EASTSUFFOLK
COUNCIL

AIR QUALITY STRATEGY

2025 - 2030

Foreword

This updated Air Quality Strategy sets out East Suffolk Council's vision for improving air quality within our district. We are all increasingly aware of the dangers to health and the environment posed by air pollution, and with the introduction of the most recent World Health Organisations Air Quality Guidelines in 2021[1] East Suffolk wants to do more. This strategy will enable us to protect both the health of all who live, work in and visit the district, together with our environment. It aims to seek continued improvements in air quality within the East Suffolk district for our communities, reflects the strategic framework for air quality set out by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)[2][3] and encompasses the new goals for reduction in $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations across the board[4].

In November 2023, East Suffolk Council's new Strategic Plan 'Our Direction 2028'[5] was approved. The plan sets 'Environmental Impact' as one of four main priorities and reflects our commitment to working with residents, businesses and other stakeholders to achieve our goals. East Suffolk believes that clean air must be a basic right for all, and by threading air quality considerations into our work we believe we can maintain the quality of air within East Suffolk and make improvements where possible.

Cllr Sally Noble

Cabinet Member with responsibility for The Environment

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List of abbreviations

AQAP	Air Quality Action Plan
AQMA	Air Quality Management Area
AQO	Air Quality Objective
AQS	Air Quality Strategy
ASR	Annual Status Report
COPD	Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
DCO	Development Consent Order
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DfT	Department for Transport
EA1N	East Anglia ONE North offshore windfarm
EA2	East Anglia TWO offshore windfarm
EA3	East Anglia THREE offshore windfarm
ESC	East Suffolk Council
EV	Electric Vehicle
GP	General Practitioner
LTP	Local Transport Plan
NHS	National Health Service
NO_2	Nitrogen Dioxide
NO_x	Nitrogen Oxides
NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
PHOF	Public Health Outcome Framework
PM_{10}	Coarse particulate matter of diameter 2.5-10µm
$PM_{2.5}$	Fine particulate matter of diameter<2.5µm
SCC	Suffolk County Council
SCCP	Suffolk Climate Change Partnership
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
SZC	Sizewell C
UKHSA	UK Health Security Agency

Introduction

We are fortunate in that the air quality in our district generally exceeds the expectations set out by the Government[4][6]. Our first Air Quality Strategy was published in 2021[7] where much of our focus was needed on the 2 remaining Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) declared within the district (located in Woodbridge and Stratford St. Andrew). Since this time, we have been able to revoke both AQMAs (September 2022 and December 2024) following a trend of reducing nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) concentrations at these sites. Our NO_2 air quality monitoring programme confirms the trend of reducing concentrations to be across the whole district, with the highest recorded annual mean level in 2024 being at 25.4 µg/m^3 – significantly below the national air quality objective of 40µg/m^3.

Many pollutants found outside are also found indoors. As outdoor air pollution levels decrease, the percentage contribution that indoor air quality makes towards population health impacts will increase - and so our focus must also include those sources.

East Suffolk believes the ability to breathe clean air should be a fundamental right for all residents, and therefore the focus of this updated Air Quality Strategy is to maintain and seek continued improvements in air quality within the district. This will in turn enable us to protect the environment and the many differing ecological habitats that exist within East Suffolk. It reflects the strategic framework for air quality set out by Defra in 2023[3] and encompasses the Government's new goals for reduction in concentrations of fine particulate matter of a diameter less than 2.5 microns ($PM_{2.5}$) across the board[4].

Reductions in air pollution require global, national, regional and local action and it is important that it is tackled at all levels.

Vision

To maintain and improve air quality for all residents, workers and visitors in East Suffolk, and in turn improve the environment together with health and wellbeing.

Strategic Objectives

Protect Public Health and the Environment: Maintain and where possible reduce concentrations of air pollutants within East Suffolk to help protect residents and our ecology from the harmful effects of air pollution.

Lead by example: Improve East Suffolk Council's own emissions performance ensuring council operations and procurement support our clean air goals.

Partnership Working: Continue to work closely with both internal and external partners, including our residents, to facilitate air quality improvements.

Engage and educate: Raise awareness of the importance of air quality with our communities and stakeholders and empower them to take action to reduce their own emissions and exposure.

In order to achieve our objectives, it is vital that we work closely with both internal and external partners. These include East Suffolk Council spatial planning, development control, and the environment and climate change teams; Suffolk County Council Public Health and Communities, Highways and Transport Planning; other local authorities; local developers; local businesses and very importantly our residents.

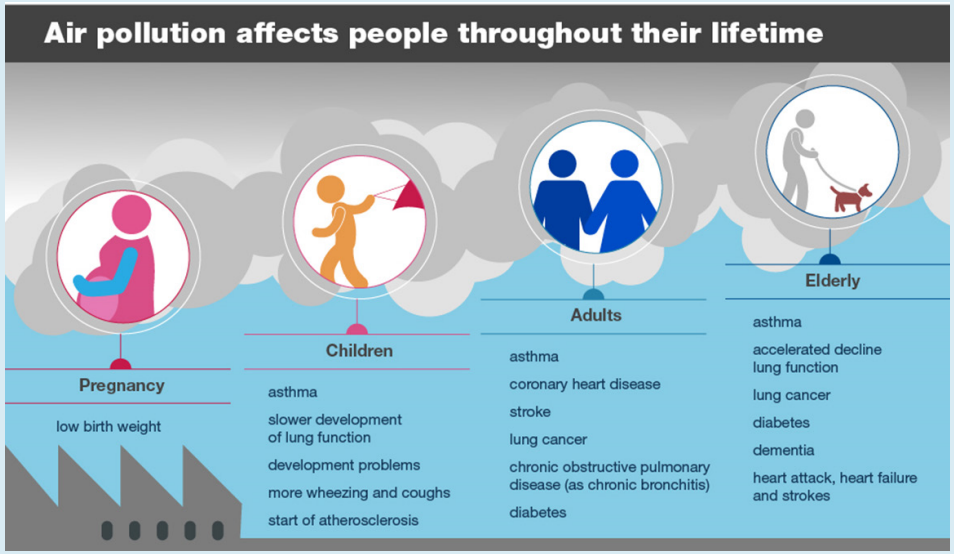
Air Quality and Health

In July 2025 the UK Government set out its 10 Year Health Plan for England[8] in which it recognised air pollution as a health issue that impacts all of us, and as a social determinant of health with working class communities most exposed to harm. A 2022 report by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA)[9] advised that air pollution causes the equivalent of between 26,000 and 38,000 deaths per year in England alone. It also further contributes to chronic ill health. The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities estimate that between 2017 and 2025 the total cost to the NHS and social care system of air pollutants (fine particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide), for which there is more robust evidence for an association, will be £1.6 billion.[10]

