Appendix 3

Cabinet – 1 October 2025

Draft Air Quality Strategy – Public Consultation Report

Purpose	To review the outcomes of the public consultation on the draft Air Quality Strategy and the amended Air Quality Strategy prior to consideration by Full Council.
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	New Forest District Council has no declared Air Quality Management Areas and as directed by The Environment Act 2021; the council must proceed to publish an Air Quality Strategy to ensure air quality remains a high priority. A public consultation on the draft Air Quality Strategy was undertaken between 3 March – 5 May 2025 with 96 responses received. The responses have been considered, resulting in some minor amendments to the draft Air Quality Strategy and some additional points collated to help steer the development and implementation of the Strategy. Following the consultation process the amended Air Quality Strategy is recommended for adoption.
Recommendation	**That Cabinet supports the process for Council to consider the Air Quality Strategy for the New Forest District Council, with the recommendation of adoption.**
Reasons for recommendation(s)	It is a legal requirement to develop an Air Quality Strategy by Local Authorities with no declared Air Quality Management Areas.
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Dan Poole – Portfolio Holder for Community, Safety and Wellbeing

Strategic Director(s)	Richard Knott – Strategic Director of Housing & Communities
Officer Contact	Rachel Higgins Environmental Protection Team Manager 02380 285339 rachel.higgins@nfdc.gov.uk Joanne McClay Service Manager – Environmental and Regulation 02380 285325 joanne.mcclay@nfdc.gov.uk

Introduction

1. This report advises on the outcome of an 8-week public consultation (from 3 March to 5 May 2025) concerning the draft Air Quality Strategy (AQS) for New Forest District Council (NFDC). The report also provides detail on the resulting amendments made to the draft AQS.

2. The consultation report and amended AQS was presented to the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 17 September 2025, who were supportive of the report, and will be presented to Council, with the recommendation to approve and adopt the AQS for NFDC.

Background

3. Local Authorities have a statutory duty through the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) regime to review and assess local air quality in their district in accordance with legislation, Government policy and guidance. Where an air quality objective is being, or likely to be, exceeded, an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) must be declared.

4. The Environment Act 2021 updated the LAQM regime to require local authorities from 2023 with no declared AQMAs to produce an AQS for their district. In August 2023 NFDC revoked its remaining AQMA (Lyndhurst) and officers have progressed work to develop a draft AQS.

5. The LAQM regime of review and assessment of local air quality against the air quality objectives remains and will be maintained alongside the implementation of the AQS.

6. The draft AQS was developed with the assistance of air quality consultants Ricardo-AEA Ltd and relevant stakeholders who proactively contributed to the text of the draft AQS. The draft AQS was presented to Cabinet on 5 February 2025 who approved the draft AQS for public consultation.

Overview of public consultation on the draft Air Quality Strategy

7. The public consultation on the draft AQS was undertaken between 3 March and 5 May 2025 via an online questionnaire. The consultation sought respondents' views on:
   - air quality within the New Forest area,
   - general concerns about air quality,
   - a district wide Air Quality Strategy,
   - the priorities identified in the Strategy,
   - the representatives proposed to sit on the steering group and
   - understanding what actions, if any, they would be willing to take to themselves to improve local air quality

8. A link to the questionnaire was posted on the New Forest District Council website and publicised via the Council's Facebook page and on the resident email updates. Respondents could request a paper copy of the questionnaire if required.

9. Some questions required a yes or no answer, some asked for activities to be ranked in order of perceived importance and others allowed free text in which the respondent could expand upon their views or concerns.

10. The responses were collated and presented in a consultation report and attached in **Appendix 1**.

Outcome of public consultation on the draft Air Quality Strategy

11. In response to the consultation NFDC received:
    Online responses: 93
    Email response from a member of the public: 1
    Email responses from professional bodies: 2 (New Forest NPA and UKHSA)

12. The majority of respondents agreed with the Council's priority areas within the draft AQS and the stakeholders we intend to work with. Respondents did state they would like to see more involvement from members of the public in the development and implementation of actions to improve local air quality.

13. The consultation highlighted public transport, improving traffic flow and planned development were a concern to the majority of respondents in terms of impacts on local air quality.

14. In response to the public consultation there were 6 minor amendments to the text of the draft AQS. These are noted in Appendix C of the consultation report (attached as **Appendix 1**) and have been completed for the finalised AQS document (attached as **Appendix 2**).

15. The responses to the public consultation will also assist with prioritising, developing and implementing each of the 6 priority areas identified within the draft Air Quality Strategy. The steering group will consider comments such as; ensuring public involvement throughout the process possibly through focus groups, having stronger links with public transport and cleaner transport modes and providing clearer messages on local air quality information and monitoring, when developing an action plan.

Corporate plan priorities

16. The adoption of the AQS for New Forest District Council is a statutory requirement and relates to the following corporate priorities:

17. **Theme:**
Empowering our residents to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives and protecting our climate.

18. **Corporate Plan Objective**:
Protect and improve the health and wellbeing of our communities.

19. **Service Objective**:
Adoption and implementation of the AQS for New Forest District Council.

Options appraisal

20. **Option 1:**
That Cabinet reviews the AQS prior to Council, considers the proposed amendments to the AQS (following the consultation process) and recommend the revised AQS for adoption by Full Council.

21. **Option 2:**

That the adoption and publication of the AQS is not considered a priority for the Council. However, the Council is legally required to

adopt an AQS and failure to approve and adopt may leave the Council open to legal challenge, including by Defra. This option is not recommended given the Council's corporate plan commitments to the health of its residents.

Consultation undertaken

22. Consultation has taken place with the Portfolio Holder, stakeholders and the public through a public consultation process.

Financial and resource implications

23. The cost to develop the AQS has been funded from existing budgets, however there is likely to be an annual cost to implement the actions arising from the Strategy. The cost for implementation of the Strategy will be determined through work plans and stakeholder involvement. Future work may include additional monitoring of pollutants within the district and potential consultancy costs to assess and model pollutants, when necessary, to further develop the Strategy priorities and assess the impact of any measures implemented.

24. Existing budgets will fund part of the costs to implement the AQS. However, further funding opportunities will need to be explored such as securing additional funding from Government grant funding schemes either individually or by working collaboratively with neighbouring authorities to reduce costs and the possibility of funding from planning contributions.

25. There is also resource implication for officer engagement to implement the AQS. This work would be completed by current positions within the Service and across the Council. However, there may be some opportunity for collaborative working with other local authorities to develop and implement specific schemes. There is also an option to continue work with Southampton University using their expertise in air quality data analysis.

Legal implications

26. In accordance with The Environment Act 2021 the Council is required to develop and adopt an AQS where there are no AQMAs within their district. Legal implications of failing to adopt an Air Quality Strategy may result in challenge from Defra.

Risk assessment

27. There is no requirement for a formal risk assessment. Any risks in delivering the Strategy will be reviewed in terms of task-based

actions and staffing and financial resources required to deliver the actions which will continue to improve local air quality.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

28. The development and implementation of an AQS for New Forest should align with policies concerning health, climate and nature, reducing emissions from vehicles and by working with local industry. Actions forwarded within the Strategy will be developed by the steering group and address impacts on the environment, climate and nature.

Equalities implications

29. The Environment Act 2021 has been assessed by Government as being compliant with United Kingdom equalities and human rights legislation. Furthermore, the action areas identified within the draft AQS aim to link areas of health inequalities with air quality to enable suitable targeting of action to reduce the impacts of airborne pollution on those most vulnerable in the New Forest district.

Crime and disorder implications

30. No specific implications.

Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications

31. No specific implications.

New Forest National Park implications

32. The AQS for New Forest covers both the New Forest District Council and New Forest National Park areas. The aim of the Strategy is to improve air quality and therefore benefit these areas, however the development of specific actions needs to ensure any potential negative impacts are identified and appropriately considered.

33. The inclusion of the New Forest National Park in the development of the Strategy, and on the strategy steering group should ensure all partner agencies are included in the development of actions, decision making and delivery. Therefore, avoiding duplications, conflicts of policy or unreasonable impacts.

Conclusion

34. The Council is legally required to develop an AQS for New Forest following the revocation of its remaining Air Quality Management Area in 2023. The draft Strategy has been consulted on with stakeholders and the public and is now seeking final approval for adoption.

Appendices:

Appendix 1
Air Quality Strategy Consultation Report

Appendix 2
Finalised Air Quality Strategy

Background Papers:

Defra LAQM Policy:

England (exc. London) Policy Guidance | LAQM

APPENDIX 1

AIR QUALITY STRATEGY CONSULTATION REPORT

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

July 2025

Contents

Appendices

Executive Summary

Due to improvements in local air quality, there are currently no declared Air Quality Management Areas in the New Forest district. In such circumstances and as directed by The Environment Act 2021, New Forest District Council is required to publish an Air Quality Strategy to ensure local air quality remains a high priority.

In order to develop a draft Air Quality Strategy for New Forest District Council, workshops were held with relevant partners and stakeholders from across the district. Through these workshops, 6 priority areas were identified, aimed at improving air quality for people living and working in and visiting the New Forest. Following this, a public consultation sought views on the draft Air Quality Strategy including the respondents' general views on local air quality.

Most respondents agreed with the Council's priority areas within the draft Air Quality Strategy and the stakeholders we intend to work with, however respondents would like to see more involvement from members of the public in the development and implementation of actions to improve local air quality. The findings also showed public transport, improving traffic flow and planned development were a concern to the majority of respondents in terms of impacts on local air quality.

The results of the consultation have been used to:

- update the draft Air Quality Strategy where necessary before final Council adoption and publication, and,
- assist with prioritising, developing, and implementing each of the 6 priority areas identified within the draft Air Quality Strategy.

Officer recommendations based on the outcome of the public consultation:

- There is no requirement to amend the draft Air Quality Strategy in terms of the 6 priority areas and how the Strategy will be delivered via a steering group with agreed action plans.
- The draft Air Quality Strategy should be finalised and progressed for adoption by New Forest District Council.

Background

The 2023 Defra document 'Air Quality Strategy – Framework for local authority delivery' required all local authorities without an Air Quality Management Area (an area where air quality fails to comply with government set air quality objective levels) to develop and publish an Air Quality Strategy. The Strategy should set out the steps the local authority intends to take to improve local air quality.

New Forest District Council does not currently have any Air Quality Management Areas therefore a draft Air Quality Strategy was developed with the support of air quality consultants, AEA-Ricardo, and a steering group. The steering group included representatives from New Forest District Council (Environmental Health, Planning and Climate), Hampshire County Council (Public Health and Transport), New Forest National Park Authority, UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), Environment Agency, the Environment Centre and local industry.

Local Authorities are encouraged to consult with members of the public on the production of an Air Quality Strategy to enable the views of local residents, businesses and employees to be taken into account during the development and implementation of the document. The comments provided could also be used to inform and direct the priorities of the Strategy.

Methodology

Public consultation on the draft New Forest District Council Air Quality Strategy was undertaken between 3 March and 5 May 2025 via an online questionnaire.

The consultation sought respondent's views on:

- air quality within the New Forest area,
- general concerns about air quality,
- a district wide Air Quality Strategy,
- the priorities identified in the Strategy,
- the representatives proposed to sit on the steering group and.
- understanding what actions, if any, they would be willing to take to themselves to improve local air quality.

A link to the questionnaire was posted on the New Forest District Council website and publicised via the Councils Facebook page and on the resident email updates. Respondents could request a paper copy of the questionnaire if required.

Some questions required a yes or no answer, some asked for activities to be ranked in order of perceived importance and others allowed free text in which the respondent could expand upon their views or concerns.

The responses were collated and analysed in this report. With regards to the free text questions, common themes were grouped for ease of understanding.

Interpretation of results

The public consultation is not representative of the overall population but provides information on the opinion of those respondents who engaged.

Results

The questionnaire received:

- Online responses: 93
- Email response from a member of the public: 1
- Email responses from professional bodies: 2

The results of the online consultation are shown below, with other comments received discussed further in Appendix A.

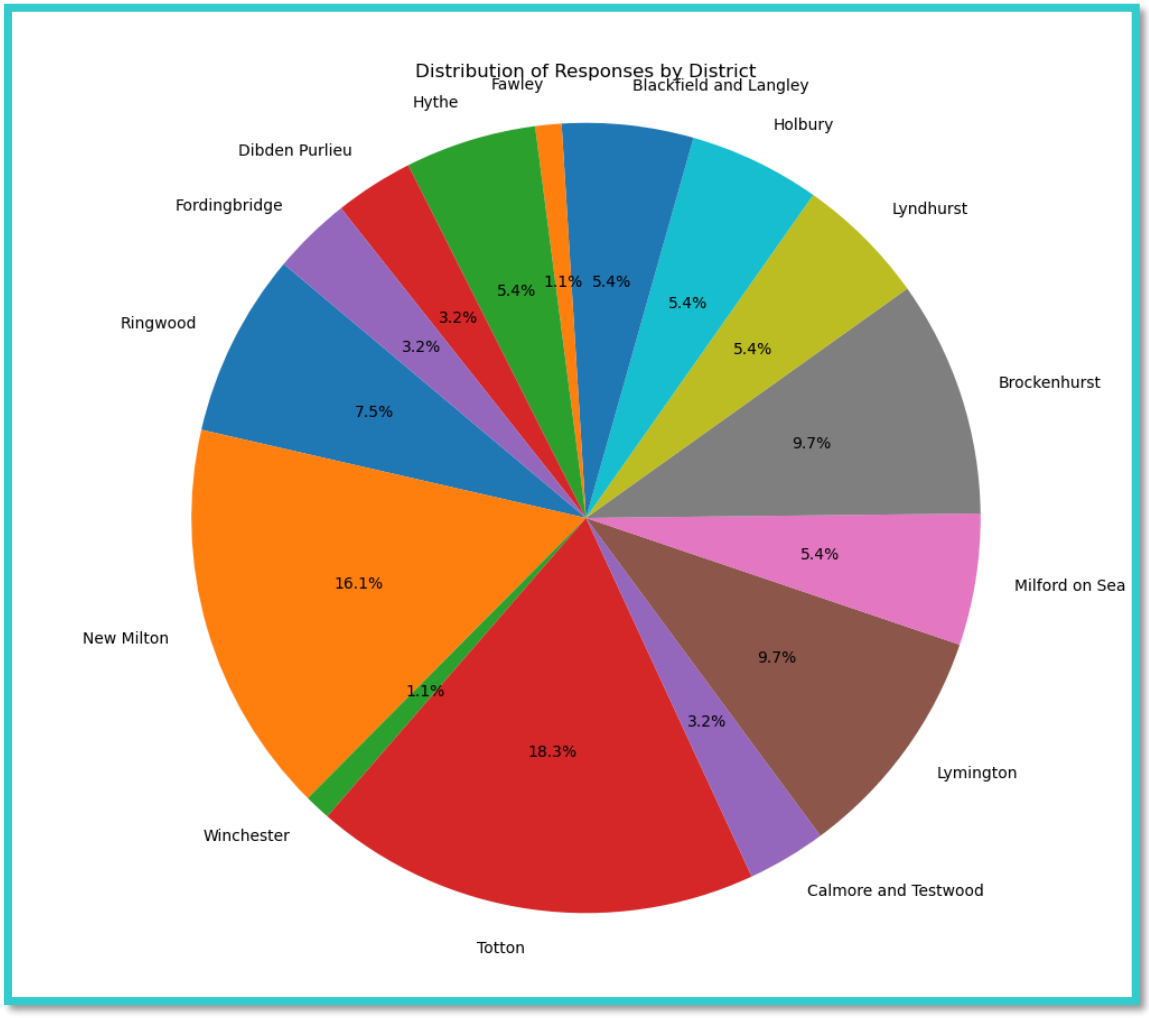
Questions 1-3 collected statistical data to enable analysis of the scope of responses and representation from different demographic groups.

Q1 Name

It was not mandatory to provide a name.

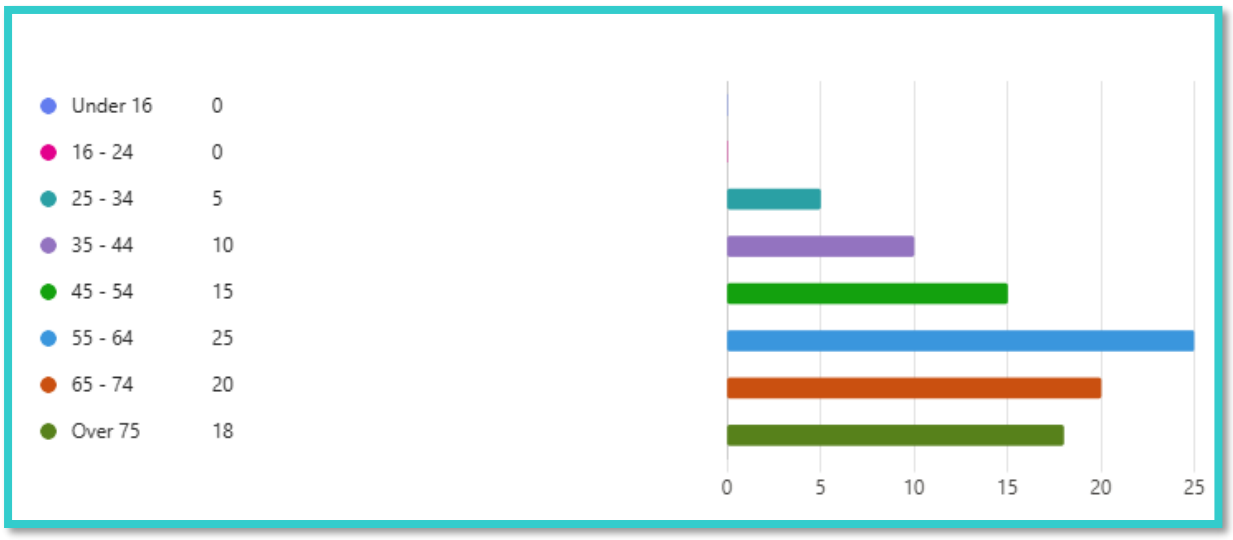
Q2 Postcode

The breakdown of postcode is as follows:



Q3 Age

The largest group of respondents 27% (or 25 respondents) were the 55-64 age group.

