



# New Forest District Council: **Air Quality Strategy 2025**

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## 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

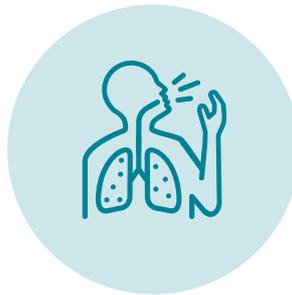
**It is estimated that human-made air pollution in the UK leads to 28,000 to 36,000 premature deaths every year.**<sup>1</sup> Episodes of higher air pollution increase hospital admissions and mortality, with harmful short-term effects including exacerbating symptoms for those with pre-existing heart 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.<sup>2,3</sup>

**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.<sup>4</sup>



**Elderly**



**Those with  
lung disease**



**Children**

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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>

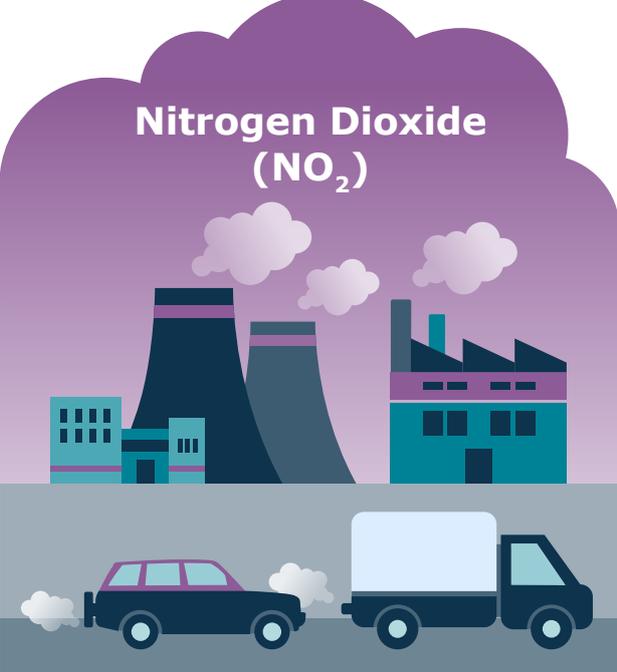
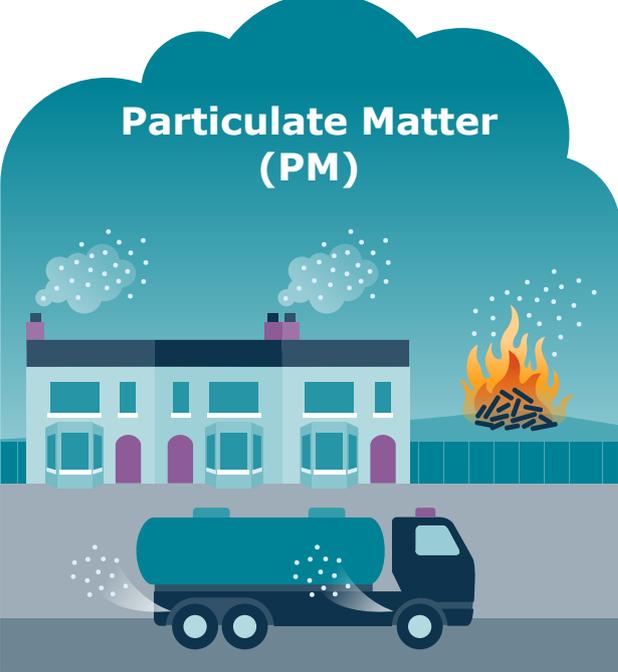
2 Public Health England (2014), PHE-CRCE-010: Estimating local mortality burdens associated with particulate air pollution. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/estimating-local-mortality-burdens-associated-with-particulate-air-pollution>

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](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<sub>2</sub>) and particulate matter (PM).

 <h3>Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>)</h3>	 <h3>Particulate Matter (PM)</h3>
<p><b>What is it?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colourless gas with one nitrogen atom and two oxygen atoms</li> <li>• One of a group of gases called nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>)</li> </ul> <p><b>Where does it come from?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formed during combustion e.g. from power generation, industrial combustion and road transport</li> <li>• Other nitrogen oxides can convert to NO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere</li> </ul> <p><b>Where is it found?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High concentrations are often seen near busy roads</li> </ul> <p><b>How does it affect me?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequent exposure to high NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations increases risk of <b>respiratory illnesses, cardiopulmonary effects, asthma attacks, and decreased lung function</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>What is it?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solid particles (dust) and liquid droplets suspended in the air</li> <li>• Made up of a range of chemicals, some of which can be toxic to human health</li> <li>• PM<sub>10</sub>, PM<sub>2.5</sub>, PM<sub>0.1</sub> are different sizes of particles</li> </ul> <p><b>Where does it come from?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Burning fossil fuels and wood, tyre and brake wear</li> <li>• Also formed by reactions between other pollutants in the air</li> </ul> <p><b>Where is it found?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Across wide areas, but particularly near roads and industry</li> </ul> <p><b>How does it affect me?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large particles can <b>irritate the eyes, nose and throat, and lead to increased risk of cardio-respiratory illnesses</b></li> <li>• Smaller particles can enter the lungs and into the bloodstream, <b>affecting the heart and the brain, and have been associated with numerous health impacts</b></li> </ul>

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<sub>2.5</sub> is the air pollutant that causes most significant health problems and premature deaths. National modelling estimates suggest that a reduction of 1 µg/m<sup>3</sup> of PM<sub>2.5</sub> 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.<sup>5</sup>

Sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) is also an important pollutant which is associated with industry. This was historically an issue near the Fawley refinery, but SO<sub>2</sub> 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.<sup>6</sup> Some pollutants have more than one limit value covering different averaging times.

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<sub>2.5</sub> were reviewed to reflect the new WHO guidelines under the UK Environment Act 2021.<sup>7</sup> The new annual mean PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration target is 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup> to be met across England by 2040, a 50% decrease from the current UK PM<sub>2.5</sub> air quality standard.<sup>8</sup> The Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 for England also set an interim annual mean PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration target of 12 µg/m<sup>3</sup> 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<sub>2.5</sub>, and we expect to see a larger focus on actions to reduce particulate matter emissions in the coming years.



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.