Air pollution can cause and worsen health effects in all individuals, particularly society's most vulnerable populations (the very young; older people; those with underlying health conditions; and pregnant women). The infographic in Figure 1 details the potential health implications at different life stages. Long-term exposure to air pollution can cause chronic conditions such as cardiovascular and respiratory diseases as well as lung cancer, leading to reduced life expectancy. Short-term increases in levels of air pollution can also cause a range of health impacts, including effects on lung function, exacerbation of asthma, increases in respiratory and cardiovascular hospital admissions and mortality.[9][11]

The UKHSA in their 'Health Matters: Air Pollution' 2018 guidance[11] advise that emerging evidence suggests air pollution may also affect the brain and is possibly linked to dementia and cognitive decline. There is also emerging evidence associating air pollution with early life effects such as low birth weight.

Figure 1: Potential effects of air pollution through different stages of life



Source: UKHSA guidance - Health Matters: Air Pollution, November 2018[11]

The Suffolk County Council (SCC) Air Quality Strategy 2023[12] advises that areas experiencing poorer air quality are often strongly correlated with inequalities, and deprivation, and are more likely to experience adverse health effects from poor air quality for a number of reasons:

- Poorer air quality in Suffolk to date is often related to traffic volume and congestion
- Housing prices are generally lower around busy roads with traffic congestion and those on the lowest incomes typically live in these areas

- Lower priced housing is often linked with poorer housing quality and poorer indoor air quality (from sources such as damp and mould, inefficient heating and cooking systems, poor insulation or ventilation and use of solid fuel for heating).
- People living in these areas are less likely to live close to well-maintained green spaces associated with lower levels of air pollution, increased physical activity, and improved mental wellbeing.
- These groups are disproportionately exposed to poor air quality and are also more likely to have pre-existing health conditions which make them more susceptible to the health impacts of air pollution.

Deprivation, as determined by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government[13], is difficult to compare across Suffolk, however East Suffolk will use a targeted approach to consider health and inequalities across the district.

Public Health Data for East Suffolk

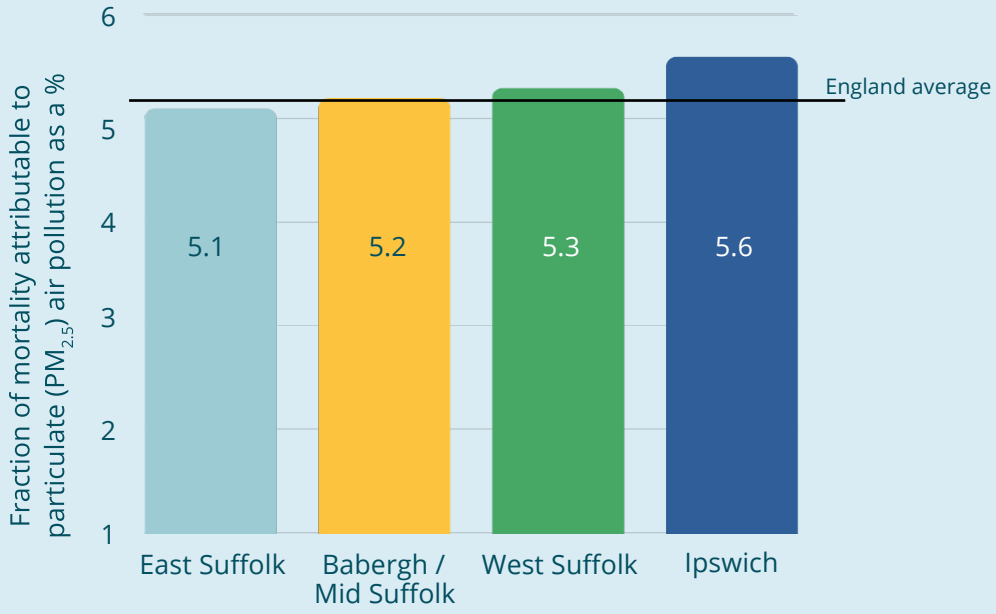
The Public Health Outcome Framework (PHOF) is a set of indicators compiled by the Department of Health and Social Care to measure how effectively the activities of each local authority are addressing the determinants of health[14].

Within the PHOF there is one indicator which specifically measures the impact of air pollution on health - the fraction of mortality attributable to particulate ($PM_{2.5}$) air pollution. 2023 data represented in Figure 2 shows that East Suffolk has a value of 5.1% which is the lowest of all Suffolk local authorities and also lower than the whole of England average (5.2%). However, while this measure is one indicator of the possible health impacts of air pollution, it does not indicate a direct causal link. Particulate matter is one of many factors contributing to ill health and death, alongside other pollutants and other factors impacting health.

However, 2023 data from Suffolk GP surgeries (on SCC's Place Based Needs dashboard[15]) indicates that the prevalence of asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is higher in East Suffolk than the England average. The GP surgeries with the highest prevalence were located in Lowestoft, Reydon, Beccles and Bungay. Urban centres with the highest indicators of multiple deprivation also had the highest prevalence of asthma and COPD as reported by SCC Public Health & Communities. People with asthma and COPD are particularly susceptible to the health impacts of air pollution.

Taken together, while air pollution levels are falling, and mortality rates associated with particulate matter are lower in East Suffolk than the England average, recent studies suggest that there is no safe level of fine particles, and the higher prevalence of asthma and COPD in some areas of East Suffolk means that we must continue to reduce air pollution levels.

Figure 2 - Public Health Outcomes Framework: Fraction of mortality to attributable to particulate ($PM_{2.5}$) air pollution as a %



Alignment with key policies

This strategy aligns with national, regional and local policies, plans and strategies that either directly or indirectly relate to the improvement of air quality. Targets and interventions at each of these levels are key to tackling air pollution, it cannot be achieved in isolation and many of the changes needed fall within the remit of our wider partners. Figure 3, below, details the national, regional and local policy, plans and strategies of relevance for tackling air pollution within East Suffolk.