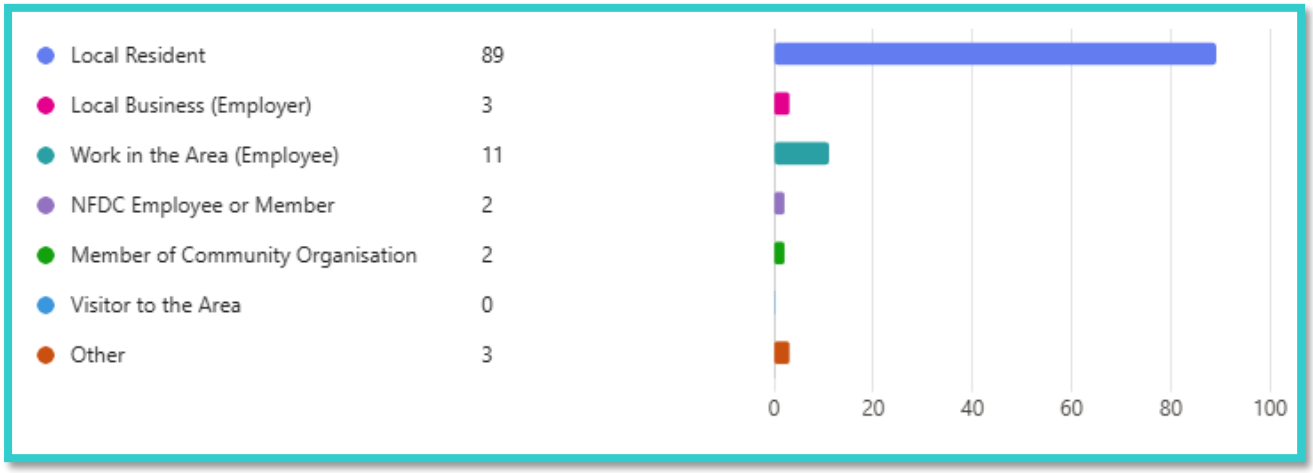


Q4 Commenting as . . .

The majority, 81%, of respondents (89 people) were commenting as a local resident.

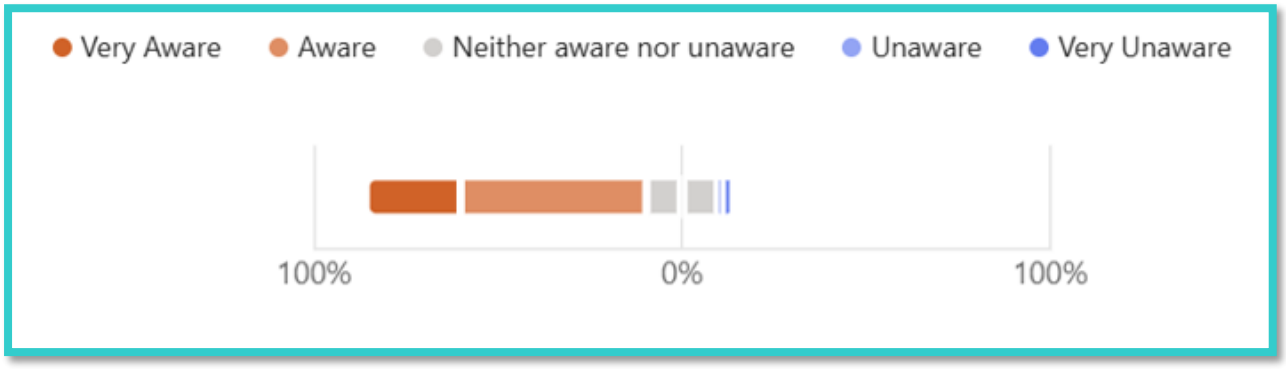
Respondents commenting as an employee within the area were the second highest group -10% of respondents or 11 people.

Note: some responders answered as a member of more than one group and so the graph displays more than 93 results.



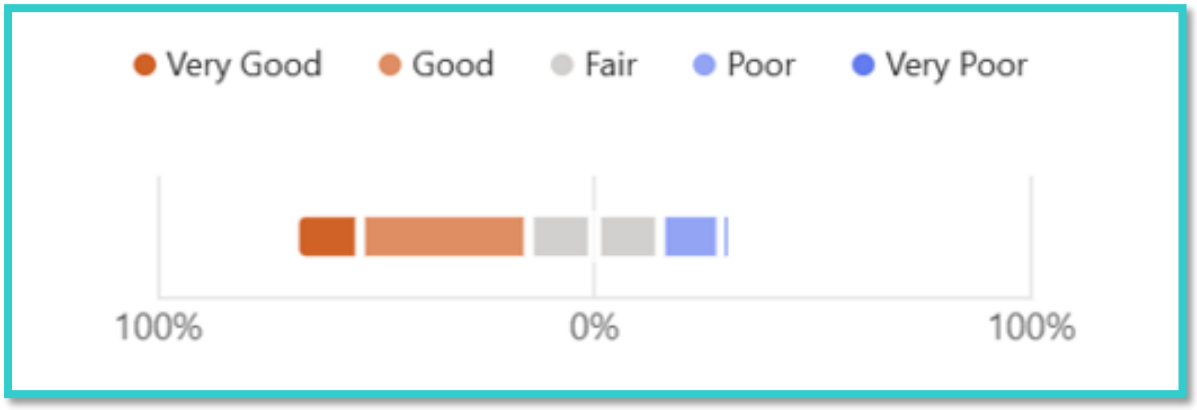
Q5 What is your awareness of air quality within the New Forest area?

The majority of respondents (76%) were aware or very aware of air quality within the New Forest



Q6 How do you perceive air quality in the New Forest?

The majority of respondents (54%) perceived air quality as being good or very good in the New Forest.

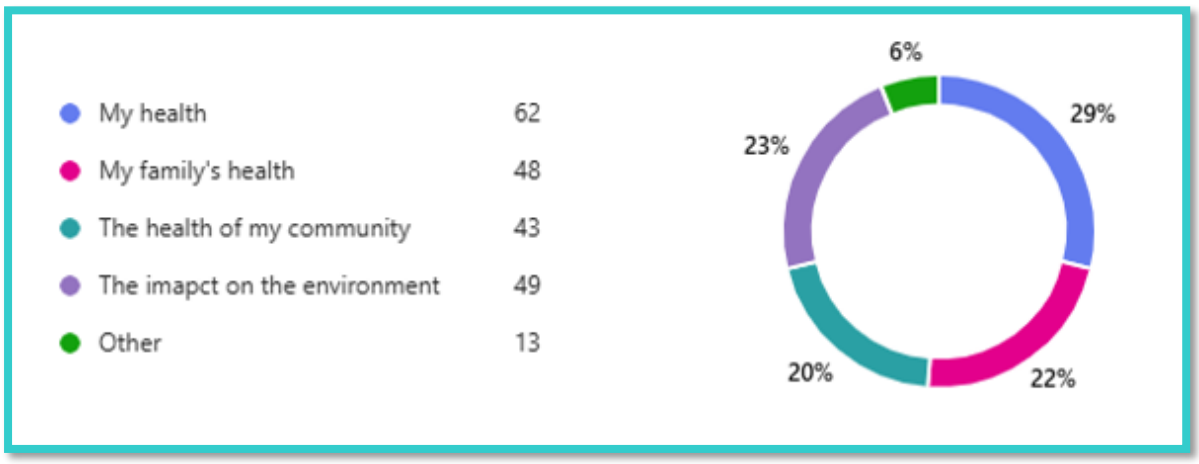


Q7 What concerns you most about air quality.

Respondents were asked to choose up to three categories which were of most concern to them.

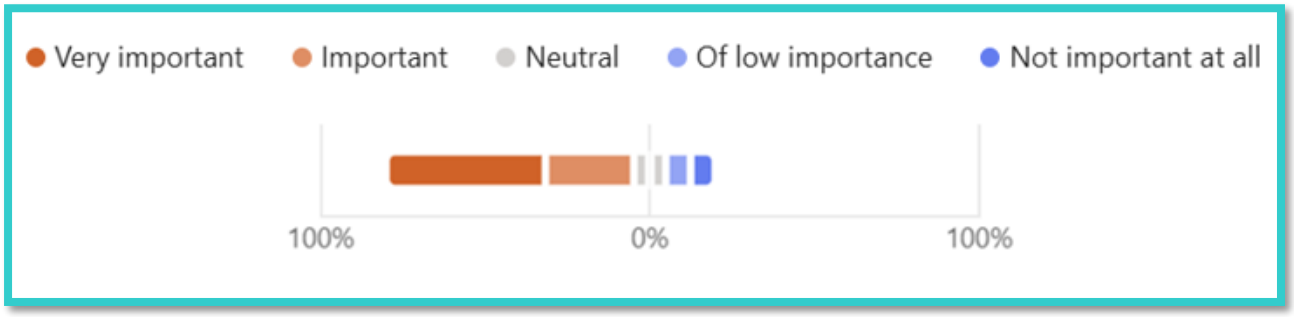
The 'my health' category was cumulatively the most common response receiving 29% of votes.

Note: The pie chart shows the percentage of votes given to each category whilst the numbers refer to the number of votes per category.



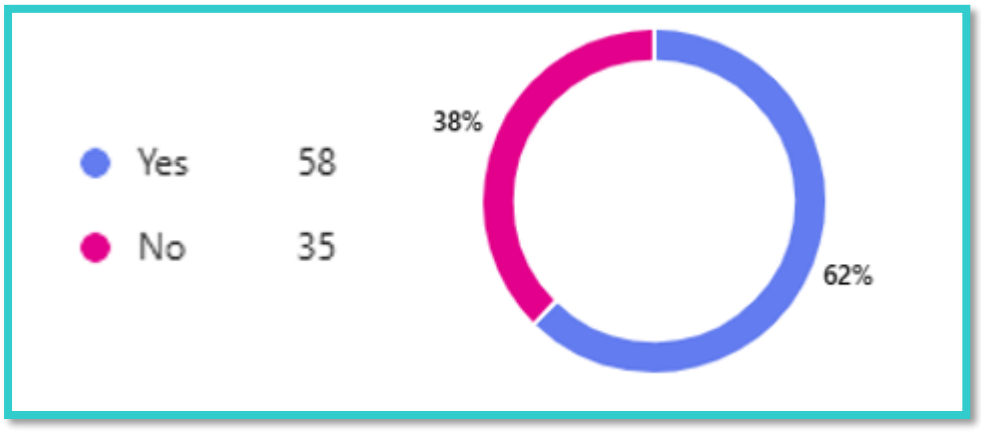
Q8 How important do you think it is to have an Air Quality Strategy to look at improving air quality for the New Forest?

78% of respondents stated this was very important or important.



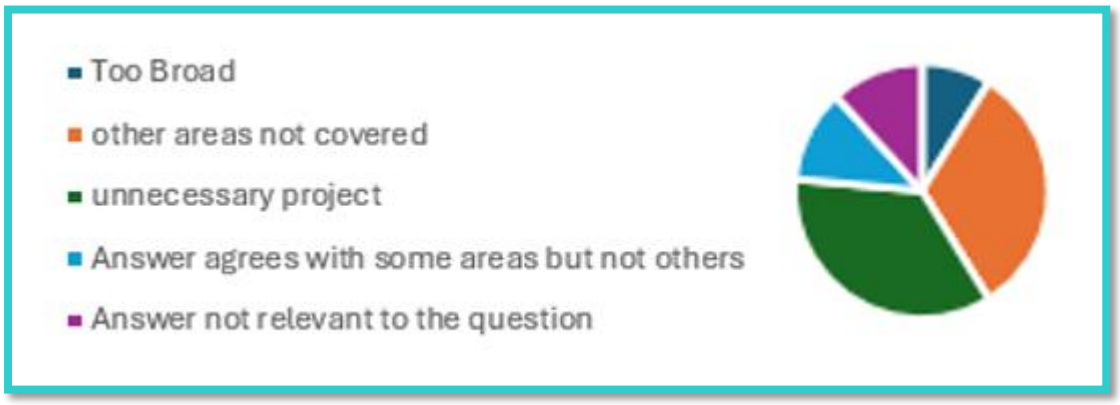
Q9 Do you agree with the summary of priority areas identified in the Air Quality Strategy?

62% of respondents (58 people) agreed this was important, 38%, (35 people) did not.



Q10 If not, why not

This was a free text question to which 34 people responded. The responses were collated into themes:



Other priority areas listed by respondents included:

- Shipping
- Industry
- Public transport (although this would come under the road transport priority area)

Other general comments or concerns included:

- A concern over charging to enter the area (this is not stated in the Air Quality Strategy)
- Concerns over the targeting of woodburning and rural ways of life.

Q11 The 6 priority areas within the Air Quality Strategy are listed. Please rank them in order of importance to you.

This question requested respondents to rank the 6 priorities.

Public awareness and behaviour change was the highest overall priority with 42% of respondents placing this as their 1st or 2nd choice.

However, whilst this priority was the most populous in terms of cumulative ranking, reducing road traffic emissions and reducing the impact of new developments had the joint highest 1st choice responses. It is also noted that reducing the impact of new development also received an equal proportion of 6th choice votes.

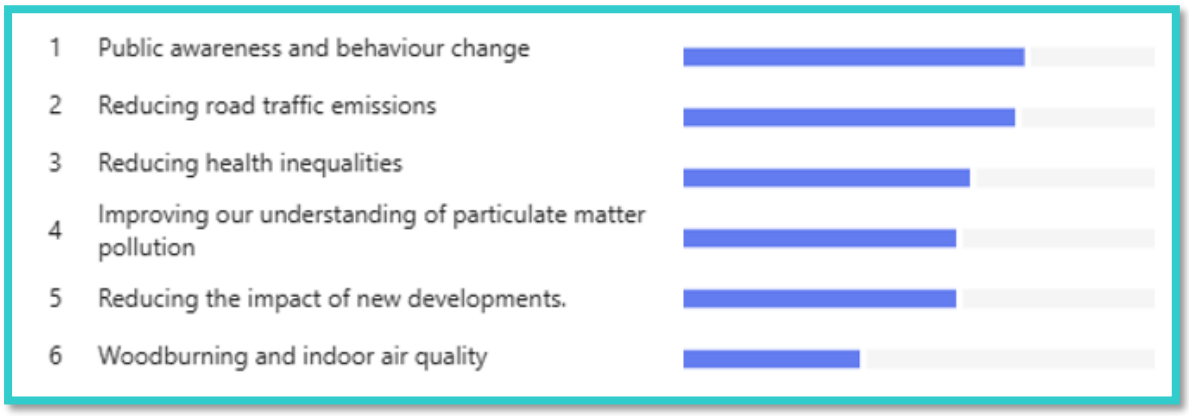
Woodburning and indoor air quality was placed 6th overall but was the highest priority for 11% of respondents.

Percentage of 1st choice votes

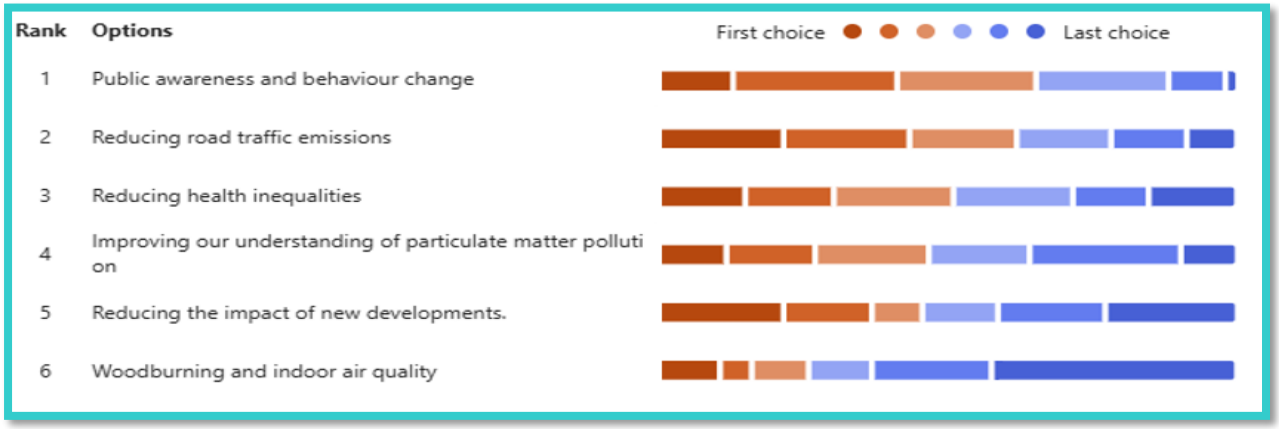
Priority Area	% of 1st Choice
Reducing Road traffic emissions	23
Reducing the impact of new development	23
Reducing health inequalities	16
Public awareness and behavioural change	14
Understanding particulate matter	13
Woodburning and indoor air pollution	11

Percentage of 6th choice votes

Priority Area	% of 6th Choice
Woodburning and indoor air pollution	42
Reducing the impact of new development	22
Reducing health inequalities	15
Understanding particulate matter	10
Reducing Road traffic emissions	9
Public awareness and behavioural change	2



The bar chart below shows the distribution of these concerns as first and last choices. Public awareness and behaviour change and reducing road traffic emissions are frequently chosen as top priorities, while woodburning and indoor air quality are often seen as less important.



Q12 Why have you ranked them in this order?

This was a free text question resulting in a varied response.