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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/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.<sup>9</sup> The new guidelines for PM<sub>2.5</sub> are based on there being no evidence for a safe level of exposure to PM<sub>2.5</sub>. 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/m<sup>3</sup>)**

Pollutant	UK Air Quality Standard	Government Target	World Health Organisation Air Quality Guideline
Nitrogen dioxide (NO <sub>2</sub> )	40	-	10
Particulate matter (PM <sub>10</sub> )	40	-	15
Particulate matter (PM <sub>2.5</sub> )	20	10 µg/m <sup>3</sup> 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<sub>2.5</sub> 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%
<b>New Forest</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>4.4%</b>
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.<sup>10</sup> 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<sub>2</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub> and SO<sub>2</sub> concentration levels. We do not currently monitor PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations at continuous monitors in the New Forest.

We also monitor NO<sub>2</sub> 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.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> 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/>

<sup>11</sup> [National Bias Adjustment Factors | LAQM \(defra.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-bias-adjustment-factors-for-air-quality-measurements)

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

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<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> 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<sub>2</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub> 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.



#### Redbridge Causeway

- Defra models NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations along all major roads in the UK to identify roads which exceed the UK Air Quality Objectives.
- High levels of NO<sub>2</sub> 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.



#### 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<sub>2</sub> UK Air Quality Objective in 2005.
- We determined that the main cause was traffic congestion in narrow streets.
- Between 2010 and 2022, NO<sub>2</sub> levels decreased by 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup>, 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.

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

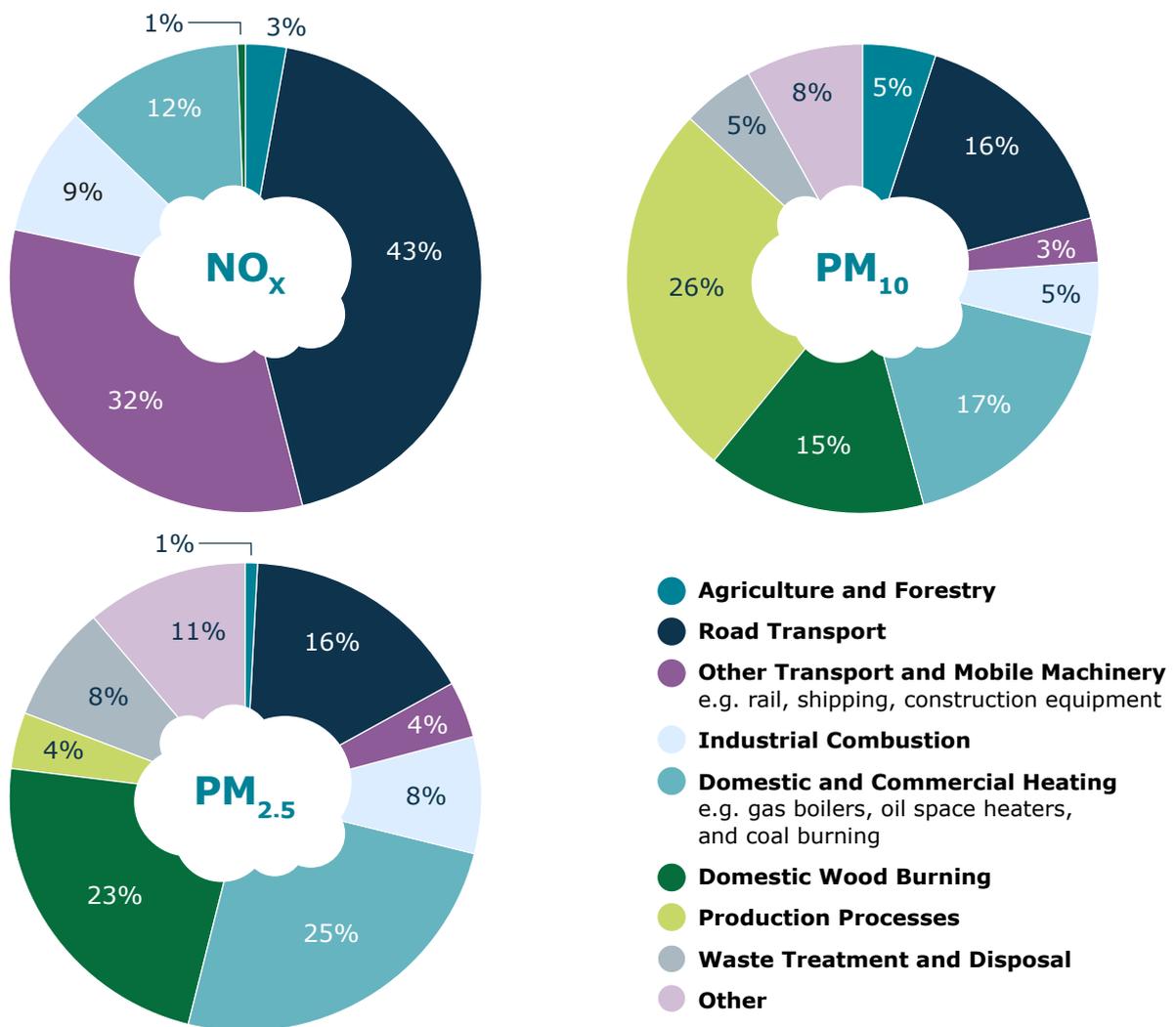
### 3.3 WHERE DOES AIR POLLUTION IN THE NEW FOREST COME FROM?

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.**<sup>13</sup>

**Road transport plays a key role as a primary source of NO<sub>2</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub>, and PM<sub>2.5</sub>.** 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<sub>2.5</sub> emissions in the New Forest District.

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



<sup>13</sup> 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<sub>2</sub>) and methane (CH<sub>4</sub>). This means that improving air quality by reducing emissions can also help to address climate change.

#### Which air pollutants can contribute to climate change?

While CO<sub>2</sub> 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<sub>x</sub>) 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<sup>15</sup> 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.

“Pollutants not only severely impact public health, but also the earth’s climate and ecosystems globally.”