Figure 3 - Layers of policy, plans and strategies of relevance to this Air Quality Strategy

National

Environment Act 1995[16] and 2021[4]

Air Quality Strategy: framework for local authority delivery 2023[3]

Local Air Quality Management Policy Guidance 2022[17]

UK Government's 10 Year Health Plan for England[18]

Regional (Suffolk wide)

Suffolk Air Quality Strategy and Action Plan 2023[12]

Suffolk Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2027[20]

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Suffolk[21]

Suffolk Guidance for Parking 2023[22]

Suffolk Climate Change Partnership

The Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan[23]

Local Transport Plan 2025-2040[19]

- Beccles Area Transport Plan 2025
- Felixstowe Area Transport Plan 2025
- Lowestoft Area Transport Plan 2025
- Saxmundham and Leiston Area Transport Plan 2025
- Woodbridge Area Transport Plan 2025

Local – East Suffolk Council Plans, Strategies and documents

East Suffolk Strategic Plan – Our Direction 2028[5]

East Suffolk Council Suffolk Coastal Local Plan[24]
East Suffolk Council Waveney Local Plan[25]
Sustainable Construction Supplementary Planning Document[26]
Healthy Environments Supplementary Planning Document[27]

Cycling and Walking Strategy[28]

Housing Strategy[29]
Warm Homes Healthy People Initiative

Economic Strategy[30]

Air Quality Strategy (this document)
Environmental Impact Strategy[31]
Clean Hydrogen Strategy[32]

The National and Regional situation

National

Following delivery of the Environment Act 2021, the UK Government published an Air Quality Strategy: framework for local authority delivery in 2023[3]. This set out a range of actions to improve air quality across the country and specific expectations for the role of local authorities in the delivery of clean air. The Government's priorities through the framework are:

1. Planning reforms helping to deliver on air quality.
2. Building capacity in local councils through training, guidance and knowledge sharing.
3. Reducing emissions from industrial sources through improved enforcement of environmental permits.
4. Reducing pollution from domestic burning
5. Raising awareness within local communities of air quality impacts and how to reduce them.
6. Boosting active travel and public transport

Emerging themes from the framework include emissions from agriculture and indoor air quality. Action to reduce emissions from domestic burning will help tackle indoor air pollution, however it is also impacted by pollutants released indoors including from cleaning products, furniture and as the result of damp and mould, inefficient heating and cooking and ineffective insulation/ventilation. It is important to increase public awareness and knowledge on this issue.

Defra requires all local authorities to take proactive action to improve air quality whether or not they have an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) declared. If a local authority has no AQMAs, they must specify proactive measures they will take in an Air Quality Strategy (AQS). The AQS should be informed by local authorities monitoring and assessments.

In the UK Government's recent 10 Year Health Plan for England published July 2025[18], the Government have made commitments to reduce air pollution. They will deliver greener, safer and healthier transport including by decarbonisation of the transport system, clean technologies for roads, rail, aviation and maritime, and supporting active travel. They will look at action on domestic burning and improving standards in rented and low-income homes.

The Environment Act 2021[4] included two new legally binding, long-term targets for fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$): a 35% reduction in population exposure by 2040 (compared to 2018) and a maximum annual mean concentration of 10 micrograms per cubic meter ($\mu g/m^3$) across England by 2040. Local authorities are currently tasked with working towards these targets in the Government's Policy Guidance LAQM. PG22[17]. This Air Quality Strategy sets out the measures East Suffolk are taking.

Regional

Our Eastern region is a mixture of rural, agricultural and coastal uses with one large town – Ipswich and a number of other small urban centres which include Lowestoft and Felixstowe within East Suffolk. Therefore, the challenges and solutions around air quality are different to the national picture and most importantly larger urban centres.

The Director of Public Health for Suffolk has identified that close working between partners is essential in order to address air quality through all means available in order to reduce health risks across the board, not only within declared Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). The Suffolk Air Quality Strategy[12] was published in 2023, and recently updated in April 2025, it sets out the actions identified as being important to the improvement of air quality together with timescales for delivery. The regional policies listed in Figure 3 show the work being planned and carried out on a Suffolk-wide scale in relation to air quality, health, climate change and transport.

The Local Transport Plan for Suffolk[19] has 5 associated Area Transport Plans within the East Suffolk district for Beccles, Felixstowe, Lowestoft, Saxmundham & Leiston and Woodbridge. The projects within the Area Plans include measures to support the development of sustainable travel options for residents and visitors to these locations so that they become more attractive and realistic choices for all.

All local authorities within Suffolk measure levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) within their districts and all are experiencing the same trend as East Suffolk - reducing concentrations over time. All Suffolk authorities have historically declared AQMAs for annual mean NO_2 concentrations. East Suffolk Council's remaining AQMA was revoked December 2024; West Suffolk revoked their remaining AQMA located in Great Barton in 2025; Babergh District Council is currently seeking Defra approval to start the revocation process for their only AQMA in Cross Street in Sudbury; and Ipswich Borough Council (the most intensively trafficked town in Suffolk) were able to revoke the first of their AQMAs in 2025 with monitoring results for the remaining three AQMAs all falling below the Air Quality Objectives in 2024.

Even with the trend of reducing concentrations, it is key that we still strive to reduce air pollution further.

The Local situation in East Suffolk

Figure 3 shows the plans, policies and strategies in place for East Suffolk Council that will all have an impact on reducing air pollution within the district.

Sources

The key air pollutants in East Suffolk in terms of this strategy are nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) and particulate matter. Particulate matter is classified in terms of particle size and those of relevance are: PM_{10} (particles smaller than 10 micrometres in diameter); and $PM_{2.5}$ (smaller than 2.5 micrometres in diameter).

It is important to note with regard to particulate matter, and specifically $PM_{2.5}$, that sources can be either 'Primary' – emitted as particles, or 'Secondary' – formed in the atmosphere through changes in pollutants and reactions between them. Particulate matter comes from both human activity and natural sources (some examples include pollen, dust, ash and sea-spray). Defra advise that around half of the particulate matter concentrations that people in the UK are exposed to come from naturally occurring sources, or are transported to the UK from long distances – international shipping and other countries[33]. Due to the small size of $PM_{2.5}$ particles this pollutant is able to be transmitted over very long distances and can easily travel across from the continent or farther afield (for example Saharan dust episodes).

The pie charts in Figure 4 show the sources of NO_2, PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ within the East Suffolk district (derived from the UK National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory[34]) arising from human activity – the emissions that we may be able to impact at a local level.