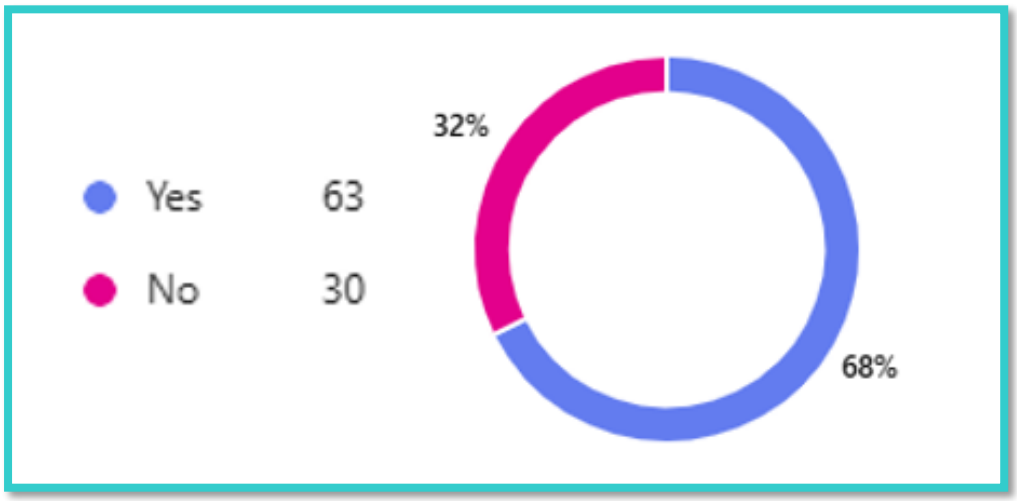
Opinions were too broad to elicit a common response, however common themes in respondent reasonings included:

- Objections to targeting woodburners
- Appeals to ban woodburners
- Concerns relating to traffic / public transport / infrastructure
- Concerns regarding development in the area
- Emissions relating to local industry, particularly the refinery
- Reasoning relating to very localised issues
- Political views on the Air Quality Strategy and other policies
- The Air Quality Strategy is viewed as a waste of money

Q13 Chapter 4 advises how we intend to implement the Air Quality Strategy. Our plan is to oversee the strategy by forming a steering group of relevant officers and local stakeholders who will develop annual work plans to forward agreed actions in a timely manner.

Do you agree with the approach to developing and forwarding local air quality actions?

68% or 63 respondents agreed with the approach. 32% or 30 respondents did not.



Q14 If not, why not?

This was a free text question with 28 responses.

In summary, the main responses were:

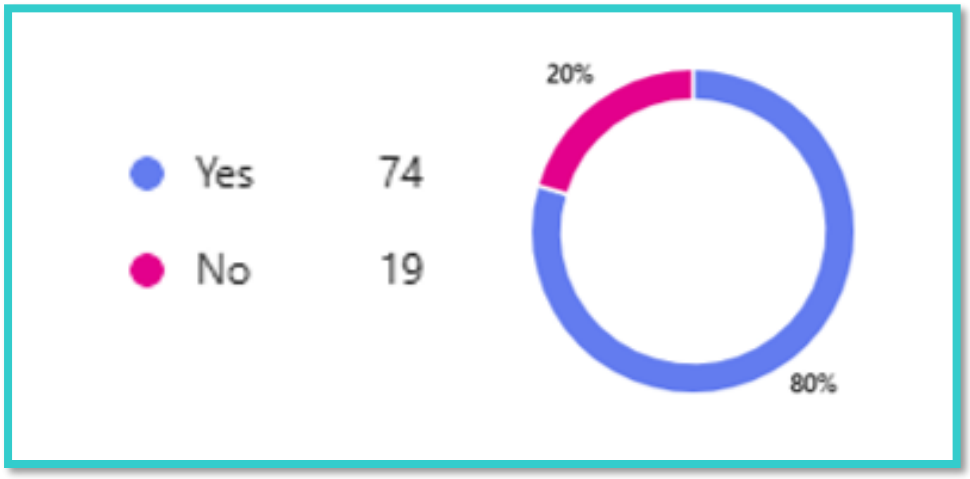
- It will increase the length of the process to take decisions and actions/It adds more meetings to the process/adds to bureaucracy (10)
- Having a stakeholder group would add cost which is taxpayers' money (9)

- The stakeholders are all the same type of officer and therefore would be biased/Trust is eroded/The group should involve the public (4)

Q15 Chapter 4 advises of the partners we intend to work with in the implementation of the Air Quality Strategy.

Partners include (but not limited to) Environmental Health, Public Health, Planning, Transportation, Climate Change, local industry, and the New Forest National Park Authority do you agree we are working with the correct partners?

80% or 74 respondents were in agreement. 20% or 19 respondents were not.



Q16 Are there any other partners we should be working with?

This question gathered 66 responses.

Other suggested partners included:

- Local community members (public, local business, farmers): (19)
- Industry: (7)
- Local schools: (5)
- Associated British Ports (ABP): (5)
- Woodburner suppliers: (4)
- Sustains / cycling advocates: (3)
- Town and Parish Councils: (3)
- Shipping companies: (3)
- Transport suppliers: (2)
- Conservation groups: (1)
- Forestry England: (1)
- Politicians: (1)
- Historic England: (1)
- Other Local Authorities: (1)
- Tourism: (1)
- Chem trail experts: (1)
- Other (8)

Q17 The annual work plans and Air Quality Strategy updates will be published on the Council's website. Are there any other ways you would like to receive this information?

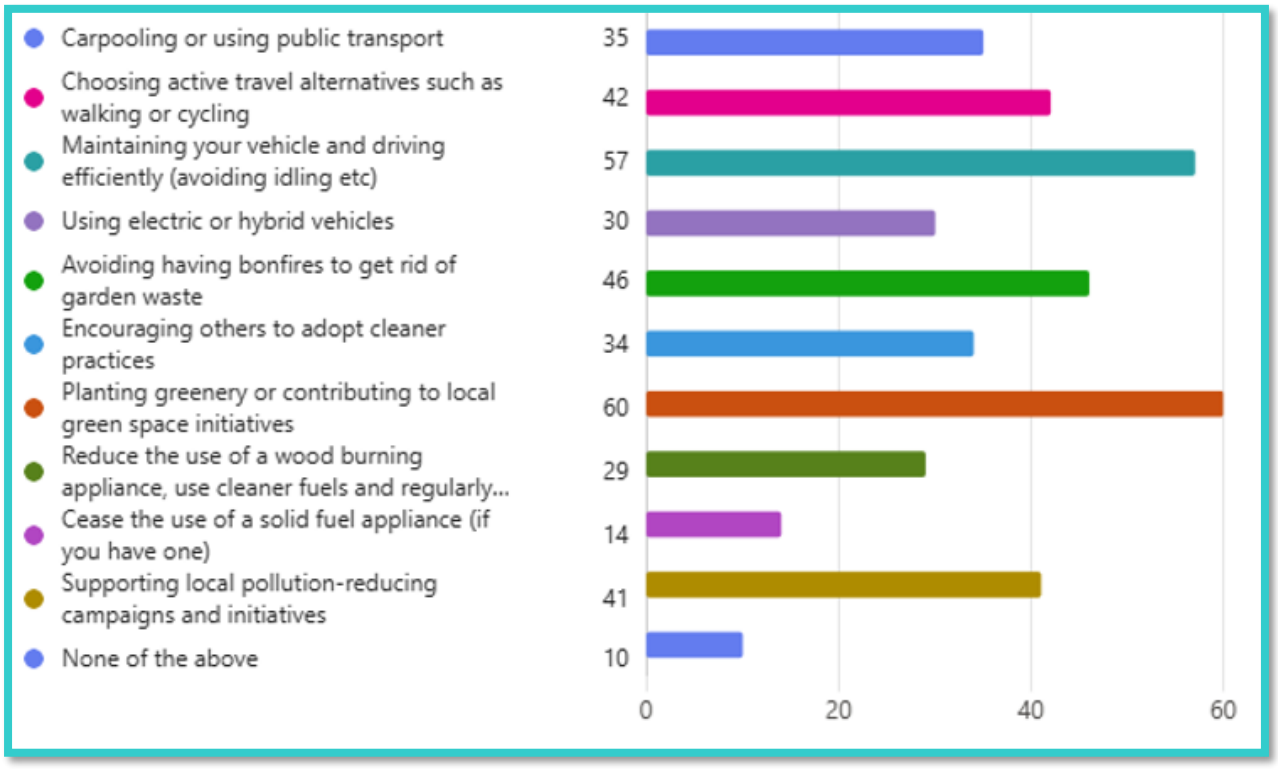
Responses to this question included:

- Leaflet drops / direct mailing
- Facebook
- Newsletters
- Personal email/resident emails/Next door email groups
- Newspapers
- Pigeon
- Community centres
- Via parish/town councils

Q18 We all have a role to play in improving air quality. Which of the actions below would you consider doing to improve air quality in your area?

Responses to this question included:

- Planting greenery or contributing to green space initiatives was the most popular action with 60 respondents highlighting this as an action they would take.
- Maintaining vehicles and driving efficiently were also popular commitments.
- Ceasing the use of a woodburner (if you have one) was the least popular commitment.



Q19 What else can we do to make a positive difference to air quality in the New Forest?

This free text question elicited 62 responses, the most popular included:

Topics already included in priority areas within the draft Air Quality Strategy:

- Improve public transport including from / to Southampton: (11)
- Improving traffic / reducing congestion: (8)
- Encourage cycling / walking in both urban and rural locations: (8)
- Improve enforcement on residents: (2)
- Targeting individual behaviour change: (1)

Topics already noted within the draft Air Quality Strategy for further consideration:

- Reduce development: (5)
- Ban woodburners: (3)
- Journey planning: (2)
- Increase/improve green spaces: (2)
- Stop garden bonfires: (2)
- Stop forest burning: (1)
- Incentives to remove woodburners: (1)
- Cleaner industry: (1)
- Work effectively with other regulators: (1)

Other topics not noted within the draft Air Quality Strategy:

- Stop cruise shipping: (3)
- Stop chem trails: (2)
- Introduce park and ride: (2)
- Planting more trees: (1)
- Restore Hythe ferry: (1)
- Introduce charging zone: (1)
- Shore power for cruise ships: (1)
- Stop incineration: (1)
- Reduce tourists: (1)
- Stop port development: (1)
- Reduce garden waste collection costs: (1)

All comments received from the public consultation on the draft Air Quality Strategy (redacted of personal information) are available on request.

Additional comments received

Additional comments were received from professional bodies:

- New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA)
- UK Health Standards Agency (UKHSA)

The full comments received from NFNPA and the UKSHA can be found in Appendix B. These comments were supportive of the Air Quality Strategy.

The comments also included some minor amendments to the text as well as broader comments and suggestions which will be taken into consideration as the work to implement the Strategy is progressed.

Changes made to the text of the draft Air Quality Strategy based on comments received from the consultation are stated in Table 1 in Appendix C

Officer recommendations

The consultation highlighted a diverse and often differing public view of local air quality within the New Forest district and how the Council should prioritise its work to manage and improve local air quality for all.

The main themes of concern surrounded:

- Transport and public transport
- Planned development
- The need for clearer information and advice on the work the Council currently undertakes on air quality including:
    i) more detail on the monitoring requirements and reporting
    ii) ongoing regulation including of local industry
- Collaborative working
- How and when we will seek to involve other groups/representatives as we develop and implement work plans

It was evident that communication with the public is desired and necessary for transparency, to gather public support for air quality improvements and to ensure clear information on air quality issues is widely available. The responses received from the public consultation will help direct discussion with the steering group and form future actions taking public opinion into account.

Officer recommendations based on the outcome of the public consultation:

- There is no requirement to amend the draft Air Quality Strategy in terms of the 6 priority areas and how the Strategy will be delivered via a steering group with agreed action plans.
- The draft Air Quality Strategy should be finalised and progressed for adoption by New Forest District Council.

Appendices

Appendix A - NFDC Summary responses to comments received

The Council has sought to address frequently raised comments, or questions that can be answered at this time, in the following section.

Q10 Do you agree with the priority areas? If not, why not?

Shipping and industry were other sectors viewed as priority areas for respondents.

Shipping and industry have not been directly listed as a priority area because the initial regional air quality modelling exercise undertaken for the draft Strategy, (Section 3.3) did not advise these sources of emissions to be significant contributors to airborne emissions in the New Forest area. Their contribution is however noted in the modelling outputs provided in the draft Strategy.

Public transport improvements were raised by respondents, and this would be included within the development of the priority areas relating to transport and planned development. It is noted that improvements to public transport was a common theme throughout the responses received.

Q11 The 6 priorities within the Air Quality Strategy are listed. Please rank them in order of importance to you.

The top overall ranked choice was public awareness and behavioural change, which takes into account all the 1-3 ranking votes. Reducing road traffic emissions and reducing the impact of new developments were the most popular first choice groups, although reducing the impact of new development, also received an equal proportion of 6th choice votes.

Respondent views will influence those areas we may seek to develop first in conjunction with other considerations such as available resources, working with other agencies and timescales.

Q12 Why have you ranked the priority areas in this order?

Respondents views were mixed and often varied greatly with many opposing viewpoints i.e. some respondents stating that they perceive nothing wrong with air quality in the New Forest and that the Strategy was a waste of time and money, whilst others perceived air quality to be poor with the Strategy not fully addressing the perceived issues.

The general view was that public awareness of local air quality is important because without a good understanding of air quality impacts, behavioural change and other measures will not be effective.

Q14 Do you agree with this approach to developing and forwarding air quality action plans?

Responses included:

- It will increase the length of the process to take decisions and actions/It adds more meetings to the process/adds to bureaucracy (10)
- Having a stakeholder group would add cost which is taxpayers' money (9)
- The stakeholders are all the same type of officer and therefore would be biased/trust is eroded/the steering group should involve the public (4)

Having a core stakeholder group is seen as an effective and efficient method of working when multiple areas of work are being forwarded through the Strategy. Each priority action area may include different stakeholders to ensure those able to deliver positive action are included. For example, New Forest District Council does not control public transport, but we can include representatives from this sector in our discussions, similarly, New Forest District Council is not the regulator for some of the larger industrial sites such as Fawley refinery, but we will include the Environment Agency and industry representatives in the stakeholder groups.

We take on board the request to involve residents in preparing action plans and will consider appropriate ways to ensure public participation. This may be via:

- individual town and parish councils
- surveys
- public meetings
- resident focus groups

The production and implementation of the Air Quality Strategy is a statutory duty required by Government. It forms part of the Council's required work and officer time is accounted for through existing budgets.

Q16 Are there any other partners we should be working with?

Also see response to Q14.

The stakeholder group will be the drive behind developing and implementing the priority areas using their expert knowledge and regulatory understanding.

However, during the development and implementation of action plans, other groups will be involved as appropriate i.e. schools, ABP, industry and Forestry England. The involvement of local communities will be important, and this would be managed individually depending on the action of concern – for example local

business regarding deliveries, transport concerning a specific village/town, public health / clinicians for health updates concerning specific communities.

Q18 Which of the actions below would you consider doing to improve air quality in your area?

Residents are keen to pursue some actions individually to improve air quality.

Supporting people in doing so may form a part of the Strategy, for example working with local community groups to encourage participation in schemes such as tree planting, car-pooling and promoting garden waste schemes.

Q19 What else can we do to make a positive difference to air quality in the New Forest?

Of the 62 responses to this question, the majority concern transport, alternative modes of transport and better public transport access.

The Strategy includes garden bonfires and heath burning and these are covered in the public awareness priority area.

Some responses such as prohibiting cruise ships and reducing visitors to the area do not fall within the remit of the Council, although we can work to manage them, whilst other suggestions such as building railways and flyovers would be prohibitively expensive.

Some responses called for the introduction of a charging congestion zone. Others opposed it. The Strategy does not consider charging vehicles to enter any part of the New Forest district and there are no plans for the introduction of a charging zone.

Some responses requested the Council carry out air quality monitoring. This has been undertaken by New Forest District Council for over 20 years and the results of that monitoring can be viewed in the annual status reports available on the NFDC website: Air pollution - New Forest District Council

Some responses called for the ability to report problem bonfires. These can be reported by calling 02380 285411 or emailing eandr@nfc.gov.uk

Appendix B
Comments received from New Forest National Park Authority and UKHSA

Comments received from New Forest National Park Authority

Section	NFNPA comment
1.1	This section confirms that the focus of the Strategy is on the impacts of air quality on human health in the district. It is helpful to have this clarified, as distinct from the air quality impacts arising from planned development on the New Forest's internationally protected habitats and species covered by the Habitats Regulations.
Page 15	Support the reference to the fact that the New Forest National Park Authority has also declared a climate and nature emergency. When combined with the District Council's declaration, this lends further weight to the measures outlined in the Strategy.
Page 21	This section confirms that the District Council will continue, "…to work with Hampshire County Council on the development of the Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan to improve active travel facilities across the district and encourage people to shift from short car journeys to walking/ cycling/wheeling." Consideration could be given to mentioning in this section that the Waterside LCWIP is adopted and so the focus is on implementation. This is referenced on page 37 of the document.
Section 8.3	This part of the Strategy sets out a commitment to introducing particulate matter monitoring in the New Forest. The National Park Authority welcomes this and would suggest that some monitoring takes place in the rural areas of the New Forest – including the National Park – given that wood burning is a potential source.
Section 9.5	Section 9.5 states that the District Council will continue to raise awareness of the impact of wood burners. We welcome this commitment and the National Park Authority may be able to play a role in this awareness raising, with wood burners particularly relevant within the National Park areas of the District.
Page 38	A minor point, but it is suggested that the penultimate paragraph is amended to read, "The New Forest contains more than 100 miles of waymarked cycle routes, much of it off the public highway and traffic-free. The National Park **Authority** highlights popular cycle routes and highlights the locations of cycle hire shops in the area."

Comments received from UKHSA

Regarding the consultation on the New Forest DLC Draft Air Quality Action Strategy

Thank you for the opportunity for UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) to comment on the New Forest DLC draft Air Quality Strategy. UKHSA strongly supports the continued efforts of the Council to improve air quality in its area and reduce public exposure to air pollution.

We welcome and note the revoking of the last AQMA within the New Forest district, i.e. Lyndhurst AQMA on these grounds:

- Between 2010-2022- NO_2 levels compliant for 8 consecutive years with NO_2 levels decreased by 10µg/m^3.
- This is due in part to improvements in traffic sequencing and improvement in vehicular emissions technology.
- A forecast study predicts exceedances unlikely in the future.

For this AQ Strategy we note that whilst there were no exceedances of the Air Quality Objectives for particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide in the New Forest, the strategy document emphases the importance of continued action to reduce concentrations. We support this position.

We welcome the wide range of departments involved in producing the AQ Strategy.