WHO<sup>14</sup>

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

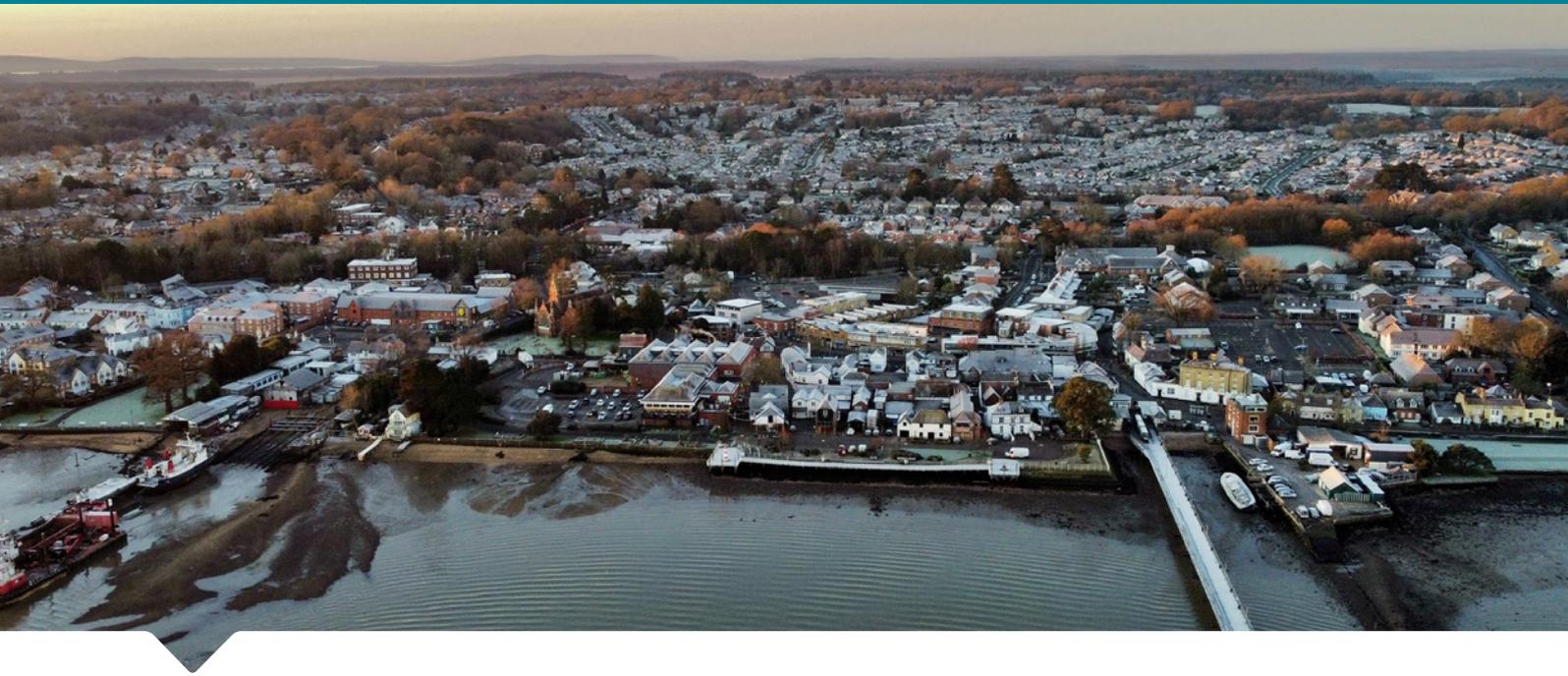
Air pollution is a regional challenge, so **collaborating with neighbouring local authorities and Hampshire County Council is crucial to ensure our success**. We will continue to collaborate with the New Forest National Park Authority and Forestry England for all projects which may affect the National 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

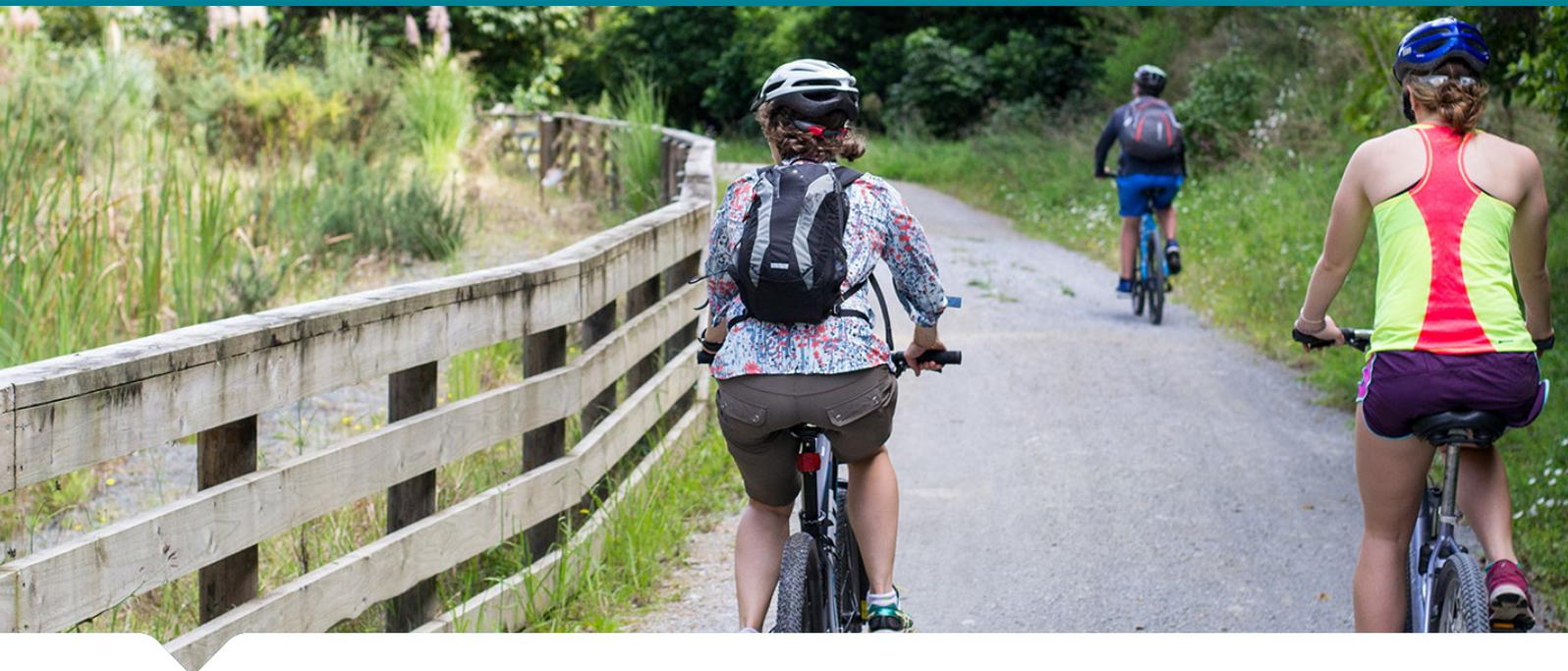


As part of this Air Quality Strategy, New Forest District Council has developed actions across multiple key areas with the aim to improve local air quality:

 <p><b>1</b> Public awareness and behaviour change</p>	 <p><b>2</b> Reducing health inequalities</p>	 <p><b>3</b> Improving our understanding of particulate matter pollution</p>
 <p><b>4</b> Wood burning and indoor air pollution</p>	 <p><b>5</b> Reducing road traffic emissions</p>	 <p><b>6</b> Reducing the impact of new developments</p>

# 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.<sup>16</sup>

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.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> 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.