The main sources of each pollutant can be seen to differ considerably:

- NO_2 – main sources are road transport and shipping followed by domestic combustion and agriculture & farming
- PM_{10} – main sources are agriculture & farming and production processes followed by domestic combustion and road transport.
- $PM_{2.5}$ – this pollutant has a larger number of different sources. The main source is domestic combustion followed by road transport, combustion in manufacturing, energy & transformation industry and waste collection, treatment & disposal activities.

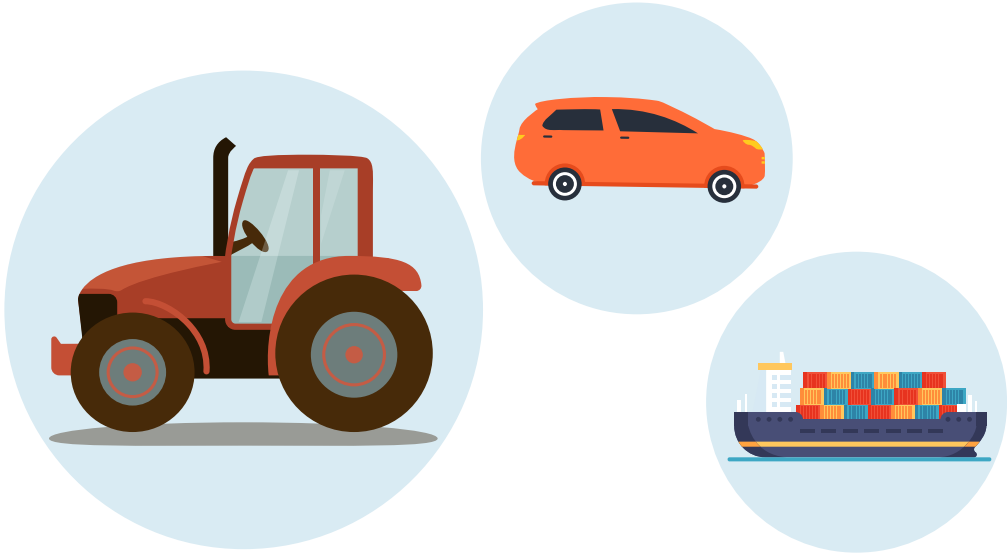
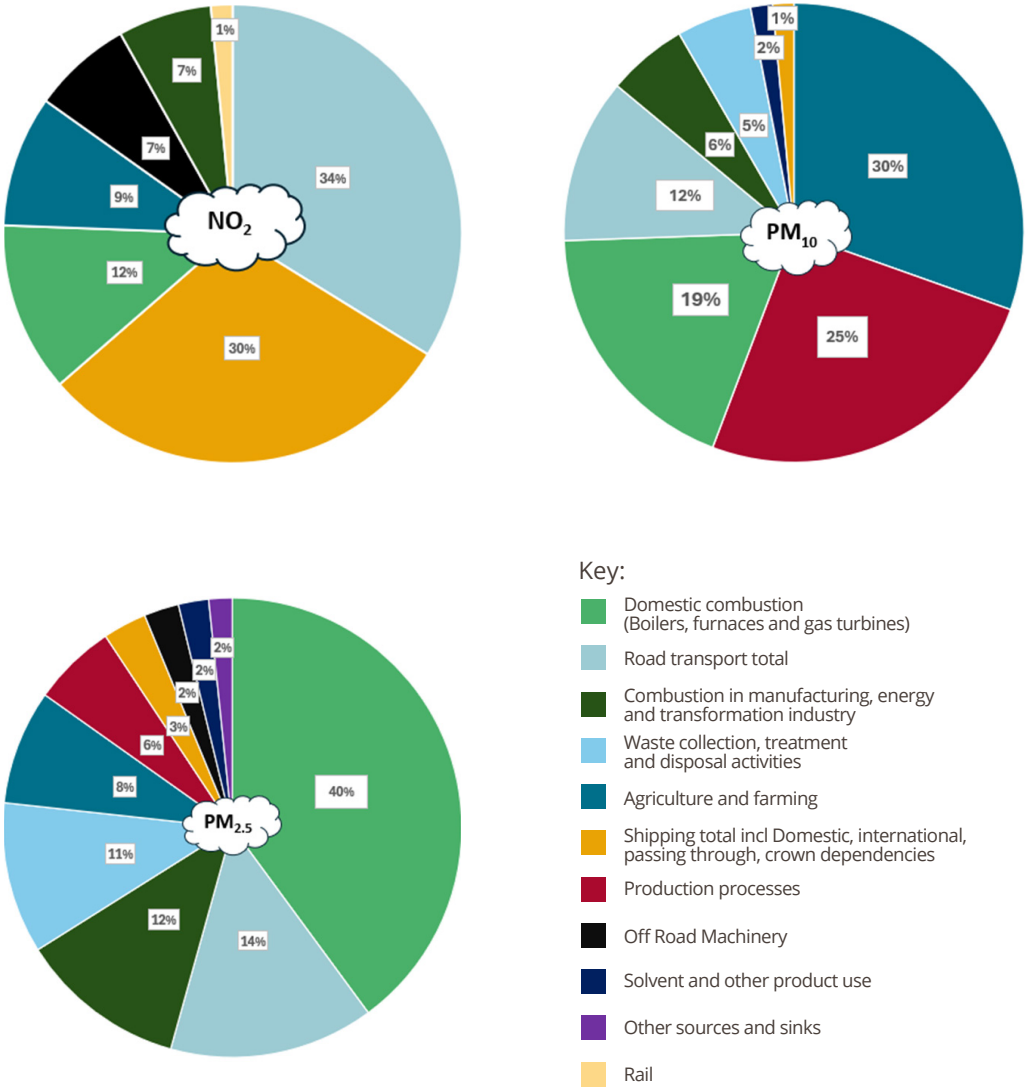


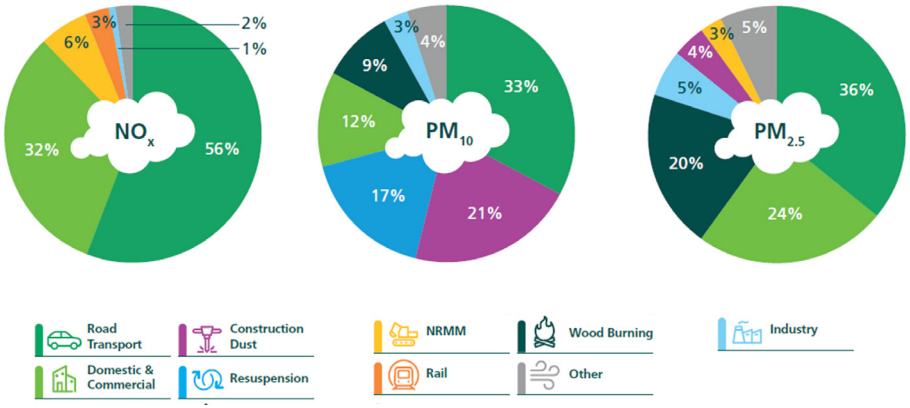
Figure 4 – Emission sources of NO_2, PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ from human activities within the East Suffolk district derived from The UK National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory (NAEI)[34]



As discussed earlier, East Suffolk has a very different set of air pollution sources, and therefore challenges, than a larger urban centre. Primary air pollutant sources from a typical urban environment, as reported in Ealing's Air Quality Strategy[35], can be seen in Figure 5 below and show the main source of all three pollutants (NO_x, PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$) to be from road transport with domestic and commercial sources being the second largest source of NO_x and $PM_{2.5}$ and construction dust being the second largest source of PM_{10}.

