

# BreATHe

Tackling air pollution in Bath and North East Somerset

February 2018 Update 1

## Everybody has the right to clean air

Clean air is one of the most basic requirements of a healthy environment for us all to live, work and bring up families. But with more vehicles on our roads, we face an ongoing challenge to keep Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) from exceeding accepted levels at a number of sites in the area at peak times.

We take air quality seriously – and since 2002 we've been monitoring levels and putting in place measures to tackle hotspots – regularly listening to and acting on resident's concerns and ideas. This work is published in our Air Quality Action Plans (AQAPs) for Bath, Keynsham and Saltford, and informs strategies for planning and transport.

## Bath Breathes 2021

Despite this, it's clear that more needs to be done – and urgently. Last year, the Government issued the Council with a directive to reduce the levels of NO<sub>2</sub> being recorded at our London Road monitoring station.

This means that we now have access to Government funds and expertise (not normally available to us) to further investigate and implement some of the



suggestions, recently put forward by residents and stakeholders, to improve air quality.

To comply, we need to agree a plan of action by December 2018 to reduce levels of NO<sub>2</sub> at London Road to within accepted limits. Improvements must be realised 'in the shortest possible time' and by 2021 at the latest, and the project should also improve air quality at other hotspots in Bath. This is in line with the Government's own National Air Quality Plan and objectives.

Throughout the year, we'll assess a range of measures capable of reducing vehicle emissions quickly, and encouraging greener modes of travel. We'd value regular feedback from residents and stakeholders, so please join the conversation and have your say. You can find out more overleaf and online.

## Does Air Quality matter?

**Yes it does.** Air pollution is associated with a number of adverse health impacts, particularly respiratory conditions, and is recognised as a contributing factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer. It particularly affects the most vulnerable in society – children and older people, and those with heart and lung conditions – and is often associated with less affluent areas of towns and cities. It's therefore both a health and equalities issue.

## Join the conversation

- Go to [www.bathnes.gov.uk/breathe](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/breathe)
- Follow us on Twitter and Facebook  
 [twitter.com/bathnes](https://twitter.com/bathnes)  [www.facebook.com/bathnes](https://www.facebook.com/bathnes)
- Find us using [#bathbreathes2021](https://twitter.com/bathbreathes2021)
- Attend our workshops and drop-ins
- Keep up-to-date with our regular Breathe Newsletter

**Bath & North East  
Somerset Council**



## What pollutants affect the area?

The source of air pollution in our region is overwhelmingly from vehicles, and in particular high levels of NO<sub>2</sub> caused by emissions. Areas of poor air quality tend to be very localised, where vehicles move slowly through built-up areas (NO<sub>2</sub> hotspots).

NO<sub>2</sub> pollution exceeds acceptable levels (40 µg/m<sup>3</sup>) at places along the major road networks within Bath (e.g. annual average readings at London Road are 69 µg/m<sup>3</sup>), at Keynsham High Street and a small section of the A4 in Salford.

New monitoring sites in the Temple Cloud area also show exceedances. Pollution from particulate matter does not exceed acceptable levels in our area.

Whilst there are plans to tackle poor air quality wherever it

exists, some areas of Bath are of particular concern because of the high level of vehicle movements in a built-up area.

## What are we already doing to help?

Because our pollution is caused by vehicles, the focus of our work is on reducing vehicle emissions and encouraging greener modes of travel, such as walking, cycling and taking public transport.

Our routine monitoring work includes:

- 96 NO<sub>2</sub> monitoring sites across the area. When improvements are necessary, we designate air quality management areas (AQMAs) under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 and the Air Quality (Standards) Regulations 2010.
- Annual reports for Defra and live data on the website for anybody to see.

- Producing Air Quality Action Plans (AQAPs) in consultation with residents and stakeholders, with objectives, actions and links to strategies for improving air quality.
- Aligning our planning and transport strategies with our AQAPs.
- Using our measurements and readings to assess the viability of new developments as part of the planning process.

To see live data from our monitoring sites and download the latest AQAPs for Bath, Keynsham and Salford, go to <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/environment/pollution/air-quality>

## What's contributing to NO<sub>2</sub> in Bath?

**We're currently gathering fresh data via an ANPR survey (see overleaf), but as of 2016, the calculated source of nitrogen oxides at London Road, based on national vehicle fleet composition data, is as follows:**