<sup>16</sup> Air Quality in England. (2024) New Forest District Council Monitoring Data. Available at: [https://www.airqualityengland.co.uk/local-authority/?la\\_id=236](https://www.airqualityengland.co.uk/local-authority/?la_id=236)

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

<sup>18</sup> 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.**

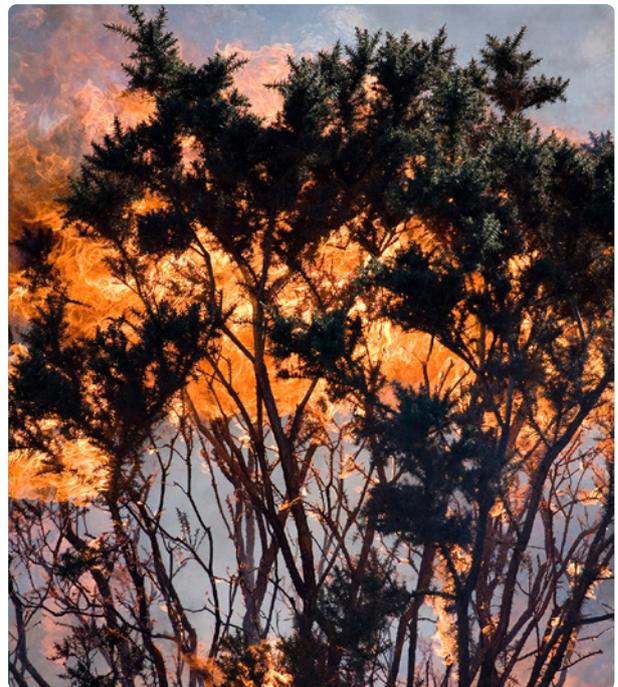
Throughout the life of this strategy, we will consider a range of approaches to public engagement to understand the most important air quality issues for our residents, town and parish councils and visitors. We will identify best practice examples from other local authorities to build on the work we 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