It is very important that East Suffolk's targeted interventions focus on solutions to our local needs, and as shown these will need to be different to those adopted by other local authorities with larger urban centres.

Figure 5 – Primary emission sources of NO_x, $PM_{2.5}$ and PM_{10} in Ealing (taken from Ealing Council Air Quality Strategy 2022-2030[35])



In 2025 within East Suffolk;

Air quality Monitoring

- 76 diffusion tube sites monitoring concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) covering 24 areas within the district. There is a general trend of annual mean NO_2 reductions across the district over time and 2024 monitoring results showed no exceedances of the annual mean air quality objective for the 8th year running.
- 2 continuous air quality sensors, moved annually around the district, located within Beccles and Trimley St. Mary in 2025 measuring concentrations of NO_2 and particulate matter. 2024 monitoring results for Worlingham and Lowestoft (Love Road) showed no exceedances of any air quality objective for NO_2 or particulate matter.
- 1 national monitoring site at Sibton which began measurement of PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ in 2024. 2024 monitoring results showed no exceedances of any air quality objective for particulate matter.

ESC OPCube continuous air quality sensor measuring NO_2, PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$

Diffusion tube measuring nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) deployed by ESC

Industrial Installations

108 industrial installations regulated by The Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016[36] which have the potential to cause air and environmental pollution. Processes are classified into 3 groups based on their polluting potential. A(1) installations are the highest risk and are regulated by the Environment Agency of which there are 48. Lower risk A(2) and Part B installations are regulated by East Suffolk Council of which there are 60.

There are 48 Part A(1) installations which include intensive farming (poultry and pigs), waste landfilling, slaughtering, combustion plant >50MW, surface treating of metals and plastics, generators and the disposal of non-hazardous waste

There is 1 Part A(2) which is a timber treatment process.

There are 59 Part B installations which include petrol stations, small waste incinerators, dry cleaners, paint spraying, cement and lime processes, roadstone and other coating activities, cremation, crushing and screening and other mineral activities.

Ports

Two Ports within its area:

1. The Port of Felixstowe is Britain's largest container Port handling approximately 45% of the UK's sea-bound freight. It has 9 berths across 2 terminals, 28 quay cranes and capability to handle the latest generation of mega vessels[37].

2. Lowestoft Port is the UK's most easterly port and is a major hub for servicing the region's energy sector, including offshore wind, oil & gas and nuclear as well as other industries such as fishing and leisure craft[38].

Nationally Significant Infrastructure projects (NSIPs)

- 1 completed NSIP – The Gull Wing Bridge in Lowestoft – completed September 2024.
- 4 consented NSIPs for which construction has now started – East Anglia ONE North (EA1N), East Anglia TWO (EA2) and East Anglia THREE (EA3) Offshore Windfarms and Sizewell C (SZC) nuclear power station. As part of the SZC project a number of associated developments are being delivered within the East Suffolk area including; 2 park and ride sites, a Two Villages bypass of the A12, the Sizewell Link Road, a new A12 roundabout at Yoxford, temporary Green Rail Route, Freight Management Centre and construction workers accommodation.
- 1 NSIP in the pre-examination phase – National Grid Electricity Transmission Sea Link submitted their planning application in March 2025 and the documents are currently being examined.
- 1 NSIP in the pre-application phase – National Grid Ventures LionLink for which statutory consultation is expected Autumn 2025.

These planned NSIPs will have sequential and overlapping construction periods and air quality impacts within East Suffolk have been and are continuing to be assessed.

We are aware that additional NSIP schemes may come forward in time. ESC will ensure that each assesses both its own impacts and those in combination with other planned and known development. We will work to ensure that any NSIPs provide the appropriate mitigation for impacts on air quality.

Local engagement

Local engagement with our stakeholders to help shape this Air Quality Strategy and identify the future actions for ESC is essential and has been undertaken in a number of different ways:

- Workshop sessions with our partners – an online workshop was held following communication of the draft document for a number of our key partners - SCC Public Health & Communities, Environment & Climate Change team at ESC, Planning & Building Control ESC and the Energy Projects team at ESC.
- One to one contact - with SCC Public Health & Communities, Environment & Climate Change team at ESC and Energy Projects team at ESC.

- Local public and stakeholder engagement via a survey monkey questionnaire was undertaken with help from the ESC Communications team at the start of 2025. 109 responses were received. Results from the survey are summarised below, a more detailed breakdown of the results is attached as Appendix A;
  - The top 5 pollution sources of greatest concern were: road transport, business & industry, construction sites, agriculture and domestic bonfires, fire pits & BBQs.
  - The top 5 actions for East Suffolk in relation to air pollution were: active travel improvement, access to air quality data, general education on air quality, increasing the use of public transport and information on the health impacts of air pollution.
- Two in-person events held on Clean Air Day in June 2025 to talk with the public about air pollution in general and gauge their thoughts.

Clean Air and Climate Change links

There are significant links between air quality and climate change. Many common air pollutants are also greenhouse gases and therefore reducing air pollution will lessen the warming effect on our climate. Climate change also worsens air quality in other ways: warmer temperatures can increase the concentration of pollutants close to the ground; wildfires associated with extended periods of hot and dry weather can significantly increase the levels of particulate matter in the atmosphere; flooding can increase the risk of damp and mould inside homes and buildings; and pollutant dispersal may be reduced through more frequent and prolonged stagnant weather conditions. Poor air quality and climate change therefore both have a direct impact on the health and wellbeing of our communities and the natural environment. Many measures and actions we could take to reduce emissions in one area will have a positive incidental impact on the other, for example by improving insulation, ventilation and the efficiency of heating and cooking systems in housing we can improve both indoor air quality and reduce carbon emissions. It is therefore essential that air quality and climate change action is closely aligned at East Suffolk.