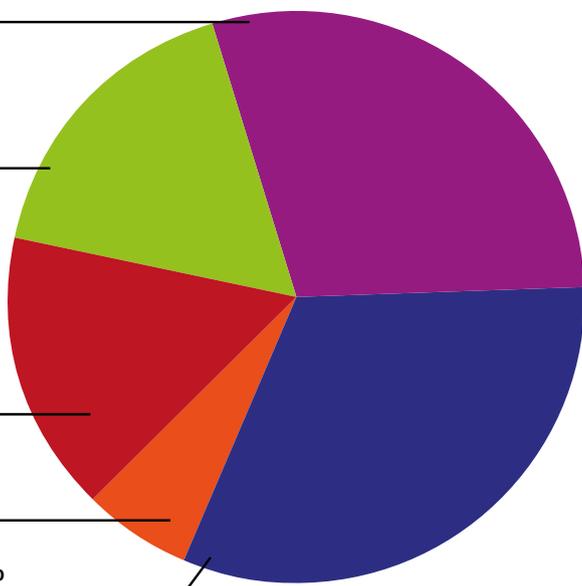
HGV 29%

LGV 17%

Buses & Coaches 16%

Petrol Cars 6%

Diesel Cars 32%



## Ideas from the public

Ideas to improve air quality, put forward by residents and stakeholders during the consultation on Bath's Air Quality Action Plan, include:

- Improvements to public transport
- Active travel – walking and cycling
- Green infrastructure
- Pedestrian areas or traffic free streets
- Switch to low emission or electric vehicles
- Anti-idling ban or zones
- Review the current parking system
- A Clean Air Zone

These measures and others are included in our long list of over 60 options currently being considered.

## What's the impact of the National Air Quality Plan?

The Government is equally concerned about the impact of NO<sub>2</sub> on health, and has identified 29 local authorities that need help to tackle hotspots and reduce levels of pollution by 2021.

B&NES Council is included in the plan, which means we're legally bound to reduce the levels of NO<sub>2</sub> recorded at the nationally-linked London Road monitor in 'the shortest possible time'. In doing this work, we also aim to improve air quality at other NO<sub>2</sub> hotspots in Bath.

This work is a priority and will happen alongside meeting our objectives for air quality improvements already laid out in our action plans for Bath, Saltford and Keynsham.

The Government has set a clear framework for the steps we need to take and is providing a total of £255m nationally to help local authorities to develop and implement their plans.

Funding and plans will only be approved if:

- the impact on health, local residents and businesses has been assessed
- proposals demonstrate value for money
- they enable sufficient improvements to air quality in the shortest possible time.

## What needs to be done?

By the end of December 2018, we must have decided on our final package of measures for improving air quality and reducing the levels of NO<sub>2</sub> in Bath by 2021 (at the latest).

To reach this point, we need to:

- Use emissions data, Bath AQAP work and the results of our Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) Survey to develop a long list of possible measures to reduce pollution and improve air quality
- Assess the likely benefits, impact and effectiveness of these measures and create a short list of the best packages by March 2018
- Engage with the public and stakeholders and fully assess the impacts of this short list to select a preferred package
- Seek public views on the preferred package
- Further design the scheme with input from the community to develop the final proposals
- Submit the final package of measures for approval by the Government by December 2018.

Our focus is on measures that can reduce vehicle emissions and encourage greener modes of travel, and we'll engage the public throughout.

Along with benefits to health, residents and local businesses, the final package must demonstrate value for money.



“We see this as a unique opportunity to not only access significant funds and expertise for improvements in central Bath, but to use what we learn from feasibility studies and modelling to improve air quality across the region.”



## ANPR Survey

Over a two-week period in October and November 2017, we completed an Automatic Number Plate Recognition Survey across Bath, using cameras to track the types, frequency and movements of vehicles around the city.

This extensive data has been sent to Defra for analysis to help assess the impact of different types of measures which could improve air quality at NO<sub>2</sub> hotspots in Bath.

## How will the work be funded and agreed?

All of the work required to comply with the directive will be funded by central Government, so these costs will not fall on the Council or the local tax payer. We've already been awarded £100,000 to set up the programme and run the feasibility study. We've also been promised additional funding of over £1m to work up and put together our detailed proposals. We will apply for additional funds as we need it, demonstrating how our plans meet the Government's criteria.

## How can the public get involved?

Despite the short time frame, we want to give stakeholders and the public plenty of opportunity to ask questions and offer their views.

Along with two formal engagement periods, we'll continually talk with stakeholders and the public from February 2018, starting with a series of drop-in sessions, workshops and other events. We'll

also build on the regular contact we've had with interested parties over the Bath AQAP.

This regular newsletter, a dedicated web page at [www.bathnes.gov.uk/breathe](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/breathe) and social media ([#bathbreathes2021](https://twitter.com/bathbreathes2021)), will also keep you informed.

Throughout, we'll liaise with neighbouring local authorities and the West of England Combined Authority (WECA), recognising that solutions will undoubtedly involve our partners.

## Key dates

- Deadline to present an assessment of the long list of options and a short list of the best package of measures – March 2018
- Deadline to present an assessment of the short list, and a preferred package of measures – September 2018
- Deadline to present the design of the proposed final package with a full business case – December 2018

## Upcoming events

### Bath Breathes 2021 Drop-in session

Find out more about our plans to tackle NO<sub>2</sub> in Bath by 2021.

**Wednesday 21 February 2018,  
1.00-5.30pm, Widcombe Social Club, Widcombe Hill, BA2 6AA**

For further advice and queries please contact [environmental\\_monitoring@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:environmental_monitoring@bathnes.gov.uk)