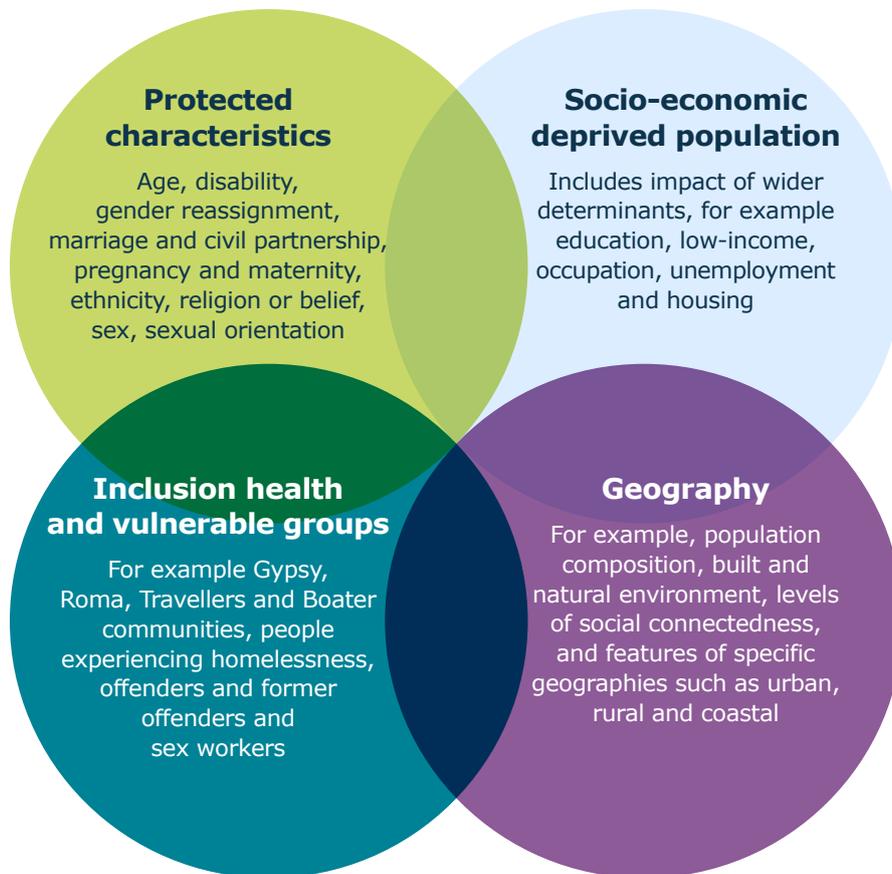
# Reducing health inequalities



## 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.

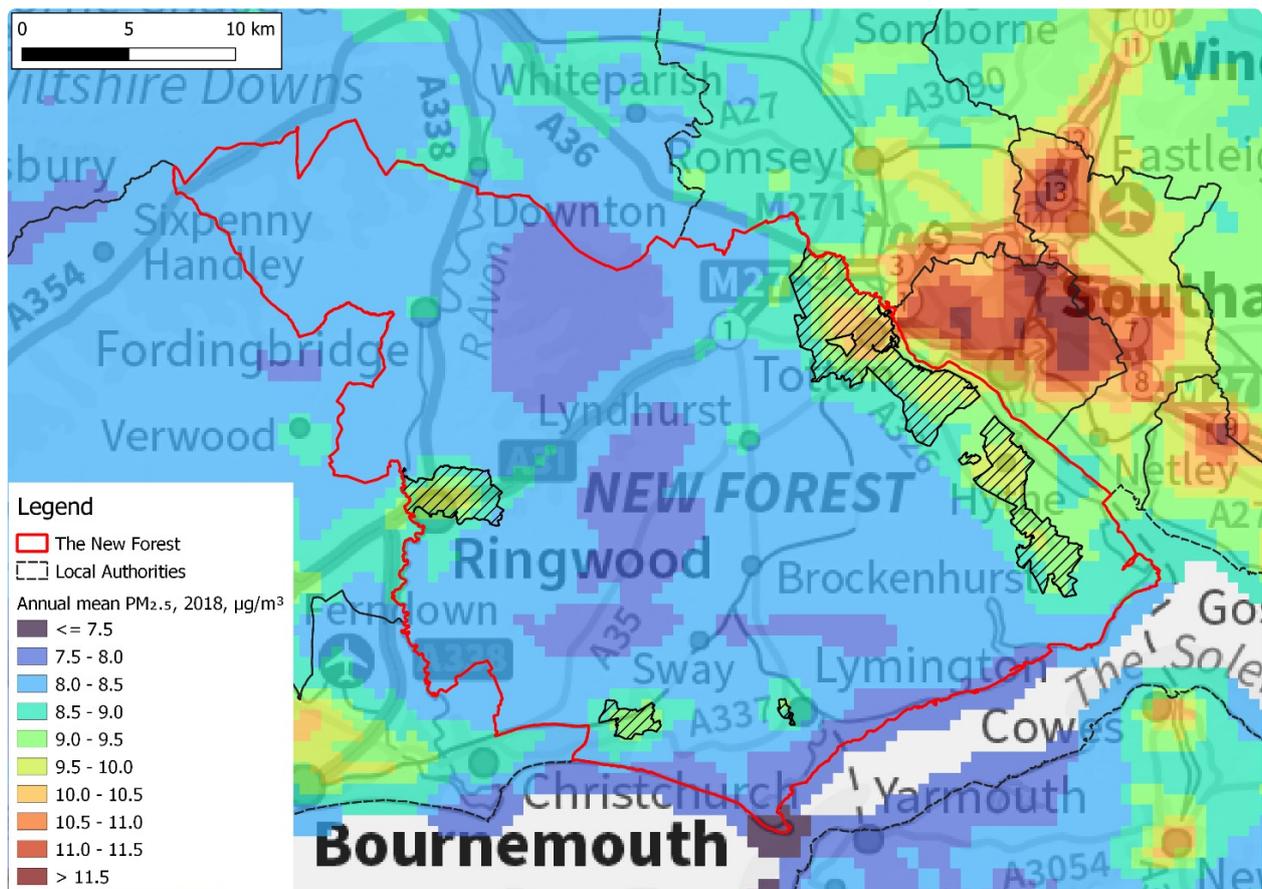
In the New Forest, 16% of the population is aged 15 or under, and 29% are 65 or older. In particular, **the New Forest has an older population than the rest of Hampshire, and as a result our population is more vulnerable to air pollution.**

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<sup>19</sup> and annual average PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration data for 2018 published by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs.<sup>20</sup> Figure 7-1 shows areas where the annual average PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration in 2018 was within 10% of the new PM<sub>2.5</sub> 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<sub>2.5</sub> 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.<sup>21</sup> 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.

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<sup>21</sup> Hampshire Joint 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<sub>2.5</sub> IMPORTANT?

**Fine particulate matter, known as PM<sub>2.5</sub>, 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<sub>2.5</sub> of 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup> 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  $12 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  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  $13 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ , which is above the 2040 target of  $10 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ .

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<sub>2.5</sub> hotspots

We will use our monitoring data and consider the use of modelling to **identify areas where PM<sub>2.5</sub> 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<sub>2.5</sub> in particular areas.

## Detailed source apportionment of PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations

We will carry out **detailed source apportionment of PM<sub>2.5</sub> 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<sub>2.5</sub> 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<sub>2.5</sub> emissions in the New Forest**, including targeted and district-wide measures.

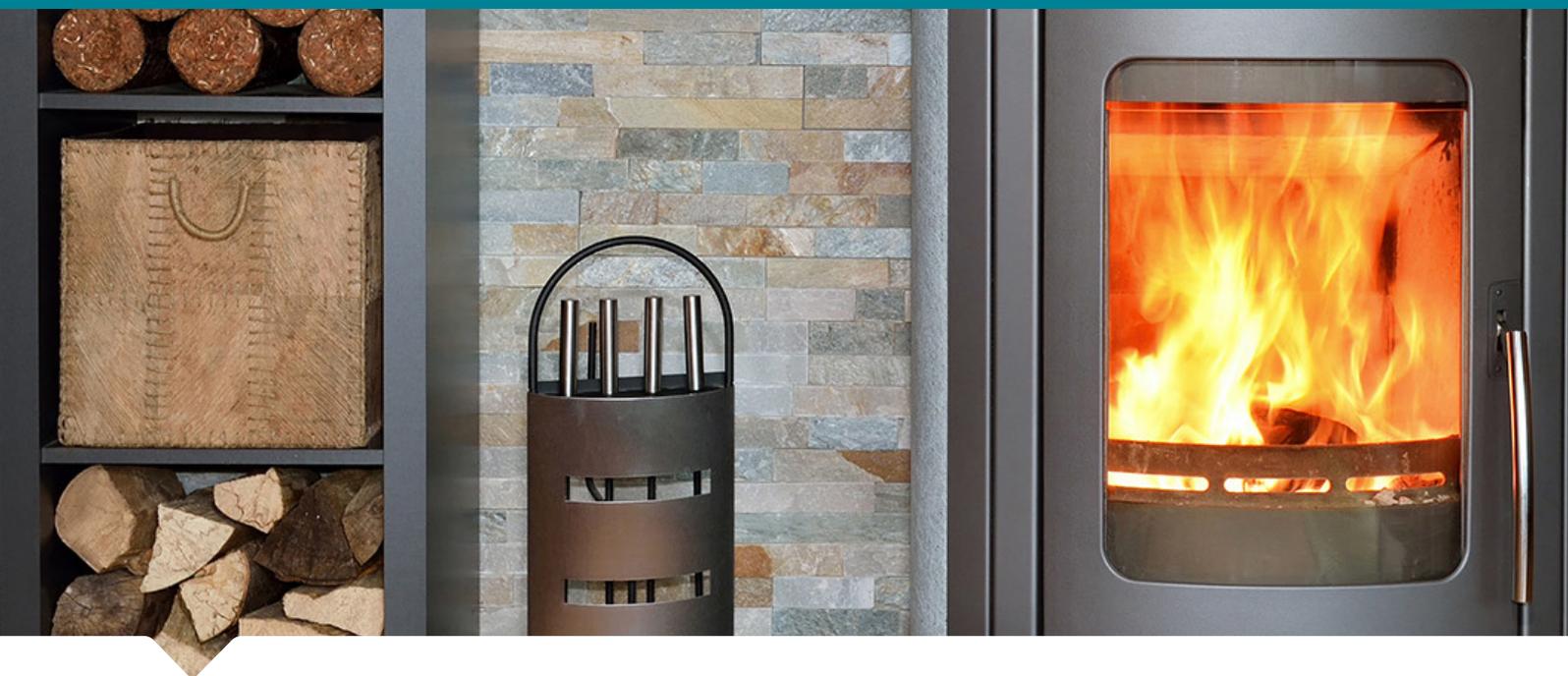
We expect that many of the actions we are already taking will also contribute to reducing PM<sub>2.5</sub> emissions. However, in the meantime, we are continuing to work on our existing plans that will help reduce particulate pollution, especially our Burn Better Campaign.