East Suffolk Council declared a climate change emergency in July 2019 and responded with the ambition to become a net zero council by 2030. This includes all our buildings and the services we deliver for our communities, both directly and indirectly through our external partners such as our leisure providers. In June 2024 the East Suffolk Council Environmental Impact Strategy[31] was adopted which shows how East Suffolk are delivering over 100 climate change, sustainability and nature-related workstreams.

The Council is part of the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership (SCCP) which aspires to make Suffolk the greenest county. The Partnership works together with other local authorities, voluntary groups, communities and businesses across the county to help them reduce their energy consumption and improve our natural environment. The Suffolk Climate Change, Energy and Environment Board has been established which has overseen the development of the Suffolk Climate Emergency Action Plan[23]. This document details how all organisations will work together with communities and businesses to deliver the aspiration of net zero emissions in Suffolk.

Our local efforts to reduce air pollution, such as promoting active travel, improving public transport, and regulating industrial emissions will not only improve air quality but also help mitigate climate change by cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

Our achievements since the first Air Quality Strategy

East Suffolk Council's first Air Quality Strategy was produced in 2021[39]. Since its publication there have been a number of air quality achievements delivered by East Suffolk Council and its external partners – some of the highlights are listed in this section.

More information about each achievement is available in our Air Quality Annual Status Reports produced for Defra.

Air quality achievements by the East Suffolk Council Environmental Protection Team include:

- 4,280 planning applications considered for air quality implications (2021-2024)
- Revocation of the Air Quality Management Areas located in Woodbridge (2022) and Stratford St. Andrew (2024)
- Purchase of two air quality sensors to continuously measure nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter within the district.
- Annual social media campaigns on domestic burning to increase public awareness
- Work on Planning applications for the NSIPs – SZC and EA1N and EA2
- Permitting and inspection of industrial installations regulated by The Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016[36] located within East Suffolk
- Air Quality Theatres in Schools productions at 19 schools (in conjunction with SCC), together with air quality monitoring for nitrogen dioxide outside 31 schools to date.
- Annual participation in National Clean Air Day – the UK's largest air pollution campaign.

The team taking part in National Clean Air Day

Actions undertaken by internal partners include:

- Provision of electric vehicle charging and an electric and hybrid vehicle fleet at the ESC Port Health Office
- Installation of 199 Quiet Lanes covering 61 parishes in the ESC district in conjunction with SCC
- Production of ESC Strategies; Cycling and Walking Strategy 2022[28]; Clean Hydrogen Strategy 2023[32]; and the Environmental Impact Strategy 2024[31]
- Production of the Sustainable Construction Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 2022[26] and the Healthy Environments SPD 2024[27]
- Production of the ESC Local Validation List and guidance for planning applications[40]
- Demand Responsive Transport Schemes – Katch and Buzz About
- Reduced ESC licence fees for electric and hybrid taxis
- ESC and 'Go Jauntly' partnered to provide the app for the East Suffolk district which includes over 70 miles of walking trails.
- Suffolk Healthy Homes includes the Warm Homes Healthy People and Safe Suffolk Renters initiatives – helping our residents with damp, mould, cold homes and heating costs.

Actions undertaken by external partners include:

- Opening of the third Lake Lothing Crossing – Gull Wing Bridge in Lowestoft in 2024 by Suffolk County Council (SCC)
- Production of the Suffolk Local Transport Plan 2025-2040 (SCC)[19]
- SCC Plug in Suffolk – Phase 1 of additional EV charging across Suffolk
- Production of the SCC Suffolk Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy 2023[41]
- Production of the Suffolk AQ Strategy by SCC Public Health & Communities and creation of the Suffolk Air Quality Network[12]
- Three of the SCC temporary trial cycling improvements in ESC made permanent - Lowestoft Rd in Beccles between East of Beccles and Ellough Rd; Hamilton Rd in Felixstowe; and High Road East & West in Felixstowe.
- Suffolk Solar Together - 182 solar PV installations within East Suffolk delivered by the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership (including ESC) and private householders.
- SCC 'Free Wheels' trial - created a bike library for a school in Lowestoft, years 5 and 6 can borrow a bike, learn to ride and how to look after it. Trial successful and future funding accessed to provide 200-400 bikes to schools in Lowestoft and Ipswich.

Air Quality Strategy Action Plan

The Strategic Objectives of this Air Quality Strategy are to be achieved through a series of actions listed in the tables below under the 4 main headings. These summarise work already being achieved or planned for delivery to help the Council protect and, where necessary, improve air quality in East Suffolk.

It is anticipated that the Strategy Action Plan will develop as this policy area progresses to include emerging policy in the areas of energy, transport and regulation. East Suffolk Council's priorities around 'Environmental Impact' in our Strategic Direction 2028[5] will be central to our further air quality actions under this strategy.

The Action Plan will be updated periodically using an additional 'Progress' column detailing work on current measures and updates will be included in our Air Quality Annual Status Reports for Defra. Inclusion of any new measures will be provided in the updates.

Our Air Quality Strategic Objectives

Protect Public Health and the Environment

Lead by example

Partnership Working

Engage and educate

Action Plan

Strategic Objective: Protect Public Health and the Environment - Maintain and where possible reduce concentrations of pollutants

Action	Lead(s)	Timescale	Key Performance Indicator
Assessment of planning application and involvement in Development Consent Order (DCO) for National Grid Electricity Transmission Sea Link (NSIP)	• Environmental Protection ESC • Energy Projects ESC	On-going	Air quality considerations included in the planning process. Mitigation included to reduce associated emissions
Pre-application and application submission assessment of documents for National Grid Ventures LionLink (NSIP)	• Environmental Protection ESC • Energy Projects ESC	On-going	Air quality considerations included in the planning process Mitigation included to reduce associated emissions
Air quality considerations included in the new ESC Local Plan	• Environmental Protection ESC • Planning & Development Control ESC	On-going	Environmental Protection Team consulted Air quality considerations fed into the Local Plan
Respond to consultations on Neighbourhood Plans in respect of air quality considerations	• Environmental Protection ESC • Planning & Development Control ESC	On-going	Air quality considered in any Neighbourhood Plan consultations
Air quality compliance monitoring for Sizewell C DCO - ensuring developers comply with commitments made under the DCO	• Environmental Protection ESC	On-going	Attend monthly meetings Document and data checking
Enhanced air quality monitoring capability of ESC in relation to NSIPs - use of designated funding to purchase equipment	• Environmental Protection ESC • Planning & Development Control ESC	On-going	Purchase additional air quality monitoring equipment Conduct additional air quality monitoring to assess any NSIPs impact
Respond to complaints received about approved NSIP construction work	• Environmental Protection ESC	On-going	Percentage of complaints responded to within 3 days
Assessment of general planning applications for impact on air quality	• Environmental Protection ESC	On-going Appraised annually	Percentage of applications responded to within 21 working days