UKHSA's approach to improving air quality

UKHSA's position is that some pollutants, such as NO_2 and PM, are non-threshold – i.e. there is no known level of exposure below which health impacts don't occur. This means that any improvement in air quality, even below Air Quality Objective Levels and Standards, is associated with benefits to people's health. We support approaches which minimise or mitigate public exposure to non-threshold air pollutants, address inequalities (in exposure) and maximise co-benefits (such as by increasing active travel and physical exercise or improving access to and quality of greenspaces). As outlined in our 2019 review of interventions to improve outdoor air quality and health, we recommend that evaluation is embedded in the design of interventions from their outset and to systematically gather evidence of their impact and effectiveness. We suggest that it is beneficial to seek the implementation of the evaluation methods at the planning stage.

It is important that local authorities keep working to reduce levels of air pollution not only in AQMAs but across the wider local authority area. The evidence around the role of fine and ultrafine fractions in the health effects of air pollution is growing. In 2021 the World Health Organization reduced their guideline level for fine PM ($PM_{2.5}$) from 10 µg/m^3 to 5 µg/m^3.[1] In January 2022, the Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants (COMEAP), an expert committee of the Department of Health and Social Care, published updated guidance on the health evidence relevant to setting PM2.5 targets.[2] This was intended to inform the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra's) development of air quality targets under the Environment Act 2021. The advice included that reducing concentrations below the WHO guideline value of 5 µg/m^3 would benefit public health.

Recommendations

1. To outline general principles, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) refers to the Public Health England (PHE) review of interventions to improve outdoor air quality and health. PHE was a predecessor agency to UKHSA. This review document recommends a hierarchy of interventions (actions) with preventing, reducing, or replacing polluting activities to reduce emissions as the first priority. Actions to reduce the concentration of air pollution once it has occurred is the second priority, and individual avoidance of exposure is the third. The air quality strategy broadly follows this hierarchy by emphasising public behaviour change and understanding sources of air pollution before devising interventions among other key action point areas being considered.

2. Regarding Section 2 “Why do we need to improve air quality”, the section detailing health effects should be expanded to provide a fuller context of health effects over various timeframes. This response will include standard lines as an appendix.
3. Regarding Section 6 on public awareness and behaviour change, the PHE review found that educational campaigns are most effective when designed around established behavioural change models. The Interventions Report recommends that authorities "help people understand the impacts of air pollution and what they can do to reduce their exposures, using recognised behavioural frameworks if implementing behavioural interventions.”
4. The continuous monitoring and review of the strategy has been emphasised throughout the Air Quality Strategy. PHE’s review of interventions to improve outdoor air quality and health recommended that evaluation should be embedded in the design of interventions from their outset, to gather evidence of their impact and effectiveness.
5. Regarding Section 11, "Reducing the impact of new developments," poorly planned developments can disproportionately affect certain population groups throughout their development lifecycle—from location selection to construction, operation, and eventual deconstruction. As the Local Authority is reviewing their planning application response process, we encourage where possible, the inclusion of assessments that consider adverse air quality impacts on all and this includes disadvantaged communities and areas.
6. Referring to section 12 “Where to find more information” it may be helpful to expand the table by incorporating additional resources detailed in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Useful links and references

Title	Link	Description
Household air pollution attributable deaths	WHO.int	Global Health Observatory portal shows various indicators for burden of disease attributable to air pollution.
Estimating the morbidity from air pollution and its economic costs	WHO.int	WHO project providing expert technical and advisory support on the adverse health effects of air pollution and the different morbidities it causes, with a special focus on developing economic assessments.
Air pollution: applying All Our Health	OHID.gov.uk	Information to help frontline health and care staff use their trusted relationships with patients, families, and communities to take action on the health effects of air pollution.
Air pollution: outdoor air quality and health: quality standards	NICE.org.uk	NICE quality standard covering road-traffic-related air pollution and its impact on health. It describes high-quality actions in priority areas for improvement.
Public health profiles	OHID.gov.uk	Example public health indicator for air pollution: proportion of local authority population living with an AQMA linked here.
Air Quality - A guide for directors of public health	Defra.gov.uk	Suite of tools produced through collaboration of the Local Government Association, the Association of Directors of Public Health, Defra and UKHSA which will help local authorities to take action to improve air quality.
Review of interventions to improve outdoor air quality and public health	UKHSA.gov.uk	Evidence-based advice available to local authorities, and national actions required to support them, on the most effective practical actions to reduce air pollution and its impact on our health

Concluding remarks

The draft New Forest DLC AQ Strategy addresses the public health impacts of air pollution. Key priorities comprise public awareness and behaviour change, reducing health inequalities, improving understanding of particulate matter air pollution, addressing wood burning and indoor air pollution and reducing traffic emissions. These priorities will be implemented variously through action plans, continuous monitoring and evaluation, partnerships and community engagements.

The strategy notes that while air quality in the New Forest is generally “good” compared to neighbouring areas, continued action is required to safeguard public health. As airborne pollutants including PM and NO_2 are non-threshold, we welcome actions arising from this strategy to address pollution at source and reduce air pollution further below national Air Quality Objectives while addressing inequalities in exposure.

Editorial notes:

Please note that the lettered points (a, b, c, etc.) under each numbered item correspond to observations found on the page number referenced in that item.

1. Page (abbreviated P. thereafter) 5: It might be helpful to cite link to strategies in the main text so readers can readily access references without referring to footnote references.
2. P. 12: It might be more transparent to provide a link for footnote 10 in the table description as well as in the main text
    a. use of “-1” with table number, makes it look like it is Table 1, Table 2 and Table 3, use Table X.1 if there are more than one table, or just consistent numbering of tables from 1 to n.
    b. Is there a link for a map for diffusion tubes in the area?
3. P. 14 This page shows source apportionment for PM2.5 although no monitoring of it is currently undertaken. It may be helpful to clarify in basic terms, how source apportionment for PM2.5 is derived in the absence of specific monitoring.
4. P. 15: When mentioning greenhouse gases, the chemical formula is stated for carbon dioxide, but not methane or ozone (two paragraphs later), chemical formulas should be used consistently
    a. The link to council’s climate emergency page doesn’t work
5. P. 26: second time Figure is labelled “Figure 7-1”, first one on P 26 (see above), and again Figure description under the figure

Throughout:

6. Remove all subscripts used for the abbreviation of particulate matter, for example PM2.5 should be written PM2.5, likewise for all mentions of PM0.1 and PM10.We recommend consistency in the use of either national Air Quality Objectives or UK Air Quality Standards throughout the document, for example national Air Quality Objectives is referred to on page 9 and Air Quality Standards on page 10.
7. The figure description should be under the figures not above (example Figure 3-1, P14), and the figure numbering system is confusing, i.e. the figure numbers are led by section number, but often there is no second figure in the section to make the secondary number necessary, except for section 7, but here both figures are numbered 7-1
8. Inconsistency and interchangeable mentions of Defra, or Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs.

Appendix C - Table of amendments to the draft Air Quality Strategy

Table 1 Table of amendments being taken forward.

Organisation	Comment /Amendment	Page Number	Text Amended
NFNPA	Add word 'Authority'	38	
UKHSA	Check use of terminology of AQ Standards and Objectives is correct	9 and 10 and Table 2.1	Text amended in Table 2.1.
UKHSA	Use of chemical formulas should be consistent	15	CH_4 added after methane
UKHSA	Link to NFNPA climate change document does not work	15	Link checked
UKHSA	Figure 7-1 is used twice	25 and 26	Numbering amended throughout
NFDC	Table Update – new data published	12 Table 3-1	As required

APPENDIX 2

New Forest
DISTRICT COUNCIL

New Forest District Council:

Air Quality Strategy 2025

Contents

1

Introduction

The New Forest district covers a wide and diverse area, including towns, industrial areas, and rural regions. The natural beauty of our district, including many protected areas and the majority of the New Forest National Park, enriches the lives of residents, supports businesses, and draws many visitors each year.

Following progress at a local and national level in recent years, large parts of the New Forest now enjoy good air quality. Concentrations at all our monitoring sites are now below National UK Air Quality Objectives for all measured pollutants, so in 2023 we were able to revoke our last Air Quality Management Area in Lyndhurst. However, we need to keep making improvements to safeguard the health and wellbeing of everybody who lives and works here.

Our vision is to continuously improve the quality of the environment in our district, in support of the council's Corporate Plan priorities to deliver a vibrant and prosperous district for the residents of our unique place.

This Strategy will be reviewed and amended as required every 5 years unless there are any significant requirements to do so earlier.

1.1 WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THIS STRATEGY?

This Air Quality Strategy explains why we need to improve air quality, describes current air quality in our district, and sets out New Forest District Council's plans for improving air quality in the New Forest district. The focus of the Strategy is on the impacts of air quality on human health in the district.

We have identified a number of action areas to focus on over the next decade. These include targeting key sources of pollution and improving the information that we provide to our residents and businesses to empower them to reduce their air pollution footprint and their exposure to air pollution.

1.2 HOW WAS THIS STRATEGY DEVELOPED?

This Strategy has been developed with the support of an Air Quality Steering Group. This Steering Group includes New Forest District Council – Environmental Health, Planning, Health and Wellbeing and Climate Change, Hampshire County Council - Public Health and Transport, the UK Health Security Agency, New Forest National Park Authority, the Environment Centre, the Environment Agency, and representatives from local industry.

Furthermore, prior to formal adoption of the Strategy by New Forest District Council, a public consultation was undertaken to enable residents and businesses to provide their feedback on the Strategy.

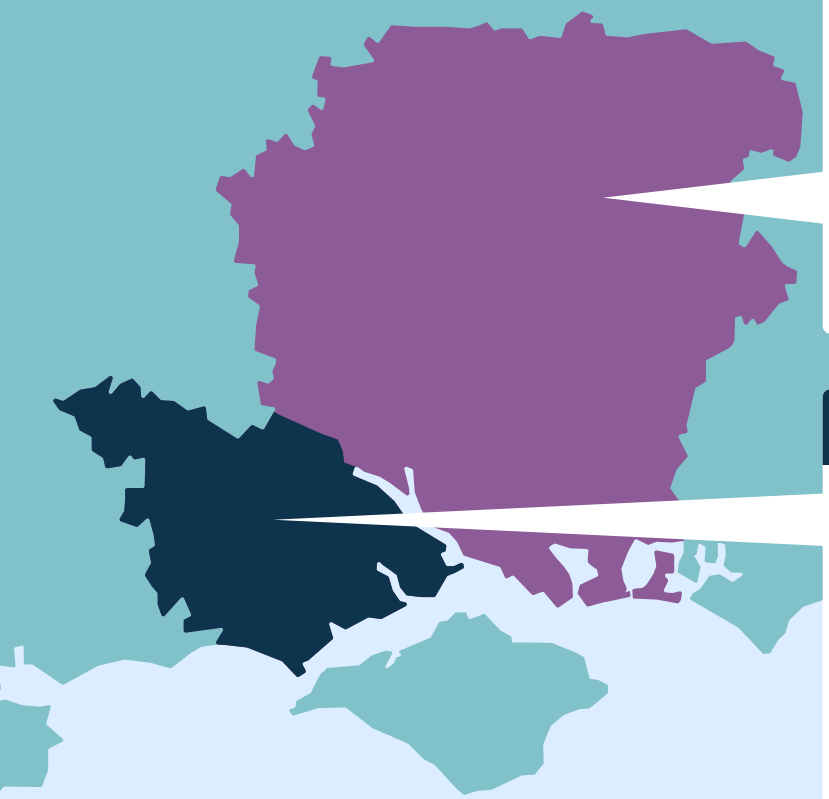
Working collaboratively allows us to ensure our commitments and actions are inclusive and fair for everyone living in, working in, and visiting the district, and to guarantee that it represents the priorities and perspectives of the local community.

1.3 HOW DOES THIS STRATEGY ALIGN WITH OTHER POLICIES?

Air pollution in the New Forest doesn't only come from inside the district; pollution from other nearby areas also has an impact on our air quality. At the same time, the pollution we produce also affects air quality for our neighbours, so it is important to address air quality at a national and regional level as well as at a local level. We have designed our Air Quality Strategy to align with other strategies, plans and policies at national, regional, and local levels as shown below.

National

- The Clean Air Strategy 2019
- DEFRA Local Air Quality Management Policy Guidance



Regional

- Hampshire County Council Climate Change Strategy 2020–2025
- Hampshire County Council Air Quality Framework Phase 1 Manual
- Hampshire County Council Local Transport Plan 4
- Hampshire County Council Air Pollution and Air Quality Report
- Partnership for South Hampshire
- Hampshire Public Health Strategy 2023–2026

Local

- Air Quality SPD 2022
- Climate Change SPD draft 2023
- Climate Change and Nature Emergency Annual Update 2023/24
- Greener Housing Strategy 2022 to 2032
- Local Plan 2016–2036
- New Forest National Park Local Plan (2019)

2

Why do we need to improve air quality?

Air pollution in the UK has seen significant improvements in recent decades due to the introduction of policies and measures designed to reduce emissions from transport, industry, businesses, and homes. However, although ambient air quality in the UK is generally considered good, elevated pollution levels still occur in many towns and cities across the country.

2.1 HEALTH AND AIR QUALITY

It is estimated that human-made air pollution in the UK leads to 28,000 to 36,000 premature deaths every year.[1] Episodes of higher air pollution increase hospital admissions and mortality, with harmful short-term effects including exacerbating symptoms for those with pre-existing heart and lung conditions, such as asthma.

There is also growing evidence that air pollution is associated with other long-term ailments which are related to reduced life expectancy such as stroke, lung cancer, respiratory conditions and cardiovascular disease, dementia, diabetes, and adverse pregnancy outcomes.[2,3]

Air pollution affects everyone who lives and works in the New Forest throughout their lives. The most vulnerable groups include young children, the elderly, pregnant women, those living in deprived communities, and those with pre-existing heart or lung conditions.[4]

Elderly

Those with lung disease

Children

1 Office for Health Improvement & Disparities, Air Pollution: applying All Our Health 2022 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/air-pollution-applying-all-our-health/air-pollution-applying-all-our-health

2 Public Health England (2014), PHE-CRCE-010: Estimating local mortality burdens associated with particulate air pollution. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/estimating-local-mortality-burdens-associated-with-particulate-air-pollution

3 World Health Organisation. (2024) Ambient (outdoor) air pollution. Available at: https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ambient-(outdoor)-air-quality-and-health

4 Office for National Statistics. (2020) Local authority ageing statistics, based on annual mid-year population estimates (2019). Available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/ageing-population-estimates/editions/time-series/versions/1

2.2 WHICH POLLUTANTS AFFECT OUR HEALTH?

The key pollutants that have an impact on our health are nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) and particulate matter (PM).

What is it?
- Colourless gas with one nitrogen atom and two oxygen atoms
- One of a group of gases called nitrogen oxides (NO_x)

Where does it come from?
- Formed during combustion e.g. from power generation, industrial combustion and road transport
- Other nitrogen oxides can convert to NO_2 in the atmosphere

Where is it found?
- High concentrations are often seen near busy roads

How does it affect me?
- Frequent exposure to high NO_2 concentrations increases risk of **respiratory illnesses, cardiopulmonary effects, asthma attacks, and decreased lung function**

What is it?
- Solid particles (dust) and liquid droplets suspended in the air
- Made up of a range of chemicals, some of which can be toxic to human health
- PM_{10}, $PM_{2.5}$, $PM_{0.1}$ are different sizes of particles

Where does it come from?
- Burning fossil fuels and wood, tyre and brake wear
- Also formed by reactions between other pollutants in the air

Where is it found?
- Across wide areas, but particularly near roads and industry

How does it affect me?
- Large particles can **irritate the eyes, nose and throat, and lead to increased risk of cardio-respiratory illnesses**
- Smaller particles can enter the lungs and into the bloodstream, **affecting the heart and the brain, and have been associated with numerous health impacts**

5 PHE. Estimation of costs to the NHS and social care due to the health impacts of air pollution. London: Public Health England; 2018. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/air-pollution-a-tool-to-estimate-healthcare-costs

$PM_{2.5}$ is the air pollutant that causes most significant health problems and premature deaths. National modelling estimates suggest that a reduction of 1 µg/m³ of $PM_{2.5}$ in 2017 in England could have prevented 50,900 cases of coronary heart disease, 16,500 strokes, 4,200 lung cancers and 9,300 cases of asthma in people aged over 18 by 2035.[5]

Sulphur dioxide (SO_2) is also an important pollutant which is associated with industry. This was historically an issue near the Fawley refinery, but SO_2 concentrations are now well below safe limits in the New Forest due to reductions in industrial emissions following collaborative working between industry, the Environment Agency and New Forest District Council.

2.3 HOW IS AIR QUALITY PROTECTED?

Safe levels for each pollutant are determined based on the latest health evidence. In our Air Quality Strategy, we refer to two sources for these safe levels.

UK Air Quality Limits

In the UK, air pollution concentrations must comply with national Air Quality Objectives. Limit values are set for individual pollutants and are made up of a concentration value, an averaging time over which it is to be measured, the number of exceedances allowed per year, if any, and a date by which it must be achieved.[6] Some pollutants have more than one limit value covering different averaging times.

In 2021, the World Health Organisation (WHO) set out updated guidelines for air quality that are based on the latest body of evidence on the effects of different air pollutants on human health.

Through the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) system local authorities are required to assess air quality in their area, and to designate Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) if improvements are necessary.

In 2023, the UK Air Quality Standards for $PM_{2.5}$ were reviewed to reflect the new WHO guidelines under the UK Environment Act 2021.[7] The new annual mean $PM_{2.5}$ concentration target is 10 µg/m³ to be met across England by 2040, a 50% decrease from the current UK $PM_{2.5}$ air quality standard.[8] The Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 for England also set an interim annual mean $PM_{2.5}$ concentration target of 12 µg/m³ at all monitoring stations by January 2028.

Local authorities are expected to contribute to meeting these targets by taking action to reduce emissions and the precursors of $PM_{2.5}$, and we expect to see a larger focus on actions to reduce particulate matter emissions in the coming years.