We will carry out detailed source apportionment of PM<sub>2.5</sub> 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<sub>2.5</sub>) emissions in the New Forest. We suggest only burning in the home when absolutely necessary to help reduce your exposure to harmful pollutants.

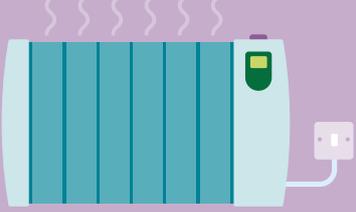
Here is our advice for reducing the air quality impacts of burning wood in your home:

 <p><b>#1 Burn cleaner</b> Burn cleaner fuels such as smokeless, authorised fuels or dry, well-seasoned wood with low moisture content.</p>	 <p><b>#2 Burn better</b> Use efficient appliances, don't shut off air or allow the temperature to drop, and service and clean them regularly.</p>	 <p><b>#3 Burn different</b> If possible, switch heating source to no or low emission fuels, such as renewable, electric or gas alternatives.</p>
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## 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:

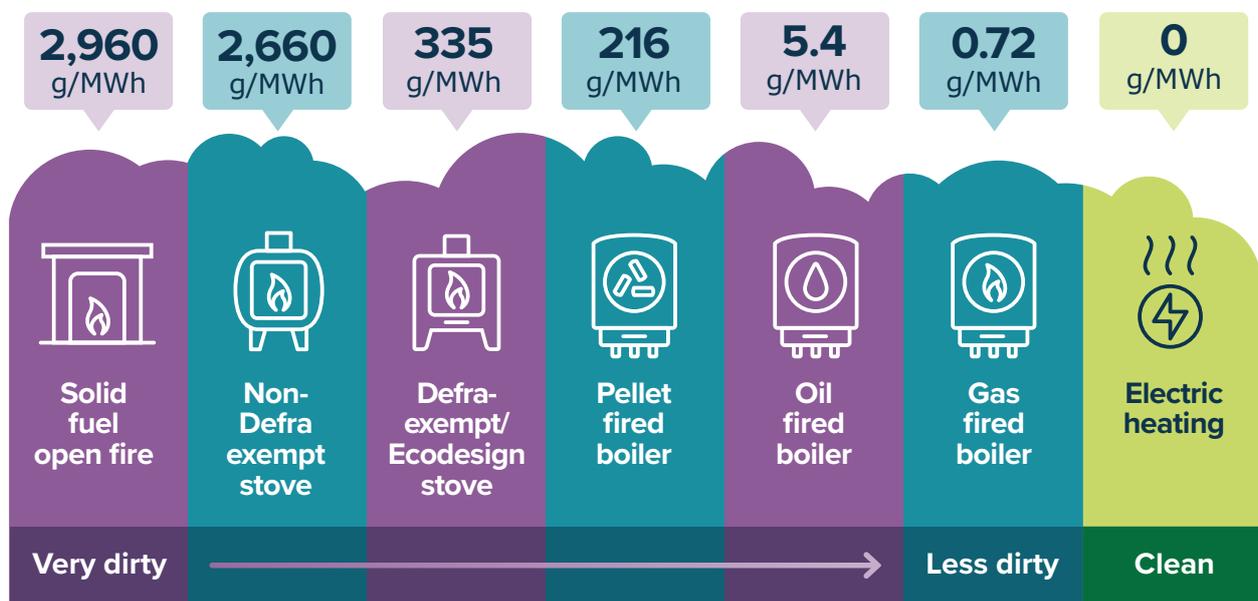
 <p>Avoid smoking indoors</p>	 <p>Use electric or gas heating rather than wood burning</p>	 <p>Open windows when you are cooking, cleaning, burning, or using paint</p>
 <p>Vacuum regularly</p>	 <p>Use a dehumidifier to prevent mould</p>	

## 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<sup>22</sup> 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<sub>2.5</sub> 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:**<sup>23</sup> This tool simplifies the process for residents and landlords to develop a retrofit plan to improve energy efficiency.
- **The Greener Housing Strategy:**<sup>24</sup> This strategy focuses on collaborating directly with landlords to ensure compliance with minimum energy efficiency standards.

<sup>22</sup> 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>

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

<sup>24</sup> 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**,<sup>25</sup> 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

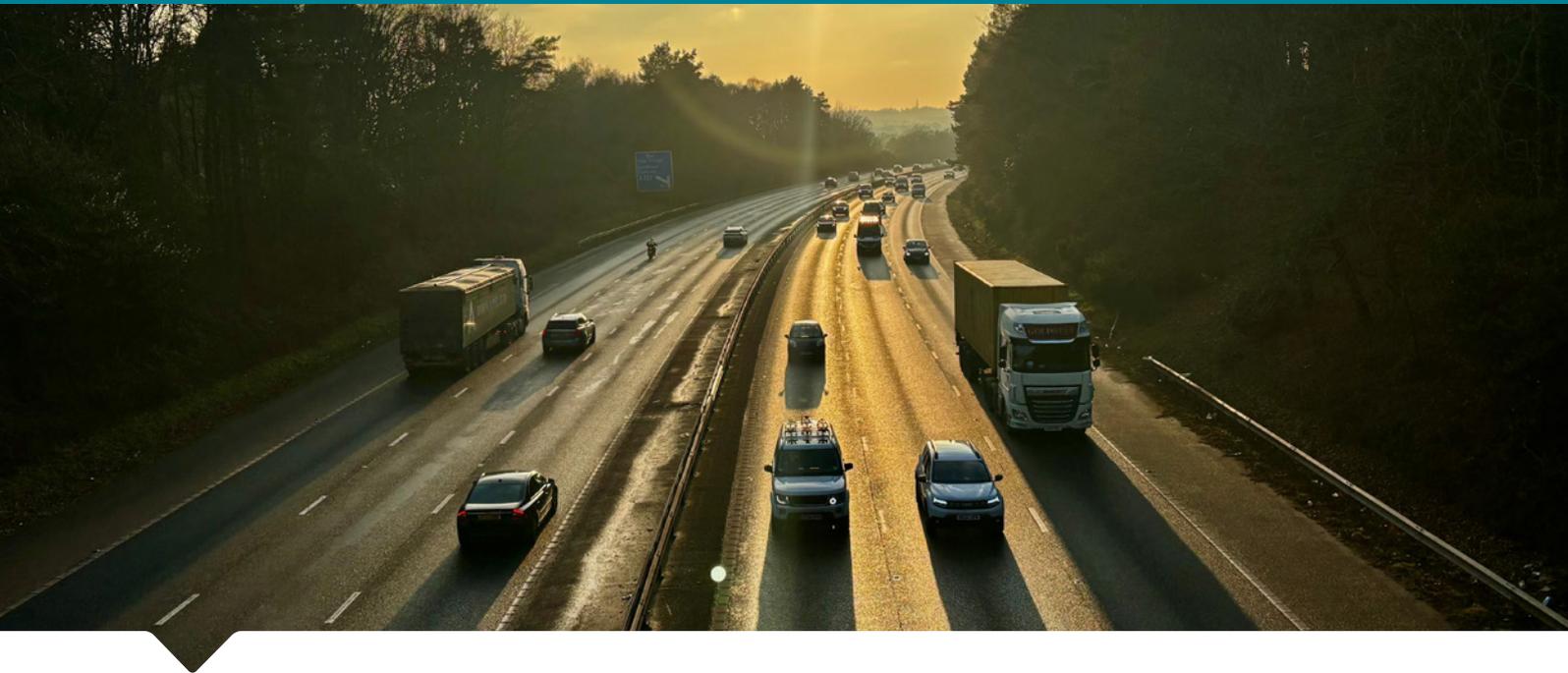
We will work collaboratively to identify opportunities to **carry out public engagement to better understand how our residents consider and manage their personal indoor air quality**. This could include surveys to find out views on issues including indoor pollutants, mould, and particulate matter to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