Action	Lead(s)	Timescale	Key Performance Indicator
Delivery of the ESC Cycling and Walking Strategy[28]	• Planning Policy and Local Plans ESC	On-going Appraised annually	Cycling and Walking projects delivered within ESC
ESC Clean Hydrogen Strategy[32] delivery – supporting and enabling the growing hydrogen sector in East Suffolk	• Economic Development ESC	On-going Appraised annually	Number of projects supported
Regulate and inspect premises requiring an Industrial Permit (Part A(2) and Part B)[36]	• Environmental Protection ESC	On-going Appraised annually	100% of annual inspections completed on time
Air Quality Annual Status Report submitted to Defra	• Environmental Protection ESC	Annual by 30th June	Completion of Annual Status Report and submission to Defra by 30th June
Annual NO2 diffusion tube monitoring programme	• Environmental Protection ESC	Annual	Monitoring programme undertaken No exceedances of the annual mean Air Quality Objective (AQO)
Annual monitoring with 2 air quality sensors (NO_2, PM_{10} & $PM_{2.5}$)	• Environmental Protection ESC	Annual	Sensors deployed No exceedances of the AQOs
Enhance our monitoring capability for NO_2, PM_{10} & $PM_{2.5}$ in relation to Sizewell C NSIP	• Environmental Protection ESC	Annual	Sensors purchased and deployed
Investigate and respond to air quality enquiries and concerns	• Environmental Protection ESC	On-going Appraised annually	100% of enquiries responded to within 3 days
Air quality assembly and resources produced by Natural England delivered to 2 schools within Lowestoft	• Environmental Protection ESC	Autumn/ Winter 2025	Assemblies and resources delivered
Raise the profile of our work on air quality	• Environmental Protection ESC	Monthly	Newsletter produced monthly for Members and made available on our website.
Find opportunities for local engagement with the farming and agricultural sector	• Environmental Protection ESC	On-going Appraised annually	Support Government initiatives to reduce the impact of intensive farming in the local area

Strategic Objective: Lead by example

Action	Lead(s)	Timescale	Key Performance Indicator
ESC Decarbonisation / Net Zero Plan update - reduction of carbon emissions from fleet, leisure centres and built assets	• Climate Change and Sustainability ESC	2025	Net Zero Officer appointed Annual reduction in greenhouse gas emissions until net zero is achieved, confirmed via the annual greenhouse gas public report and updates to the public KPI dashboard: Microsoft Power BI.
ESC Environment Task Group - cross party monitoring and accountability group	• Environment Task Group ESC	On-going appraised annually	10 monitoring meetings per year
Warm Homes Social Delivery Wave 3 project to retrofit 624 properties in ESC Housing Stock to improve energy efficiency	• Private Sector Housing ESC	2025-2028	624 ESC Housing Stock properties to meet Energy Performance Certificate standard of D or above.
ESC Leisure Centre Decarbonisation and retrofit programme – replace gas boilers with 100% renewable for energy usage.	• Asset Management ESC	2026	Measurable reduction in greenhouse gas emissions included in the annual greenhouse gas public report and updates to the public KPI dashboard: Microsoft Power BI.
Increase availability of Electric Vehicle charge points in ESC car parks across 13 major towns	• Asset Management ESC	2026	A minimum of two new public EV chargers in an ESC car park in each major town in East Suffolk by the end of 2026, supporting the reduction of internal combustion engine vehicle journeys.
Discounted annual license fee for electric and hybrid taxis	• Licensing ESC	On-going appraised annually	Number of discounted licenses for energy efficient vehicles
Demand responsive bus services trial – 'Katch' in Wickham Market area and 'Buzz About' in Lowestoft area	• Climate Change and Sustainability ESC	On-going appraised annually	On-going increase of rider numbers reported via public KPI Dashboard: Microsoft Power BI.
Increase bike parking within ESC car parks	• Climate Change and Sustainability ESC	On-going appraised annually	50 new secure cycle parking spaces (25 new cycle racks) installed in East Suffolk by end of 2026, reducing car journeys.
ESC Tree Strategy 2024 – initiative to plant 250,000 trees together with new hedgerows.	• Planning & Development Control ESC	2027	No. of trees planted Hedgerows created
Promotion of travel alternatives for ESC staff – tax free 'cycle to work' scheme, business miles cycling, pool EV vehicles, pool bikes, salary sacrifice scheme for EV or hybrid vehicle	• Human Resources ESC	On-going appraised annually	Number of tax free 'Cycle 2 Work scheme' bike purchases. Number of EV/hybrid vehicles purchased by staff

Strategic Objective: Work with our partners

Action	Lead(s)	Timescale	Key Performance Indicator
Delivery of the Suffolk Local Transport Plan 2025-2040 Area Action Plans[19] within ESC	• Transport Strategy Suffolk County Council (SCC)	2025- 2040	Delivery of listed schemes within Beccles, Felixstowe, Lowestoft, Saxmundham & Leiston and Woodbridge
Delivery of active travel project in Woodbridge	• Transport Strategy Suffolk County Council (SCC) • ESC	Unknown	Scheme delivered
Delivery of active travel project in Grange Road, Felixstowe	• Transport Strategy Suffolk County Council (SCC)	2026	Scheme delivered
Delivery of relevant actions in partnership with SCC from the Suffolk Air Quality Strategy and Action Plan[12]: • Deliver air quality and health information to clinical staff • Active member of the Suffolk Air Quality Network • Education campaigns on sources, health impacts and indoor air quality • Deliver a School Street within ESC • Support nature friendly farming on Suffolk County Farms Estate	• Public Health & Communities SCC • Environmental Protection ESC	2026	Delivery of a training programme to South Suffolk & North Essex Integrated Care Board clinical staff Production of a leaflet detailing air quality and health associations and information. Contribute to the work plan of the Suffolk Air Quality Network Education campaigns delivered Investigate the option of a School Street within ESC
Plug-In Suffolk to deliver on-street and community electric vehicle charging infrastructure with over 6,500 new public charge points.	• Plug-In Suffolk SCC	On-going appraised annually	Number of new charge points installed
Warm Homes Local Delivery Suffolk to improve the least energy efficient properties in the county using £4.62 million funding for ESC.	• Public Health & Communities SCC • Private Sector Housing ESC	On-going appraised annually	Number of properties with alterations undertaken in ESC