6 Defra, UK Air Quality Limits, accessed at https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/air-pollution/uk-limits

7 UK Environment Act 2021. https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted

8 Defra, Air quality targets in the Environment Act, 2022. https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/pm25targets/targets-development

9 World Health Organisation, WHO global air quality guidelines: particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10), ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide and carbon monoxide, 2021. https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240034228

WHO guidelines

The World Health Organization (WHO) Air Quality Guidelines are a set of global recommendations aimed at reducing the adverse health effects of air pollution. These guidelines are set based on the latest available health evidence. In 2021, the WHO set out updated guidelines for air quality that are based on the latest body of evidence on the effects of different air pollutants on human health.[9] The new guidelines for $PM_{2.5}$ are based on there being no evidence for a safe level of exposure to $PM_{2.5}$. Concentrations currently exceed these guidelines across much of the UK and Europe.

Table 2-1: Annual mean pollutant concentration limit values in micrograms per cubic metre (µg/m³)

Pollutant	UK Air Quality Standard	Government Target	World Health Organisation Air Quality Guideline
Nitrogen dioxide (NO_2)	40	-	10
Particulate matter (PM_{10})	40	-	15
Particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$)	20	10 µg/m³ to be achieved by 2040	5

3

Air quality in the New Forest

In the New Forest, air quality is generally good and in compliance with the legal limits set by the UK Government.

On average, air quality in the New Forest is better than in other local authorities in Hampshire, excluding the Isle of Wight. In particular, average concentrations in the New Forest are significantly lower than in neighbouring Southampton and Bournemouth. However, there are noted differences across the New Forest and concentrations in our towns are similar to those seen in other towns across Hampshire.

Table 3-1 shows the average $PM_{2.5}$ concentration in each Local Authority in Hampshire, and the percentage of mortality attributable to particulate air pollution.

Table 3-1: Population weighted average $PM_{2.5}$ concentration and fraction of mortality attributable to particulate air pollution in local authorities in Hampshire in 2022. Source: Office for Health Improvement & Disparities

Local Authority	Air pollution: fine particulate matter	Percentage of mortality attributable to particulate air pollution
Basingstoke and Deane	6.5	4.9%
East Hampshire	6.2	4.6%
Eastleigh	6.5	4.9%
Fareham	6.5	4.9%
Gosport	6.4	4.8%
Hart	6.6	5.0%
Havant	6.5	4.9%
Isle of Wight	5.7	4.3%
New Forest	**5.8**	**4.4%**
Portsmouth	7.0	5.2%
Rushmoor	7.1	5.3%
Southampton	6.7	5.0%
Test Valley	6.2	4.6%
Winchester	6.2	4.6%

In 2023, 4.4% of deaths among individuals aged 30 and older in New Forest were associated with long term exposure to particulate air pollution at current levels.[10] This is slightly lower than the national average of 5.2% and is the lowest of all local authorities in Hampshire excluding the Isle of Wight.

3.1 HOW DO WE MONITOR LOCAL AIR QUALITY?

Monitoring air quality provides evidence of air pollution concentrations across New Forest, which helps us to take action if any concerning increases in pollutant concentrations are noted. Air quality is currently measured using four automatic monitors, which assess NO_2, PM_{10} and SO_2 concentration levels. We do not currently monitor $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations at continuous monitors in the New Forest.

We also monitor NO_2 at 46 diffusion tube sites as of 2024. Most of these sites are in urban areas near roads. Diffusion tube readings are taken once a month and are quality assured following national guidance.[11]

10 Office for Health Improvements & Disparities, Public Health Outcomes Framework: D01 – Fraction of mortality attributable to particulate air pollution (new method), 2021 https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/public-health-outcomes-framework/

11 National Bias Adjustment Factors | LAQM (defra.gov.uk)

We publish the results of our monitoring each year in an Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR). These can be found on our website.[12]

The council has also secured a number of portable Zephyr sensors which can be deployed around the district to carry out short-term monitoring of PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ levels. The results of this monitoring can be used to provide advice and educational resources to residents.

3.2 RECENT SUCCESSES

In recent years, measured NO_2 and PM_{10} concentrations in the New Forest District have reduced due to a combination of national, regional, and local policies, together with the introduction of cleaner technologies over time. Some recent successes are highlighted below.

NO_2 Redbridge Causeway

- Defra models NO_2 concentrations along all major roads in the UK to identify roads which exceed the UK Air Quality Objectives.
- High levels of NO_2 were identified on a short stretch of the A35 over the Redbridge Causeway into Southampton.
- As a result, in 2017 New Forest District Council was named in the UK plan for tackling roadside concentrations.
- New Forest District Council and Southampton City Council collaborated on the implementation of measures to improve air quality.
- Detailed local air quality modelling was undertaken and determined that compliance would be achieved by 2019 in a business-as-usual scenario.
- Monitoring since 2019 has demonstrated that concentrations on this road are compliant with the UK Air Quality Objectives.

NO_2 Revoking the Lyndhurst AQMA

- New Forest District Council declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in Lyndhurst due to an exceedance of the annual mean NO_2 UK Air Quality Objective in 2005.
- We determined that the main cause was traffic congestion in narrow streets.
- Between 2010 and 2022, NO_2 levels decreased by 10 $\mu g/m^3$, so concentrations in the AQMA had been compliant with the Air Quality Objective for eight consecutive years leading into 2022.
- This was due to a combination of improvements in traffic sequencing improving traffic flow through the narrowest portions of the road, and improved vehicle emissions technology.
- We commissioned a forecasting study to demonstrate that no new exceedances were likely in future.
- Using this evidence, we revoked the Lyndhurst AQMA in August 2023.

12 Air pollution – New Forest District Council, https://www.newforest.gov.uk/article/1002/Air-pollution

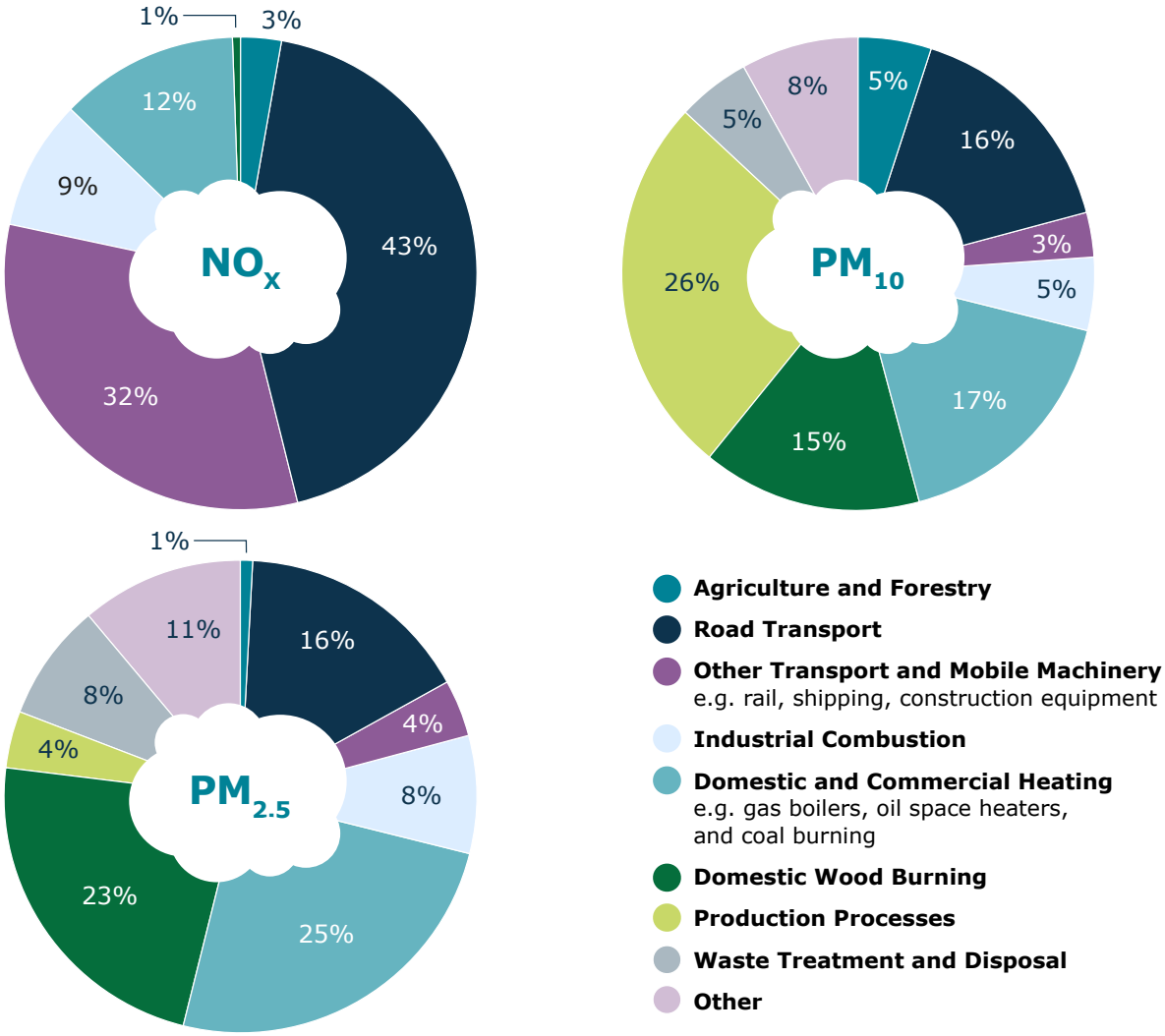
3.3 WHERE DOES AIR POLLUTION IN THE NEW FOREST COME FROM?

Different sources in the New Forest impact air quality. Identifying the sources that have the most significant impact enables us to develop policies that will have the greatest effect on reducing air pollution. **For this strategy, we have analysed emissions in the New Forest using the UK National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory.**[13]

Road transport plays a key role as a primary source of NO_2, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$. 96% of visitors arrive to the New Forest in cars or coaches, contributing to these emissions. Other key sources include emissions from commercial, residential, and agricultural sources. Our area is home to one of the largest oil refineries in Europe, as well as significant areas of sand and gravel extraction. As such, local industry is another key source of potential concern for air quality.

Domestic wood burning is also a key source of particulate matter emissions, contributing 23% of total $PM_{2.5}$ emissions in the New Forest District.

Figure 3-1: Sources of emissions in the New Forest



13 UK National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory https://naei.beis.gov.uk/
As of March 2024, the baseline year for this inventory was 2018.

Air quality is **not just a local issue**, as airborne pollution is not contained within district boundaries and can affect neighbouring areas. As a result, we work with neighbouring local authorities to address air quality issues. An example of this is the 'Burn Better' campaign, developed collaboratively with Southampton City Council, Winchester City Council and Eastleigh Borough Council to inform the public on pollutant issues concerning solid fuel burning. Air quality in the New Forest may also be affected by the proximity of Southampton Port emissions.

3.4 CLEAN AIR AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Many sources of air pollution, such as fossil fuel combustion, industry, and agriculture, are also key sources of emissions of greenhouse gas emissions like carbon dioxide (CO_2) and methane (CH_4). This means that improving air quality by reducing emissions can also help to address climate change.

> "Pollutants not only severely impact public health, but also the earth's climate and ecosystems globally."
>
> WHO[14]

Which air pollutants can contribute to climate change?

While CO_2 in itself is not harmful to human health, it along with other air pollutants can impact our climate.

Ozone is a significant greenhouse gas formed through complex chemical reactions involving nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in the presence of sunlight. It directly contributes to climate change and prevents plants from absorbing carbon dioxide. Particulate matter can absorb sunlight and contribute to global warming. Other air pollutants can lead to the formation of secondary aerosols. These aerosols can reflect light and therefore affect our climate.

What does this mean for the New Forest?

Limiting the emissions of these pollutants through behavioural change such as shifting away from private vehicle use, improving fuel efficiency in vehicles or improving energy efficiency in homes and workplaces can help to minimise our climate impacts.

In October 2021 the council declared a 'Climate Change and Nature Emergency' as a result of extreme weather and climate impacts at a local, national, and worldwide level. Our Climate Change and Nature Emergency Report and Action Plan[15] outlines our approach for how the Council can demonstrate climate leadership, implementing actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change.

The New Forest National Park Authority has also declared a climate and nature emergency. More information is available at: https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/conservation/partnership-plan/partnership-plan-2021-2026/net-zero-with-nature/

Ensuring that actions align with long-term prosperity is our ultimate goal and requires a considered approach that balances finances, health, and wellbeing, ecosystems services, cost of living and the needs of future generations.

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14 WHO, Air quality, energy and health, https://www.who.int/teams/environment-climate-change-and-health/air-quality-energy-and-health/health-impacts/climate-impacts-of-air-pollution

15 New Forest District Council. (2023) Climate Change and Nature Emergency Report and Action Plan 2023. Available at: https://www.newforest.gov.uk/climatechange

4

How will we implement this strategy?

4.1 DEVELOP ANNUAL WORK PLANS

New Forest District Council will form a **Steering Group** to oversee the implementation of this Strategy. This Steering Group will include representatives from a range of council departments and include key local stakeholders.

Each year, this Steering Group will **develop a work plan** describing the actions we will take over the following year. These actions will be developed from the Air Quality Strategy's action areas. Each work plan will be included in our Air Quality Annual Status Report, which will be made available on our website. The plan will set out who is responsible for each action, how we expect the measure will safeguard the health of our residents and visitors, and how we will ensure that the work plan acts to reduce health inequalities in the New Forest.

Figure 4-1: Members of our Air Quality Steering Group

4.2 MONITORING AND REVIEW

To ensure that we achieve our goals, New Forest District Council will implement a **continuous monitoring and review process for this strategy**. Through this process, we will incorporate new data, any updates to relevant regional or national guidance, and any emerging opportunities.

Data for each action will be used to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions in each work plan. Each work plan will include Key Performance Indicators that will allow us to assess the effectiveness of individual measures and make changes where required.

Throughout the life of this strategy we will also **continue to monitor pollution levels in the area and report them annually** in our Annual Status Reports.

4.3 PARTNERSHIPS

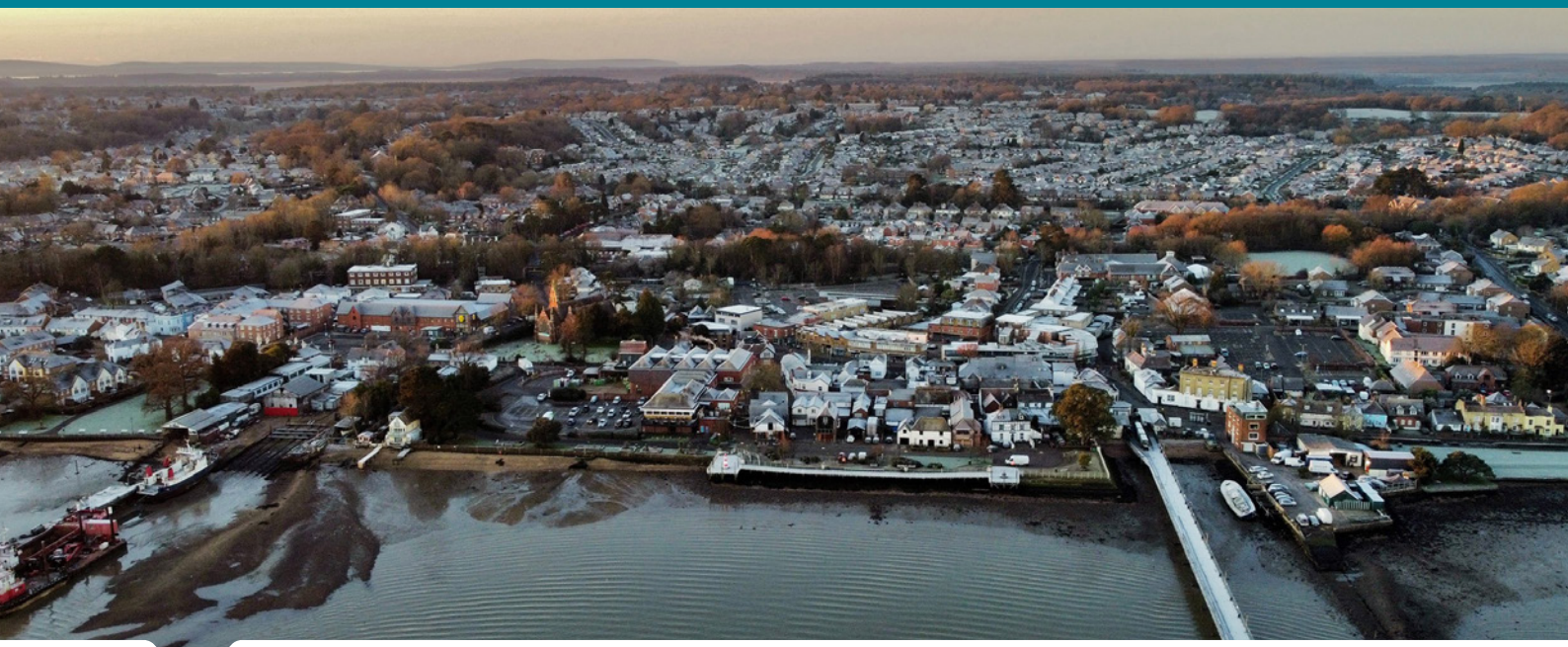
Air pollution is a regional challenge, so **collaborating with neighbouring local authorities and Hampshire County Council is crucial to ensure our success**. We will continue to collaborate with the New Forest National Park Authority and Forestry England for all projects which may affect the National Park and will continue building partnerships with local industry in the district. We will also seek opportunities to join new local and national networks on nature and climate change to deliver regional actions.

We will continue to work as a member of the Partnership for South Hampshire across key areas including energy efficiency, minimising carbon emissions, reducing the need for transport through placemaking, and support for renewable energy development.