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<sup>25</sup> 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

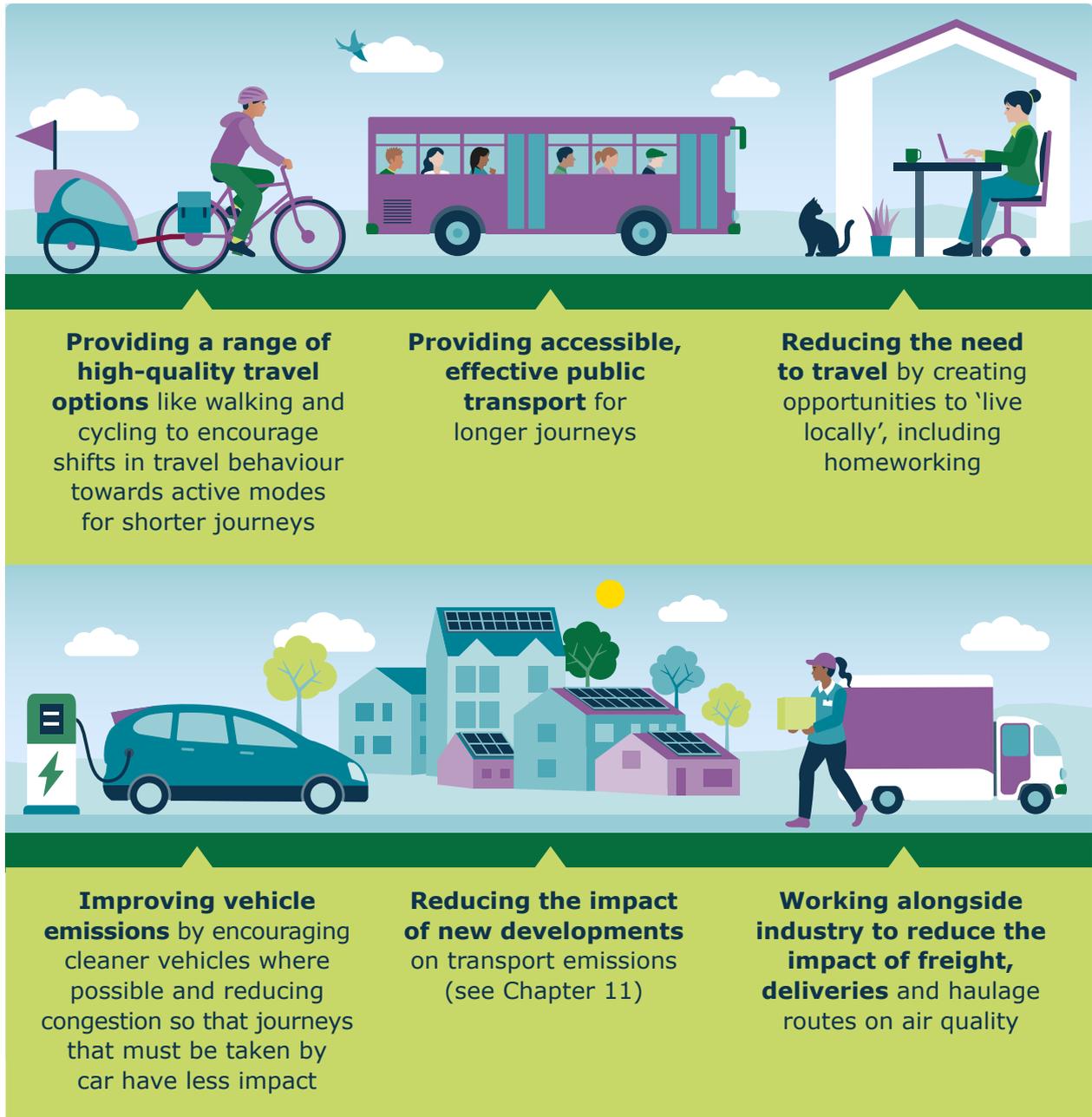
Road traffic emissions have reduced substantially in recent years due to actions and abatement measures that New Forest District Council and Hampshire County Council have implemented, combined with technological advances prompted by vehicle emission standards and other measures and policies enacted by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

However, **road transport is still the largest source of emissions of NO<sub>x</sub> and NO<sub>2</sub> in the New Forest and is a major contributor to particulate emissions.** Just under two-thirds of NO<sub>x</sub> pollution in the New Forest comes from road transport, and the highest measured NO<sub>2</sub> 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**



## 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<sup>26</sup> 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.

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<sup>26</sup> 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)<sup>27</sup> 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)<sup>28</sup> 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)<sup>29</sup> 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.<sup>30</sup>

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](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<sup>26</sup> and the Hampshire Enhanced Partnership Plan<sup>31</sup> 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.

