction technology. Southampton was a focus city for the inaugural National Clean Air Day in 2017 and 2018. In partnership with Eastleigh Borough Council we launched one of the UK's first low emission taxi incentive schemes in 2017. A quarter of Southampton taxis had upgraded to low emission vehicles by 2019. The council introduced a Clean Air Network in 2017 allowing businesses and communities to access information on air quality, the actions they can take and where support is available. It also provides a forum to share experiences and seek advice from other members.

PRIORITY	OUTCOME	WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?
Improve air quality in the city	Adopt an effective programme of measures to reduce emissions of nitrogen dioxide, particulates and other pollutants in Southampton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce a package of measures to improve roadside concentrations of nitrogen dioxide in accordance with Defra's UK plan for tackling roadside concentrations of NO₂. Maintain an Air Quality Action Plan that delivers a wider range of measures. Ensure future revisions of our Local Transport Plan, Local Development Plan and all other Council and city plans and strategies provide suitable and adequate policies to reduce emissions and deliver cleaner air. Improve transport and freight delivery systems through efficient infrastructure, uptake of new and innovative technologies and increased uptake of public transport, cycling and walking. Encourage the uptake of low emission technologies and vehicles in our fleet and across the city to surpass national averages. Identify where alternative fuels and innovative solutions might deliver positive outcomes and support their assessment and introduction.
Supporting businesses and organisations	Work with businesses and organisations to promote the uptake of low emission technology and change travel behaviours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a Green City Charter that will bring together all residents and stakeholders in the city to tackle environmental challenges, including air quality. Maintain and develop our Clean Air Network to ensure ongoing engagement with key stakeholders in the city and region. Work with the Port of Southampton and other key stakeholders to identify and support initiatives that will reduce their emissions. Continue to promote sustainable and active travel through maintaining the "My Journey" campaign and explore options for further development. Empower businesses to take responsibility for their contributions to air pollution and implement improvements.
Collaborating with communities and residents	Work with and support the education of communities and individuals to identify and support behaviours which improve air quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a role for residents and community groups in our Clean Air Partnership. Support the education sector to raise awareness of air pollution and how to reduce emissions. Incentivise the use of public transport, cycling and walking. Empower communities and individuals to take responsibility for their contributions to air pollution. Provide good quality, timely information and data on local levels of pollution to enable residents to adopt behaviours to maintain their own health.
Promoting sustainability	Southampton City Council will be an exemplar of sustainable working practices in relation to reducing emissions and improving local air quality	<p>The Council will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead by example, ensuring our plans, policies and working practices support and promote an improvement in local air quality whilst delivering wider environmental and economic benefits locally, regionally and nationally. Introduce a programme of measures to reduce its emissions and act as a key partner, sharing best practice on reducing emissions and promoting sustainable working methods whenever it can. Use its influence on the local supply chain to ensure impacts on air quality are considered when making procurement decisions, including in the procurement and operation of its own fleet.

HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

We will:

- Achieve all statutory air quality standards in the shortest possible time and deliver ongoing reductions in emissions and improvements in air quality that acknowledge the World Health Organisation Guidelines.
- Monitor emissions and air quality and report trends. Evaluate the impacts of economic growth and improvement measures, and share our findings.
- Work with stakeholders and encourage collaborative delivery of improvements through the Clean Air Network and Green City Charter.
- Reduce the fraction of mortality attributable to particulate air pollution.
- Increase the proportion of journeys made by public transport or active methods.
- Increase the uptake and use of ultra-low and zero emission vehicles in the city.

This Clean Air Strategy will also contribute to wider improvements in the health of the Southampton population and we anticipate improvements in key indicators for public health in the city.

Specific details, targets and progress will be published in our Air Quality Action Plan which will be reviewed and updated annually for the duration of this strategy.

LINKS TO OTHER STRATEGIES AND PLANS