For further details on the council's partnership plans, please see:
Health and wellbeing – New Forest District Council

5

Action areas



As part of this Air Quality Strategy, New Forest District Council has developed actions across multiple key areas with the aim to improve local air quality:

1 Public awareness and behaviour change

2 Reducing health inequalities

3 Improving our understanding of particulate matter pollution

4 Wood burning and indoor air pollution

5 Reducing road traffic emissions

6 Reducing the impact of new developments

6

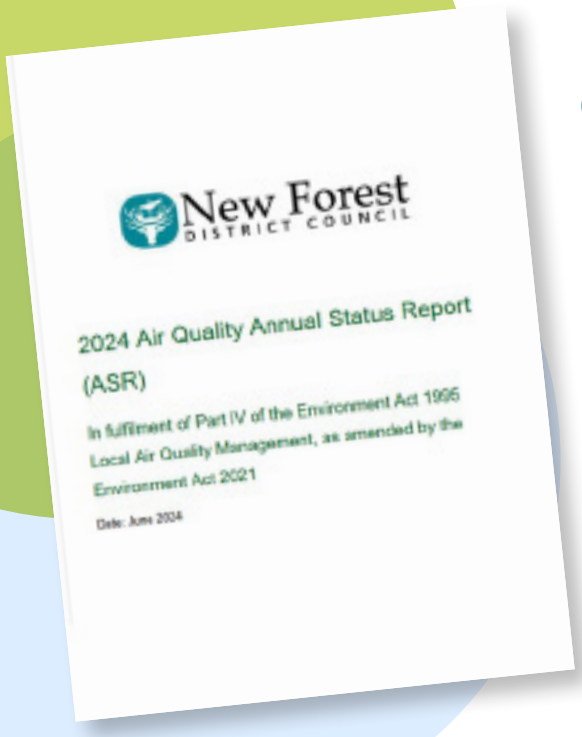
Public awareness and behaviour change

6.1 WHY IS PUBLIC AWARENESS IMPORTANT?

Access to high quality, reliable information on air quality is essential so that our residents can make informed decisions to reduce their exposure to air pollution and reduce their personal emissions of harmful pollutants.

Increased awareness empowers individuals to make informed decisions, such as reducing wood burning or choosing alternative means of transport and can also encourage residents to contribute to initiatives aimed at improving air quality.

This Air Quality Strategy aims to help promote the understanding of air quality in the New Forest, provide information on what is being done to improve air quality, and provide information on how to reduce our individual exposure and emissions.



6.2 WHAT ARE WE DOING NOW?

Publishing air quality information

Our website contains links to our latest air quality reports and monitoring data.

We routinely publish our air pollution monitoring data in map format on the Air Quality England website.[16]

We are also required to publish an annual local air quality report for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). Annual Status Reports for each year since 2018 can be found on our website.[17]

The reports include yearly measured concentrations and an analysis of air pollution in the District. Each report also provides detailed information on the actions that we are taking to improve in the New Forest each year and provides guidance for how you can reduce your own exposure to air pollution.

Public awareness for wood burning

We are currently working with neighbouring authorities (Southampton City Council, Winchester City Council, and Eastleigh Borough Council) and the Environment Centre to promote cleaner fuels and cleaner wood burning practices. They have been promoting the Wood Burning campaign[18] for the past 3 years, raising awareness of the effects of wood smoke on health and the environment through:

- Running face to face events
- Carrying out monitoring in areas where smoke complaints occur
- Production and distribution of flyers to promote clean burning in urban and rural areas
- Engagement with tree surgeons, chimney sweeps, and stove and fireplace suppliers
- Sharing 'Burn Better' information on our social media platforms.

16 Air Quality in England. (2024) New Forest District Council Monitoring Data. Available at: https://www.airqualityengland.co.uk/local-authority/?la_id=236

17 New Forest District Council. (2024) Air Pollution. Available at: https://www.newforest.gov.uk/article/1002/Air-pollution

18 The Environment Centre. (2024) Wood burning. Available at: https://environmentcentre.com/wood-burning/

6.3 WHAT WILL WE DO NEXT?

Update our air quality website

We are committed to making it easier for our residents to access important air quality information. The main source for air quality information in our area is the New Forest District Council website, so we will **update our website to make it more informative and accessible**. This could include improving access to relevant information, such as showing real-time air quality mapping data from our monitoring stations, providing more detailed health advice, and promoting educational resources.

We will also work with other teams in the council including our Climate and Sustainability Team as they make updates to their web pages, and work with neighbouring councils to identify opportunities to make further improvements.

Work to raise awareness of travel behavioural change

We will continue to work with partners to develop and support **awareness campaigns for a range of audiences across the New Forest**. Providing accurate, reliable information on the potential impacts of different modes of transport on air quality helps inspire those who can make small changes to their daily routines, whether through using alternative modes, or turning off their engines while idling.

Encourage the shift to more sustainable modes of transport

We will work with partners such as Hampshire County Council, National Highways, the New Forest National Park Authority, Forestry England and transport operators to encourage and support people to shift from short car journeys to more sustainable modes such as walking, cycling and public transport. This will include supporting the County Council as the Transport Authority alongside other partners to extend and improve public transport services.

We will also continue to work with Hampshire County Council on the development of the Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan to improve active travel facilities across the district and encourage people to shift from short car journeys to walking/cycling/wheeling.

Facilitate the shift to zero emission fuels

We will work with partners and the local community to support the uptake of electric vehicles and provision of EV charging infrastructure in new homes and commercial premises as well as work with Hampshire County Council to support the installation of rapid public EV charging points.

We will work with partners and the local community to support the uptake of electric vehicles and provision of EV charging infrastructure in new homes and commercial premises.

Public engagement to understand the most important issues for our residents and visitors

Understanding our residents' concerns allows us to develop more effective public awareness campaigns and develop actions that **address the issues that are most important to those who live and work here**.

Throughout the life of this strategy, we will consider a range of approaches to public engagement to understand the most important air quality issues for our residents, town and parish councils and visitors. We will identify best practice examples from other local authorities to build on the work we are already doing. We will also **identify opportunities** within our existing engagement programme to include air quality information, for example through work with schools.

Develop our partnerships and communications with industry in the New Forest

We will work with our industrial sites such as the Fawley Refinery and other regulators such as the Environment Agency. These partnerships will allow us to **improve awareness and understanding of air quality around industrial sites**, explain how these sites are permitted, and promote the emissions reduction practices that they employ to minimise their air pollution impacts.

Campaign for heathland burning awareness

Controlled heath burning is an essential part of the regeneration cycle in the New Forest and is a crucial tool for maintaining biodiversity and encouraging new plant growth. However, this leads to increased air pollution on burning days, so it is important that residents and visitors have information on why it is done, how it is managed, and where controlled burning is due to take place to allow vulnerable individuals to avoid affected areas. We will collaboratively work to implement **an awareness campaign to help inform residents and visitors about heath burning** and provide more information to enable residents to make informed choices.

6.3 WHAT CAN YOU DO?

We can all take some simple steps to make a big difference in reducing local air pollution and help protect our families and communities.

Figure 6-1: Actions you can take to reduce local air pollution

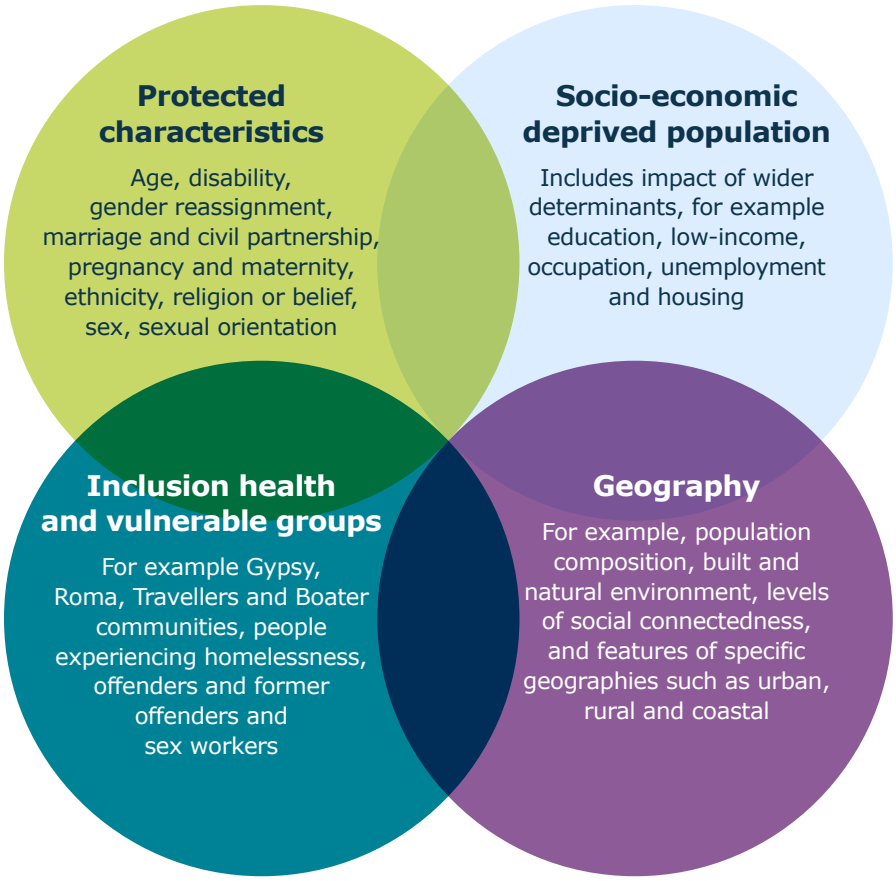
7

Reducing health inequalities

7.1 HEALTH INEQUALITIES AND AIR QUALITY

The environmental conditions around us shape our health throughout our lives. Differences in these conditions across populations impact access to good health at every stage of life, affecting how we think, feel, act, and, ultimately, our well-being. There are a broad range of individual characteristics that have been identified as contributing to health inequalities.

Figure 7-1: Individual characteristics that have been identified as contributing to health inequalities



Exposure to air pollution disproportionately affects vulnerable populations and can exacerbate existing health disparities. Lower-income communities are more likely to experience the adverse impacts of air pollution as they are more likely to:

- Have existing medical conditions;
- Live in areas with poorer outdoor and indoor environments
- Have less access to jobs, healthy food, decent housing, and green spaces, which all contribute to poorer health.

These disadvantages are often experienced in tandem and may affect people throughout their lives.

7.2 AIR QUALITY AND HEALTH INEQUALITY IN THE NEW FOREST

Air pollution affects everyone who lives and works in the New Forest, but there are some groups that are particularly vulnerable.

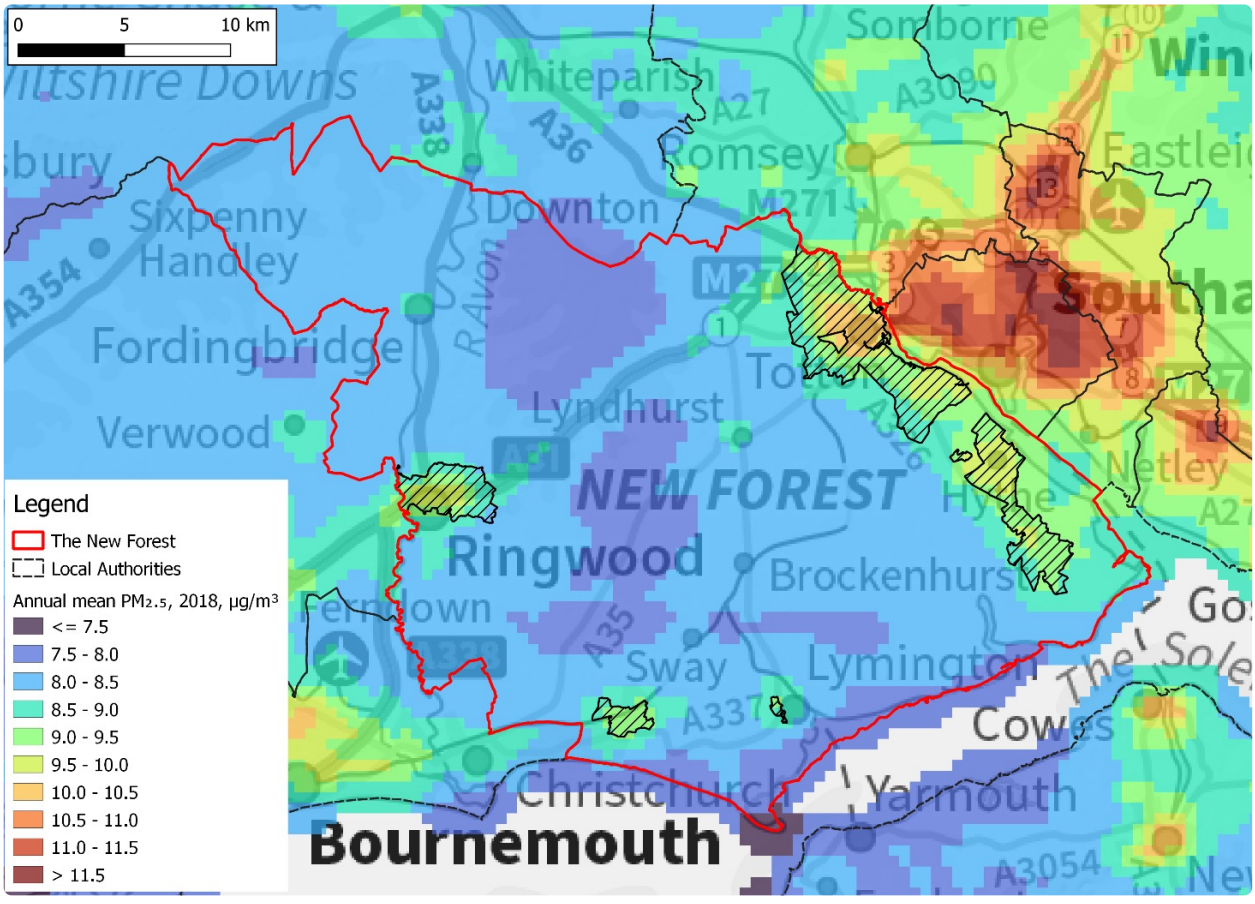
In the New Forest, 16% of the population is aged 15 or under, and 29% are 65 or older. In particular, **the New Forest has an older population than the rest of Hampshire, and as a result our population is more vulnerable to air pollution**.

On average, the New Forest is prosperous compared to the rest of the UK. Unemployment remains low according to the most recent ONS census, with 53% of the population in employment and 33% retired. However, there are a number of more disadvantaged parts of the District, particularly in our towns and in the Waterside area.

As a first step to understanding air quality and health inequality in the New Forest, we have identified vulnerable areas by combining deprivation and population data published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government[19] and annual average $PM_{2.5}$ concentration data for 2018 published by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs.[20] Figure 7-1 shows areas where the annual average $PM_{2.5}$ concentration in 2018 was within 10% of the new $PM_{2.5}$ target with either:

- a greater proportion of the population aged 60 or over than the average across Hampshire;
- a greater proportion of the population aged 15 or under than the average across Hampshire; or
- an Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) below the average for England.

Figure 7-2: Vulnerable communities in the New Forest overlaid on average $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations, 2018



19 Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, English indices of deprivation 2019 https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019

20 Defra, Background Mapping, https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/data/laqm-background-maps?year=2018

Our analysis shows that there are **vulnerable communities in several of our towns**, particularly in the Waterside area including Totton, Marchwood and Hythe. Ringwood and parts of New Milton and Lymington are also home to communities that are more vulnerable to poorer air quality.

The majority of these areas are vulnerable as the result of having a high proportion of residents over 60. Parts of the areas highlighted in New Milton, Totton, Hythe, and Blackfield are also vulnerable due to their communities being more deprived than the average. Those living in properties that front busier roads tend to be more deprived than the average. These properties are also more likely to be rental properties or social housing, and those living in these properties are exposed to higher levels of air pollution from traffic emissions than the wider population.

More information on air quality and inequalities is available from the Hampshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.[21] This is a resource for mapping New Forest residents' health and inequalities.

7.3 WHAT WILL WE DO NEXT?

Investigate links between demographics and air quality

We will work with Public Health to **better understand the available data on links between demographics and air quality**, with a specific focus on identifying the areas most vulnerable to health inequalities and understanding ways in which these can be addressed. We will talk to data providers to understand what information is available to us, particularly in vulnerable communities.

Incorporate reducing inequalities into our annual work plans

Our **Air Quality Strategy Steering Group will ensure the equitable distribution of air quality benefits in any action we undertake**. The Air Quality Steering Group will consist of a number of different stakeholders from both public health and environmental health and will meet as frequently as required to discuss potential areas of concern and develop solutions.

In each annual work plan, we will specifically address how the actions will improve health inequalities in the New Forest. We will consult our Public Health colleagues to ensure that each work plan is aligned with our overall strategy for reducing health inequalities.

Identify and deliver targeted measures for vulnerable communities

We will work with relevant stakeholders to conduct a study to **identify, and if appropriate, deliver targeted measures for vulnerable communities** in areas with poorer air quality. These measures could include engagement and public awareness building, making sure that information is accessible to those affected. These measures will be incorporated into our annual work plans.

21 Hampshire Join Strategic Needs Assessment, available at: https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/publichealth/jsna

8

Improving our understanding of particulate matter pollution

8.1 WHY IS $PM_{2.5}$ IMPORTANT?

Fine particulate matter, known as $PM_{2.5}$, is considered to be one of the most dangerous pollutants because it can bypass the lung's defences and enter the bloodstream circulating through the body. This can lead to serious health conditions including cardiovascular and respiratory disease, and even cancers. It affects more people than other pollutants and has health impacts even at very low concentrations.

As a result, under the Environment Act 2021, the UK Government has set 2 legally binding targets to reduce concentrations:

- an annual mean concentration target for $PM_{2.5}$ of 10 µg/m^3 across England by 2040
- an average population exposure reduction target of 35% in 2040 compared to a 2018 baseline

The Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 for England also set an interim annual mean $PM_{2.5}$ concentration target of 12 µg/m³ at all monitoring stations by January 2028.

This means that **all local authorities, even those where $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations are below the annual mean target, are expected to take action to improve air quality**.

$PM_{2.5}$ is a regional pollutant, so many sources of the $PM_{2.5}$ pollution in the New Forest are outside our control. However, we do have control over significant sources like road transport and wood burning, and our emissions affect concentrations across the region. The UK National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory, published by the UK Government, shows that emissions $PM_{2.5}$ in the New Forest are higher than in neighbouring areas, mostly as a result of domestic and commercial combustion, and woodburning.