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<sup>31</sup> 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**<sup>32</sup> 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**<sup>33</sup> 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.<sup>34</sup>

### 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.

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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](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**<sup>35</sup> sets out how the council aims to balance growth with conservation efforts.
- **The New Forest District Council Tree Strategy 2020-2025**<sup>36</sup> 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**<sup>37</sup> 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.

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

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

<sup>37</sup> 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**

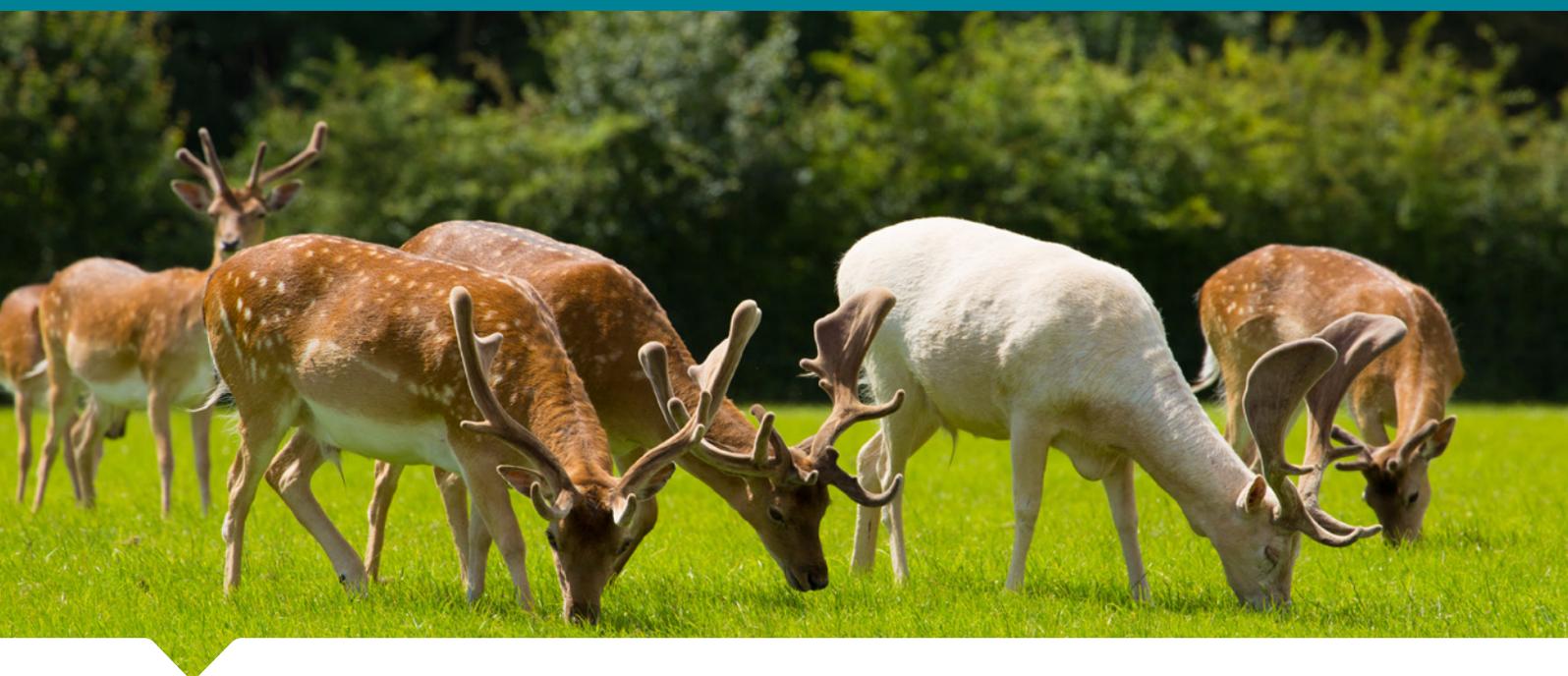
Sharing resources will allow us to help tackle air quality on a regional level. We hope to align our approach to planning and permitting for new developments across the District, including the National Park area, and contribute to the development of air quality policies across the region to address regional 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	<a href="https://www.newforest.gov.uk/airquality">https://www.newforest.gov.uk/airquality</a>
New Forest Corporate Plan	Provides context for the policies on air quality in the new forest	<a href="#">Corporate plan 2024 to 2028.pdf (newforest.gov.uk)</a>
New Forest District Council Monitoring Data	A map of the data collected by the continuous air quality monitoring stations in the New Forest	<a href="https://www.airqualityengland.co.uk/local-authority/?la_id=236">https://www.airqualityengland.co.uk/local-authority/?la_id=236</a>

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	<a href="https://www.newforest.gov.uk/article/2934/Air-Quality-in-New-Development">https://www.newforest.gov.uk/article/2934/Air-Quality-in-New-Development</a>
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	<a href="https://documents.hants.gov.uk/transportWatersideTransportStrategy-ETEDecisionDayReportAppendix.pdf">https://documents.hants.gov.uk/transportWatersideTransportStrategy-ETEDecisionDayReportAppendix.pdf</a>
New Forest National Park Cycling Routes	Contains maps of cycling routes in the New Forest National Park	<a href="https://www.forestryengland.uk/sites/default/files/documents/New-Forest_Cycle-Routes-Map_2021_0.pdf">https://www.forestryengland.uk/sites/default/files/documents/New-Forest_Cycle-Routes-Map_2021_0.pdf</a>
New Forest National Park – Sustainable Transport	Details the investments made by the National Park in sustainable travel schemes and infrastructure	<a href="https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/conservation/climate-and-nature-emergency/sustainable-transport/">https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/conservation/climate-and-nature-emergency/sustainable-transport/</a>
The Environment Centre – Wood Burning	Provides information on wood burning, and how to burn better	<a href="https://environmentcentre.com/wood-burning/">https://environmentcentre.com/wood-burning/</a>
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	<a href="https://environmentcentre.com/the-environment/clean-air/">https://environmentcentre.com/the-environment/clean-air/</a>
Hampshire County Council – Climate Change Strategy	Provides information on the County’s Climate Change Strategy	<a href="https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/environment/climatechange">https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/environment/climatechange</a>
UK Health Security Agency	Provides information about the health impacts of air pollution	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-air-pollution/health-matters-air-pollution">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-air-pollution/health-matters-air-pollution</a>
Defra Air Pollution Forecast	Defra’s air pollution forecast tool provides the latest outlook for air quality across the UK	<a href="https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/forecasting/">https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/forecasting/</a>