Action	Lead(s)	Timescale	Key Performance Indicator
Suffolk Healthy Homes programme to improve living conditions (particularly damp and mould), reduce health inequalities (fuel poverty) and promote better health.	• Suffolk Healthy Homes • Public Health & Communities SCC • Private Sector Housing ESC	On-going appraised annually	Number of ESC properties engaged with
Suffolk Solar Together – assisting private householders to install solar PV	• Suffolk Climate Change Partnership • ESC	On-going appraised annually	Number of solar PV installations
Suffolk Air Quality Group – close working with other neighbouring local authorities and agencies on air quality	• All Suffolk District and Borough Councils • Environmental Protection ESC	On-going	Contribute to the work plan of the Suffolk Air Quality Group
Saxmundham, Woodbridge and Melton train station improvements with increased bike parking, accessibility and ease of use	• Transport Strategy SCC	2026	Improvements completed

Strategic Objective: Engage and educate

Action	Lead(s)	Timescale	Key Performance Indicator
Improve access to local air quality monitoring information	• Environmental Protection ESC	2026	Monthly newsletter with monitoring results summary available on the website
Winter domestic wood burning information campaign	• Environmental Protection ESC	Annual	Campaign undertaken
Update of ESC bonfire leaflet	• Environmental Protection ESC	2025/26	Leaflet updated Revision of procedure for bonfire complaints to include leaflet
Summer domestic burning campaign – bonfires, firepits BBQs	• Environmental Protection ESC	2026	Summer burning campaign undertaken
Participation in Clean Air Day	• Environmental Protection ESC	Annual	Clean Air Day Event(s) undertaken
Participation in Clean Air Night	• Environmental Protection ESC	Annual	Clean Air Night campaign undertaken
Air quality information in ESC 'In Touch' magazine for residents	• Environmental Protection ESC	Annual	Air quality article(s) included in the 'In Touch' magazine
Update air quality pages on our website	• Environmental Protection ESC	2026	Improve access on all media to Air Quality Information
Support the Greenprint Forum	• Environmental Protection ESC • Environment Climate Change ESC	2026	Presentation on AQ at a Greenprint Forum meeting

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Appendix A

Summary of Air Quality Strategy Public Engagement responses

Public engagement to help shape our Air Quality Strategy update was conducted between Tuesday 4th March and Wednesday 2nd April 2025 via a Survey Monkey poll.

We received 109 responses to the public engagement

Q1 (ranking pollution sources in order of those that the respondent was most concerned about) was answered by all 109 respondents. The results gave the following order in ranking (from that of most concern to least):

1. Road transport
2. Business and Industrial
3. Construction sites
4. Agriculture
5. Bonfires, fire pits, BBQs in domestic premises
6. Indoor air quality
7. Non-Road transport (trains, ships etc)
8. Wood burners and open fires
9. The Council's own emissions

Q2 (any further comments relating to emission sources) was answered by 78 respondents but 30 of those were no comments so 48 comments received. The comments are split into categories in the table below. Total is actually 51 as some responses covered more than 1 topic:

Topic	Number of comments received
SZC and NSIPs	8
Aircraft	8
Construction emissions (not SZC and NSIPs)	6
Vehicle emissions (anti-idling)	6
Domestic burning (inside and outside)	5
Vehicles emissions (general)	4
Industrial emissions	3
Indoor air quality	2
Cycling and walking	1
Other related to AQ	2
Comments not related to AQ (LAQM)	6

Q3 (ranking actions we could take in order of those the respondent was most concerned about) was answered by 107 respondents. The results gave the following order in ranking (from that of most concern to least). Please note the top 5 here showed very little difference in actual ranking:

1. Active travel improvement
2. Access to air quality data
3. General education on air quality
4. Increasing the use of public transport
5. Information on health impacts of pollution
6. Ways to reduce your exposure
7. Improving local EV infrastructure

Q4 (any further comments relating to potential actions) was answered by 75 respondents but 30 of those were no comments so 45 comments received. The comments are split into categories in the table below. Total is actually 46 as some responses covered more than 1 topic:

Topic	Number of comments received
Vehicles emissions (general)	8
Indoor air quality	4
SZC and NSIPs	3
Public transport	5
Vehicle emissions (anti-idling)	2
Cycling and walking	2
Tree/vegetation planting	2
Construction emissions (not SZC and NSIPs	1
Domestic burning (inside and outside)	1
Industrial emissions	1
WHO guidelines	1
Other related to AQ	10
Comments not related to AQ (LAQM)	6

Q5 (postcode of respondent) was answered by 102 respondents.
Areas with top number of respondents are in the table below:

Postcode	Where that covers	Total respondents
IP12	Woodbridge, Melton, Rendlesham, Martlesham, Orford	32
IP13	Framlingham, Wickham Market, Grundisburgh, Ufford	9
NR33	Lowestoft, Carlton Colville, Kessingland, Gisleham, Rushmere	8
NR32	Lowestoft, Oulton Broad, Corton, Blundeston, Somerleyton, Lound, Camps Heath, Herringfleet, Ashby, Ashby Dell	6
IP16	Leiston, Thorpeness, Sizewell, Aldringham, Theberton, East Bridge	6
IP11	Felixstowe, Trimley Saint Martin, Trimley Saint Mary	6
NR34	Beccles, Worlingham, Henstead, Wrentham, Ellough	5
IP17	Saxmundham, Yoxford, Westleton, Kelsale, Knodishall	5
IP4	Ipswich, Kesgrave, Rushmere St Andrew	4
IP5	Kesgrave, Martlesham, Rushmere, Rushmere St Andrew	4
IP6	Needham Market, Claydon, Great Blakenham, Barham	3
IP19	Halesworth, Wenhaston, Blythburgh, Holton, Cratfield	3
IP18	Southwold, Reydon, Walberswick, Easton Bavents	2

IP1, IP9, IP10, IP15, IP20, NR35 all also had 1 respondent each. 3 respondents did not give accurate or complete postcodes.

EASTSUFFOLK COUNCIL

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