8.2 PARTICULATE MATTER IN THE NEW FOREST

We do not continuously monitor $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations in the New Forest but we can estimate $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations using PM_{10} measurements following UK Government guidance. In 2022, $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations at our monitoring station in Totton were estimated to be around 13 µg/m³, which is above the 2040 target of 10 µg/m³.

National $PM_{2.5}$ modelling published by Defra indicates that concentrations away from sources such as roads and industry are likely to be below the target already. This modelling also shows that concentrations in the New Forest are relatively low compared to other local authorities in Hampshire.

8.3 WHAT WILL WE DO NEXT?

Investigate monitoring options for $PM_{2.5}$

In order to improve our understanding of particulate matter pollution in the New Forest, we will first seek to **introduce $PM_{2.5}$ monitoring in the New Forest**. This will help us to establish a baseline for current $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations and ensure that $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations can be measured to understand changes over time.

Options for monitoring arrangements might include developing a network of low-cost sensors to understand how $PM_{2.5}$ varies over a wider area, or using continuous analysers, which will provide international reference standard data at limited locations (similar to our current PM_{10} monitoring). We will assess these options to determine the most effective approach.

Identify any $PM_{2.5}$ hotspots

We will use our monitoring data and consider the use of modelling to **identify areas where $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations exceed the 2040 government targets**. Using this information, our Steering Group will be able to decide whether targeted local actions are required for $PM_{2.5}$ in particular areas.

Detailed source apportionment of $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations

We will carry out **detailed source apportionment of $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations if hotspots are identified** to tell us in detail where pollution in any hotspots comes from. This will allow us to develop effective, targeted work plans. It will also help us understand how much of our residents' exposure to $PM_{2.5}$ is from sources that the council controls, helping us set to set our reduction goals.

Develop actions to reduce emissions

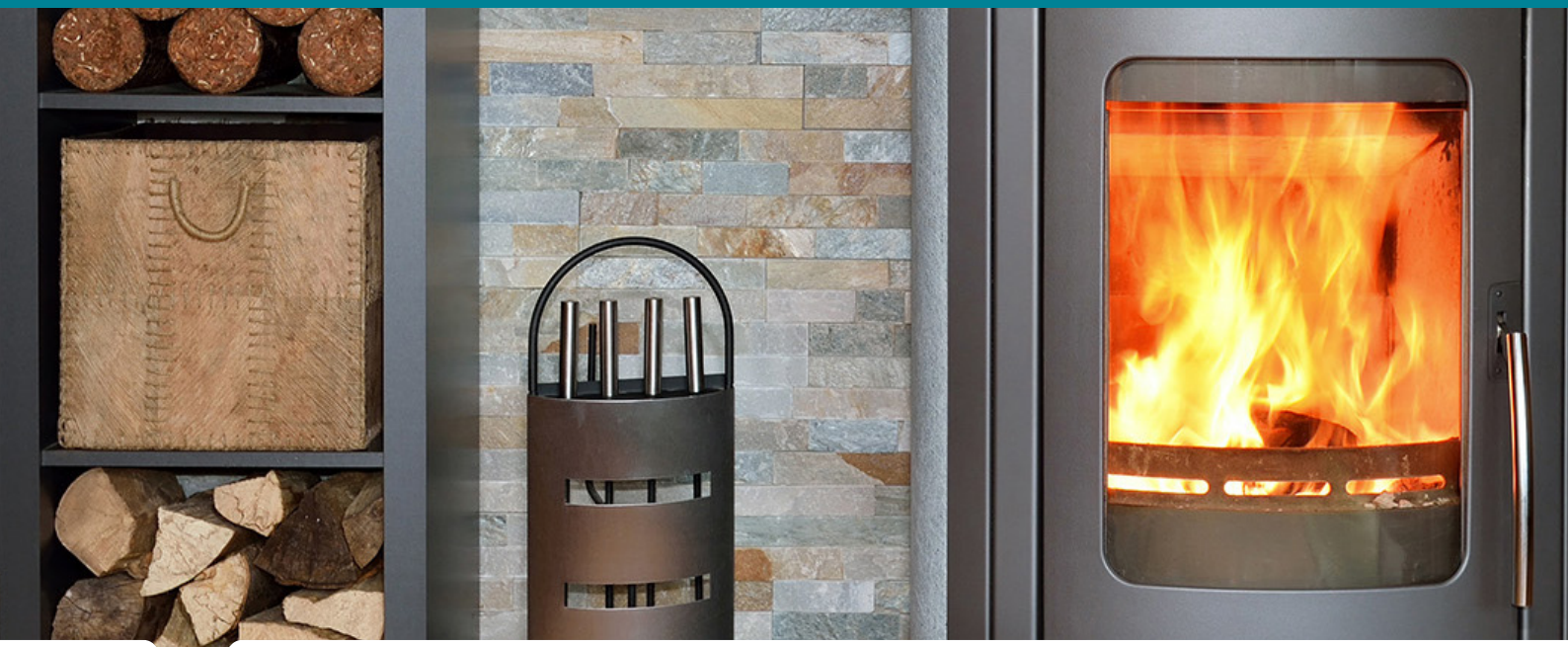
Our Air Quality Steering Group, will **develop and agree the best approach to reducing $PM_{2.5}$ emissions in the New Forest**, including targeted and district-wide measures.

We expect that many of the actions we are already taking will also contribute to reducing $PM_{2.5}$ emissions. However, in the meantime, we are continuing to work on our existing plans that will help reduce particulate pollution, especially our Burn Better Campaign.

We will carry out detailed source apportionment of $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations if hotspots are identified to tell us in detail where pollution in any hotspots comes from. This will allow us to develop effective, targeted work plans.

9

Wood burning and indoor air pollution



9.1 MANAGING OUR EXPOSURE TO INDOOR AIR POLLUTION

Many of us spend the majority of our time indoors, so understanding how our households contribute to air pollution and how to manage indoor air quality is important to safeguard our health and wellbeing.

Our actions as individuals can have a large impact on the health of those around us, for example through wood burning, and on our own health. Common sources of indoor air pollution include cooking and heating appliances, cigarette and e-cigarette smoke, damp and mould, cleaning products, and building materials.

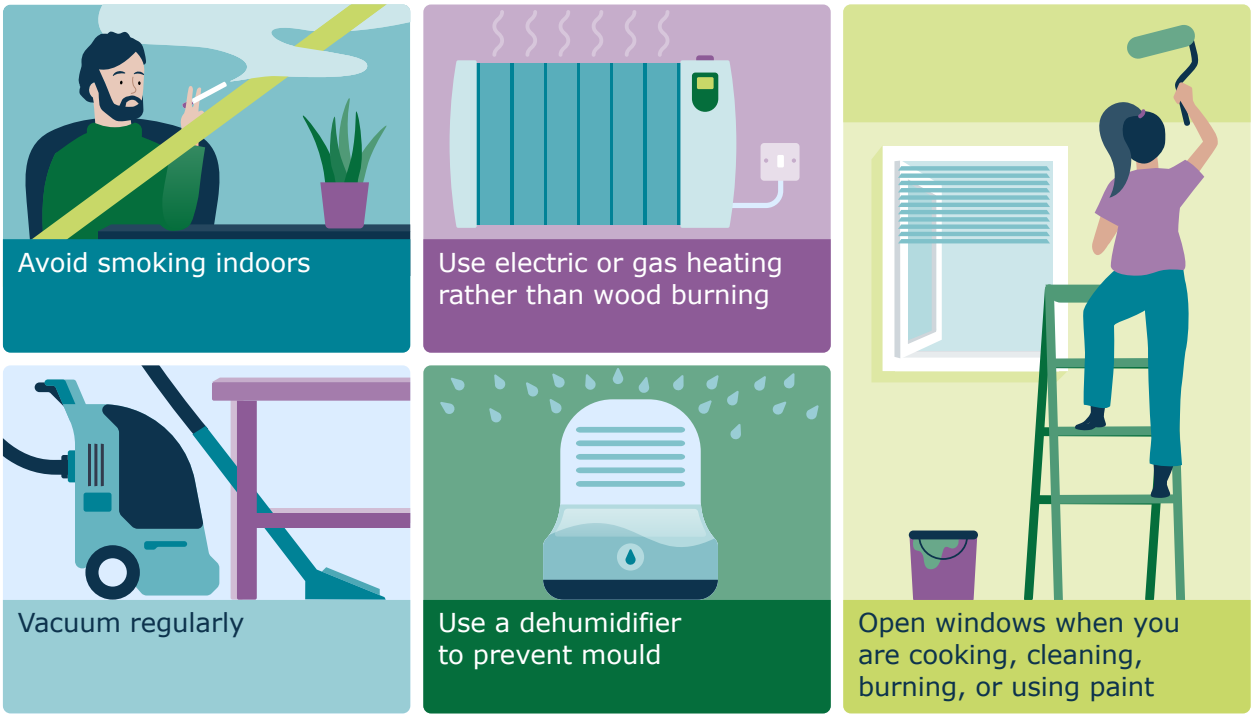
9.2 WOOD BURNING

Wood burners can be a primary source of heating for some households, but the majority of households with a woodburner use them in addition to a central heating system. This is now a major contributor to harmful particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$) emissions in the New Forest. We suggest only burning in the home when absolutely necessary to help reduce your exposure to harmful pollutants.

Here is our advice for reducing the air quality impacts of burning wood in your home:

9.3 INDOOR AIR POLLUTION

Reducing air pollution in your home is an investment in your health and wellbeing. These are some simple steps that we can all follow to make sure that we are breathing the cleanest air possible:

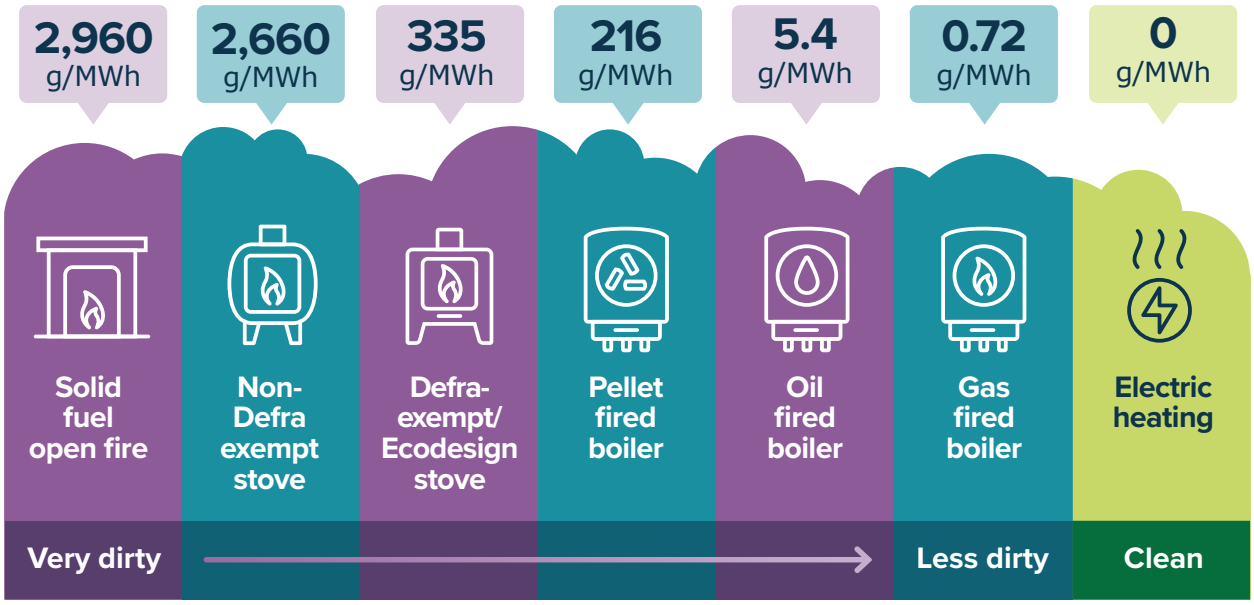


9.4 WHAT ARE WE DOING NOW?

Advocating for cleaner burning practices

Not all forms of burning are equally polluting. This figure from the Chief Medical Officer's 2022 report[22] shows how polluting different types of heating are. We are collaborating with other Hampshire Local Authorities (Southampton City Council, Winchester City Council and Eastleigh Borough Council) and The Environment Centre to advocate for cleaner burning practices in open fires, stoves, and bonfires.

Figure 9-1: The relative $PM_{2.5}$ emissions from domestic heating methods. Adapted from the Chief Medical Officer's Annual Report 2022.



Improving energy efficiency

Ensuring an efficient and sustainable method of heating your home reduces harmful indoor air pollution and energy costs. However, transitioning to more energy-efficient heating methods can be expensive.

There are several initiatives to make this transition easier:

- **Cosy Homes New Forest Tool:**[23] This tool simplifies the process for residents and landlords to develop a retrofit plan to improve energy efficiency.
- **The Greener Housing Strategy:**[24] This strategy focuses on collaborating directly with landlords to ensure compliance with minimum energy efficiency standards.

22 Chief Medical Officer's Annual Report 2022: Air pollution, available at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/chief-medical-officers-annual-report-2022-air-pollution

23 Cost Home New Forest. (2024) Start building your free online home energy plan. Available at: https://cosyhomesnewforest.planbuilder.co.uk/

24 New Forest District Council. (2022) Greener Housing Strategy 2022 to 2032. Available at: https://www.newforest.gov.uk/article/3113/Greener-Housing-Strategy-2022-to-2032

- **The Environment Centre,**[25] located in Southampton, provides complimentary guidance to residents seeking to upgrade their homes. They can also help identify relevant funding sources.

9.5 WHAT WILL WE DO NEXT?

Raise awareness of the impact of wood burners

We will **continue to raise awareness of the impact of wood burners**. Currently we are working with the Environment Centre and neighbouring Local Authorities to raise awareness of the impacts of wood burning and also provide information on cleaner heating alternatives, proper usage practices and regulations.

Provide accessible, reliable information on alternatives to wood burners

We will also look for opportunities to **collaborate with regional authorities and suppliers to provide accessible, reliable information for anybody considering alternatives to wood burners** in their home and help users of wood burners minimise their air quality and climate footprint.

Investigate possible approaches to reducing emissions from bonfires

We will **explore the feasibility and effectiveness of adopting a Smoke Control Area in the New Forest**. We will also investigate developing and promoting awareness to reduce bonfire usage within the district following examples set by other Local Authorities. By setting clear guidelines, controls, and enforcement mechanisms, we will be able to help reduce the amount of pollution from bonfires to ensure we maintain compliance with air quality standards.

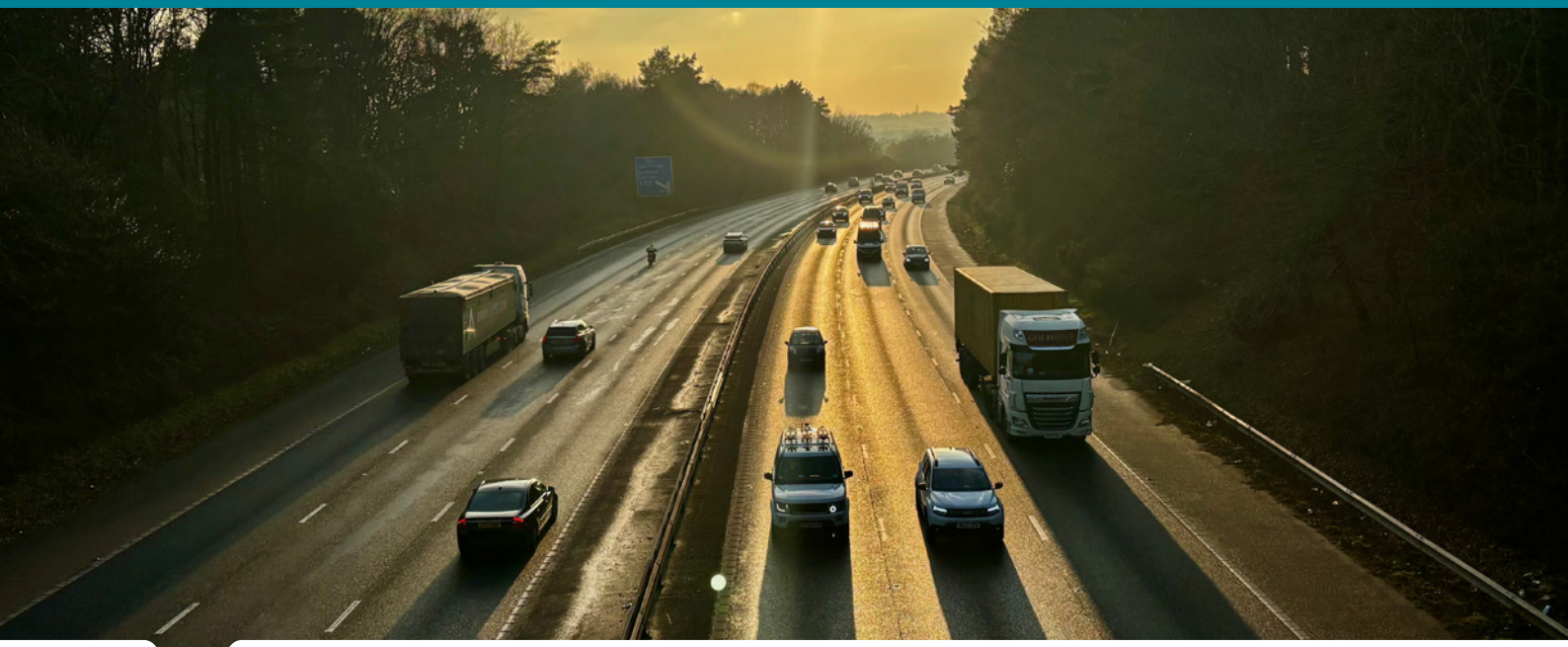
Public engagement on indoor air quality

We will work collaboratively to identify opportunities to **carry out public engagement to better understand how our residents consider and manage their personal indoor air quality**. This could include surveys to find out views on issues including indoor pollutants, mould, and particulate matter to make sure we are tackling the issues that matter most to our residents.

25 New Forest District Council. (2024) Get a grant or loan to improve your home energy efficiency. Available at: https://www.newforest.gov.uk/article/3437/Get-a-grant-or-loan-to-improve-your-home-energy-efficiency

10

Reducing road traffic emissions



10.1 ROAD TRANSPORT EMISSIONS IN THE NEW FOREST

Road traffic emissions have reduced substantially in recent years due to actions and abatement measures that New Forest District Council and Hampshire County Council have implemented, combined with technological advances prompted by vehicle emission standards and other measures and policies enacted by the UK government.

However, **road transport is still the largest source of emissions of NO_x and NO_2 in the New Forest and is a major contributor to particulate emissions**. Just under two-thirds of NO_x pollution in the New Forest comes from road transport, and the highest measured NO_2 concentrations are still seen along major roads.

While the largest contributors to air pollution in the New Forest are private cars, heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) can also be important in areas such as the port, industrial sites, and the oil refinery.

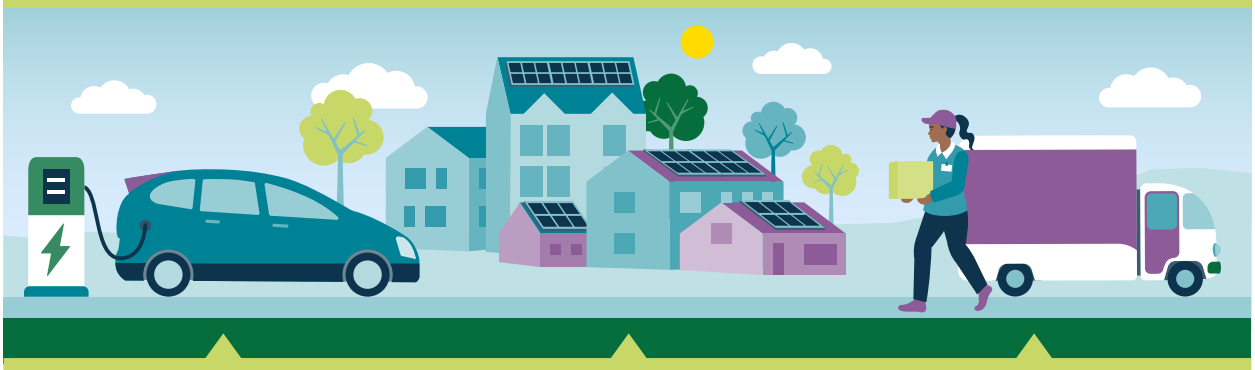
To safeguard the health and wellbeing of everybody who lives and works in the New Forest, we need to continue reducing emissions through a variety of approaches.

Figure 10-1: Ways that we can reduce road traffic emissions

Providing a range of high-quality travel options like walking and cycling to encourage shifts in travel behaviour towards active modes for shorter journeys

Providing accessible, effective public transport for longer journeys

Reducing the need to travel by creating opportunities to 'live locally', including homeworking



Improving vehicle emissions by encouraging cleaner vehicles where possible and reducing congestion so that journeys that must be taken by car have less impact

Reducing the impact of new developments on transport emissions (see Chapter 11)

Working alongside industry to reduce the impact of freight, deliveries and haulage routes on air quality

10.2 WHAT ARE WE DOING NOW?

Our transport priorities are set out in several local and regional plans. These outline the local requirements of their respective areas in terms of infrastructure and behavioural change requirements to achieve lower transport emissions and congestion. Policy C8 of the Hampshire Local Transport Plan 4[26] gives detail on how Hampshire County Council is managing the harmful health effects of poor air quality.

Enhancing walking and cycling

Shifting to walking and cycling can reduce congestion, improve physical and mental health by encouraging healthier lifestyles and help address air pollution and the climate crisis. **In Hampshire, 1 in 6 commuting trips are less than 1.25 miles, but 51% of these are made by car.**

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans are a strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements required at the local level including proposed cycling network improvements and identifying important walking centres. The Waterside Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan is now complete, and we have partnered with Hampshire County Council and the New Forest National Park Authority to produce a Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan for the entire District and National Park. We will support the introduction of new infrastructure by promoting active travel and supporting schemes to make it easier to use active travel as set out in Chapter 6.

26 Hampshire County Council (2024) Local Transport Plan 4. Available at https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/localtransportplan

Using the planning system to manage and improve emissions

The New Forest District area is covered by two local plans, prepared by New Forest District Council and the New Forest National Park Authority respectively. New Forest District Council's statutory environmental health responsibilities cover the whole of the New Forest District and our Environmental Health team are a consultee on relevant planning applications within the New Forest District area of the National Park.

Objective SO2 of the Local Plan Part 1 (2020)[27] is to manage and where possible reduce or mitigate activities that unacceptably impact on air quality. Policy CCC1 builds on this by being clear that development should not result in pollution or hazards which prejudice the health and safety of communities and their environments, including air quality. It seeks to ensure that appropriate measures are required to prevent, control, mitigate or offset the impacts or risks of development on community health and safety. We require new developments to prioritise safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle access, linking to existing pedestrian networks where possible. Wherever there are existing footpaths, cycle routes, or public transport access to a proposed development, these are required to be retained and improved by the development. We also seek to ensure that development is built in the right place in accessible locations near public transport and services in order to reduce the need to travel by car.

In addition, new developments that may have additional mitigation needs will be required to produce a Travel Plan, setting out measures to promote and encourage sustainable travel.

New Forest District Council's planning guidance on Parking Standards (2022)[28] also requires developers to enable the convenient installation of charging points for electric vehicles in residential properties. Furthermore, the council's guidance on Planning for Climate Change (2024)[29] seeks net zero carbon development which produces lower carbon emissions (and related particulates) through reduced space heating demand. Related installation of renewable energy generation (e.g. photovoltaic panels) is also encouraged.

Promoting active travel for visitors

The New Forest receives a large number of visitors, 96% of whom arrive by car. As part of our plan to reduce traffic on our roads, we are encouraging these visitors to use public transport or active travel links into the New Forest as well as within the National Park. This includes sustainable travel options such as the New Forest Tour.

The New Forest contains more than 100 miles of waymarked cycle routes, much of it off the public highway and traffic-free. The National Park Authority highlights popular cycle routes and highlights the locations of cycle hire shops in the area.[30]

We are also promoting active travel for our residents, as described in Chapter 6.

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27 New Forest (2016) Local Plan 2016-2036, Local_Plan_2016-2036_Part_One_FINAL.pdf (newforest.gov.uk)

28 New Forest (2022) Parking Standards SPD, Parking_Standards_SPD_April_2022.pdf (newforest.gov.uk)

29 New Forest (2024) Climate Change SPD, Climate_Change_SPD_Adopted_April_2024.pdf (newforest.gov.uk)

30 Forestry England (2021) Cycle routes map: The New Forest National Park. Available at: https://www.forestryengland.uk/sites/default/files/documents/New-Forest_Cycle-Routes-Map_2021_0.pdf

Enhancing public transport

For many people, public transport provides an essential means of getting around for their daily lives, and using public transport can reduce congestion and road traffic emissions. Our goal is to work with stakeholders to **make public transport more attractive, cheaper, and accessible to more people**, as the first choice for medium and longer journeys.

Recent schemes include improving bus stops with Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) in Totton and Hythe, improvements to bus lanes and crossing points in Marchwood, and accessibility improvements at Totton Rail Station.

Reducing the need for travel

Avoiding carbon-intensive activities by providing opportunities to 'live locally' as set out in the Hampshire Local Transport Plan 4 can significantly reduce both the number and length of journeys made every day, leading to significant carbon savings and cleaner air. This includes not only transportation and placemaking improvements, but also expanding digital and mobile connectivity. This will allow residents, particularly those in rural areas, to access jobs, services, and other opportunities and activities online from home if they choose. These priorities are echoed in the Waterside Transport Strategy and Action Plan, with the additional focus of sustainable cargo transport, particularly through the development of rail links to the Waterside area, reducing the dependence on polluting HGVs.

10.3 WHAT WILL WE DO NEXT?

Utilise current road infrastructure to reduce congestion and improve air quality in the locality

Hampshire County Council has identified **reducing congestion, improving accessibility, and improving road safety** on the A326, A35 and A337 as a key objective. As part of this bid to reduce congestion, there will also be an investigation into capacity improvements on the M3, M27 and A31, to allow for smoother traffic flows throughout the New Forest.

Additional improvements could include adding cycling lanes or carrying out measures to improve traffic flow on key roads in the area.

Continue to improve our walking and cycling infrastructure

Actions to encourage a shift to active travel could include installing more bicycle parking in key hubs and ensuring connectivity between our different cycle and walking routes. We will work with stakeholders to investigate opportunities to reallocate road space away from vehicles to walking and cycling healthy streets.

We will continue to work with the County Council, the New Forest National Park Authority and Forestry England to improve our walking and cycling infrastructure and develop our Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan to **make travelling on foot or by bike as pleasant and convenient as possible**.

Work with Hampshire County Council to increase reach of public transport services

By **increasing the reach of public transport services** and reaching more rural communities, we will work with Hampshire County Council to enable more people to switch to public transport, reducing the need for private vehicle journeys.

This could be achieved by expanding the public transport services, including supporting additional routes, increasing the frequency of bus and rail services, and making improvements to morning, evening, and Sunday services. The new Hampshire Local Transport Plan 4[26] and the Hampshire Enhanced Partnership Plan[31] set out Hampshire Council's plan for improving bus services.

In the longer term, we will support the County Council in exploring more flexible and responsive public transport options to increase the reach of our public transport services.

Reduce emissions from council vehicles

Vehicles are significant contributors to air pollution in the New Forest, so we need to reduce vehicle emissions to ensure the health of our residents and visitors. We will lead by example and will **replace our vehicle fleet with low emission vehicles** as part of our commitment to achieve Net Zero by 2050. We will also seek out opportunities to optimise the total number of trips made by our vehicles and ensure that staff are driving in an efficient and effective manner, reducing fuel use, and avoiding excessive braking where possible, as per the council's Fleet Management Protocol (2024).

Improve infrastructure for electric vehicles

We will seek out opportunities to improve infrastructure for electric vehicles to make it easier to own an electric vehicle in the New Forest. We currently have approximately 60 EV chargers in New Forest District Council car parks, and we will continuously support our partners in assessing the localised need to increase this capacity to make sure that chargers are installed in the right places. We will work with commercial partners and Hampshire County Council to bid for government funding to deliver rapid charging points.

Reduce impacts from freight on air quality

Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) can be a significant contributor to air pollutant emissions in areas with high numbers of deliveries such as the port, industrial sites, warehouses and the oil refinery. We will continue to work collaboratively with local industry to find ways to minimise the impact of vital freight, deliveries and haulage routes on air quality.

31 Hampshire County Council (2022) Hampshire Enhanced Partnership Plan, https://democracy.hants.gov.uk/documents/s91773/Appendix%201.pdf

11

Reducing the impact of new developments

11.1 NEW DEVELOPMENTS AND AIR QUALITY

New Forest District Council is working to enhance quality of life for local residents and provide more housing and infrastructure to meet both local needs and national policy objectives.

However, **new developments can put pressure on local air quality**, both from the pollution generated during construction and from heating and traffic pollution generated once the developments are complete. Successful developments strike the right balance between growth and conservation, so it is important that the impact of construction and new developments is kept to a minimum.

11.2 WHAT ARE WE DOING NOW?

Planning

Our **Air Quality in New Developments Supplementary Planning Document**[32] guides developers on how they should incorporate sustainable development and air quality within their designs. As part of the planning process, developers are required to submit a detailed report assessing the impact of their proposed development on local air quality and propose mitigation measures to minimise emissions. This includes impacts from additional transport to and from the new development, emissions associated with heat and power required by the new development, and emissions from any onsite processes.

Our **Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document**[33] provides guidance for developers on how they should minimise their climate change impact through reducing energy demand. Specifically, the developer should demonstrate how they have considered and plan to mitigate emissions during construction.

The New Forest District also covers the majority of the National Park, which is subject to different planning policies prepared by the New Forest National Park Authority. The planning policies for the National Park area seek to protect the environment of the New Forest from the adverse impacts associated with traffic and other forms of air pollution.[34]

Protecting our natural environment

Our National Park that covers large parts of the district, together with other protected designations (including part of the Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs National Landscape and a range of international nature conservation designations), help to preserve our area's beauty and character. However, this also represents a challenge when finding locations for new homes and infrastructure.

Within the borders of the National Park, habitat conditions are monitored at sites close to main roads. We use monitoring equipment as well as regular ecological field work, ensuring nitrogen and ammonia levels do not exceed critical thresholds.

32 New Forest District Council (2022) Air Quality Assessments in New Development: Supplementary Planning Document, https://www.newforest.gov.uk/media/2726/Air-Quality-SPD/pdf/Air_Quality_SPD_FINAL_Version_June_2022.pdf

33 New Forest District Council (2024) Planning for Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), https://newforest.gov.uk/article/3591/Planning-for-Climate-Change-Supplementary-Planning-Document-SPD

34 New Forest National Park. (2024) Planning. Available at: https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/planning/

These plans and strategies help to protect and promote green space in the New Forest:

- **The Corporate Plan**[35] sets out how the council aims to balance growth with conservation efforts.
- **The New Forest District Council Tree Strategy 2020-2025**[36] seeks to promote, enhance, and protect all trees growing on any and all land owned or managed by the council.
- **The New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016-2036**[37] lays out requirements for new development within the National Park.

Council housing

We manage over 5,000 properties, and programmes to deliver at least 600 new council homes by 2026 are currently underway.

Improving and maintaining the energy efficiency of these dwellings is important both to reduce heating costs and to limit carbon and air pollutant emissions. We are heavily involved in ensuring the housing stock owned by the council is properly maintained, with planned maintenance programmes worth £6m per year for replacing doors, windows, and roofs for better insulation.

A total of 2,884 energy efficiency measures have been installed in our council housing, with 1,330 of these aimed at heating efficiency through air source heat pumps, photovoltaic schemes, window and door replacements, and insulation.

11.3 WHAT WILL WE DO NEXT?

New opportunities for growth have the potential to drive significant development over the coming decades. The Solent Freeport, one of 12 UK freeports, is expected to drive significant economic growth in our area as the majority of land which makes up the Solent Freeport tax sites is within the New Forest district. This could include the future development of the Dibden Bay area.

It is important that we respond robustly and effectively to new plans to make sure that they deliver benefits to the New Forest while protecting the environment.

Review and monitor our existing policies to ensure that they remain effective

We will use our annual work plans to identify any changes in national air quality guidance or legislation to ensure we are following best practice. We will also use our monitoring data to benchmark our air quality and refine our strategies to maximise their impact on improving air quality.

35 New Forest District Council (2024) Corporate Plan 2024 to 2028 https://www.newforest.gov.uk/corporateplan

36 New Forest District Council (2020) Tree Strategy, https://newforest.gov.uk/media/647/tree-strategy-2020-25/pdf/tree-strategy-2020-25.pdfvc

37 New Forest National Park (2019) Local Plan 2016–2036 https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/planning/local-plan/

Review how we respond to planning applications

We will review how we provide air quality advice and our requirements for appropriate assessment and agreed mitigation measures to ensure that we are minimising the impact of development.

Work closely with the New Forest National Park Authority and neighbouring local authorities to share expertise, resources, and best practice

Sharing resources will allow us to help tackle air quality on a regional level. We hope to align our approach to planning and permitting for new developments across the District, including the National Park area, and contribute to the development of air quality policies across the region to address regional air quality challenges.

Engage with businesses to help them achieve net-zero emissions

We will seek out opportunities to engage with businesses to help them achieve net-zero emissions, and work with other Council teams to make sure these schemes deliver co-benefits for air quality where possible. This can include providing incentives, support, and guidance to businesses on implementing sustainable practices, adopting cleaner technologies, and reducing carbon and air quality footprints.

12

Where to find more information

Please refer to the following list of tools and resources to find out more information on actions being taken by the New Forest District Council to improve air quality, the state of air quality in the New Forest, and how air pollution impacts health and wellbeing.

Tool / resource	Description	Link
New Forest District Council	Provides information on air quality monitoring in the New Forest, and provides access to air quality reports	https://www.newforest.gov.uk/airquality
New Forest Corporate Plan	Provides context for the policies on air quality in the new forest	Corporate_plan_2024_to_2028.pdf (newforest.gov.uk)
New Forest District Council Monitoring Data	A map of the data collected by the continuous air quality monitoring stations in the New Forest	https://www.airqualityengland.co.uk/local-authority/?la_id=236

Tool / resource	Description	Link
Air Quality in New Developments in the New Forest	Provides information on the adoption of, and measures contained within the Air Quality Supplementary Planning Document	https://www.newforest.gov.uk/article/2934/Air-Quality-in-New-Development
New Forest Waterside Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan	Provides information on the ongoing development in the Waterside area to improve the walking and cycling experience	https://documents.hants.gov.uk/transportWatersideTransportStrategy-ETEDecisionDayReportAppendix.pdf
New Forest National Park Cycling Routes	Contains maps of cycling routes in the New Forest National Park	https://www.forestryengland.uk/sites/default/files/documents/New-Forest_Cycle-Routes-Map_2021_0.pdf
New Forest National Park – Sustainable Transport	Details the investments made by the National Park in sustainable travel schemes and infrastructure	https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/conservation/climate-and-nature-emergency/sustainable-transport/
The Environment Centre – Wood Burning	Provides information on wood burning, and how to burn better	https://environmentcentre.com/wood-burning/
The Environment Centre – Campaign for Cleaner Air	Contains information about the ongoing cleaner air campaign related to the use of log burners in the New Forest	https://environmentcentre.com/the-environment/clean-air/
Hampshire County Council – Climate Change Strategy	Provides information on the County's Climate Change Strategy	https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/environment/climatechange
UK Health Security Agency	Provides information about the health impacts of air pollution	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-air-pollution/health-matters-air-pollution
Defra Air Pollution Forecast	Defra's air pollution forecast tool provides the latest outlook for air quality across the UK	https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/forecasting/