

Clean Air for Bristol

Improving air quality in Bristol

June 2018 Update 1

Introduction

Clean air is essential for health and helps to make Bristol a pleasant place to live and work in. However, we have a number of locations within the city where Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) levels are exceeding legal limits set by the UK Government and the European Union. In Bristol, the main cause of NO₂ air pollution is from motor vehicles, mainly diesel engines.

We have been monitoring pollution levels since 1994 and putting in place a range of measures to try and improve air quality. In 2001, we created an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) covering the city centre and some of the main roads coming into it. Since then, the AQMA has informed and influenced both our planning and transport strategies.

Cleaner Air for Bristol 2021

As air pollution continues to exceed European and World Health Organisation limits, more needs to be done – and quickly. In 2017, the Government instructed a number of Local Authorities, including Bristol, to reduce levels of NO₂. Government funds and technical expertise are now available to help us consider and implement further measures to improve air quality.

To comply with the Government instruction, we need to identify a preferred package of measures by December 2018 that will reduce levels of NO₂ at certain locations in the city to within acceptable limits. A “package of measures” refers to groups of options that help reduce NO₂ emissions from vehicles and encourage the public to use less polluting modes of transport. To satisfy legal requirements and the Government’s National Air Quality Plan, we must meet legal limits “*in the shortest possible time*” and by 2021 at the latest.

As we carry out the technical work, we want to get regular feedback from stakeholders and residents, so please join the conversation and have your say. You can find out more overleaf and online.

Get involved

- Go to www.cleanairforbristol.org
- Attend our drop-in sessions and workshops
- Follow us on Twitter & Facebook
- Keep up-to-date with our regular newsletter
- Email your comments to air.quality@bristol.gov.uk

Is Air Quality important?

Yes, it is. Poor air quality is the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK. Investing in cleaner air and doing even more to tackle air pollution are priorities for the UK government. Air pollution has negative impacts on the health of people in Bristol, especially vulnerable members of the population. Evidence suggests that it can cause permanent lung damage in babies and young children and exacerbates lung and heart disease in older people. It can also make it harder for those with respiratory conditions, such as asthma, to breathe. Air quality is often worse in less affluent areas of towns and cities, making it both a health and equalities problem.

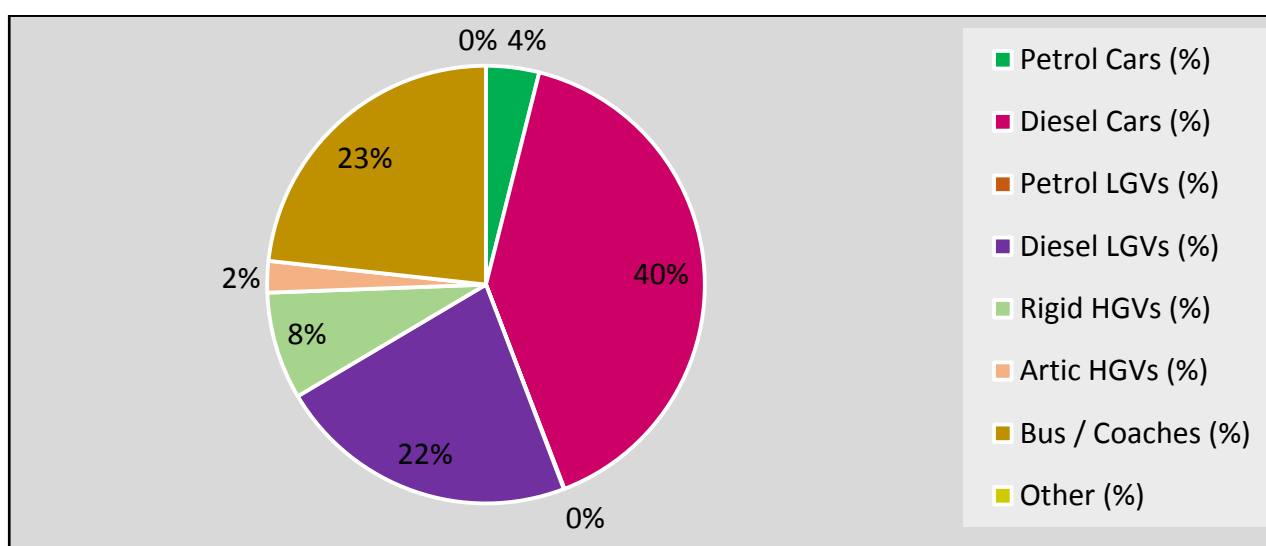
What is causing air pollution in Bristol?

The main source of air pollution in Bristol is from motor vehicles, with high levels of NO₂ caused by exhaust emissions. There tend to be localised areas of poor air quality, where lots of vehicles are moving slowly in built-up areas.

Air quality monitoring in Bristol is comprehensive and has been carried out since 1994. Our monitoring network is focused on NO₂, and is a combination of automatic monitoring stations and passive diffusion tubes throughout the city. The monitoring sites show that NO₂ pollution levels often exceed target levels (currently 40 µg/m³) at some roads within Bristol, with Rupert Street having levels higher than 90 µg/m³ in 2015 for example.

Another source of air pollution is particulate matter (PM), but PM levels at our monitoring sites have been below EU and UK limits for several years. You can read our latest air quality annual status report and get local air quality data at our 5 fixed monitoring sites by going to <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/pests-pollution-noise-food/air-quality>.

Data suggests NO₂ levels from vehicles in Bristol are being caused by:



Diesel vehicles cause 95% of NO₂ emissions in Bristol!

What have Bristol City Council already done to improve things?

We have been working to try and reduce vehicle emissions, mainly by encouraging more sustainable modes of transport, such as cycling, walking or public transport. Examples of projects that collectively will have a positive impact on air quality in the city are:

- MetroBus
- MetroWest
- New and improved cycle and walking infrastructure
- Reducing pollution from old buses
- Modernising council fleet vehicles
- More electric pool cars for council staff to use

Although these investments have made a difference, NO₂ levels remain above legal limits across the city. For this reason, we now need to go further and introduce more measures that will help bring NO₂ levels to below the legal limits.

What is the Government doing?

The Government is concerned about NO₂ pollution and, in 2017, published the National Air Quality Plan, which highlights the impact of NO₂ on health. Within this Plan, 28 Local Authorities have been identified as requiring help to tackle pollution hotspots by 2021 – Bristol City Council is one of them. This means we are legally required to reduce levels of NO₂ recorded at Newfoundland Way, which is a site included in the national monitoring network, “in the shortest possible time”. But we also want to reduce exceedances at local hotspots throughout Bristol, so are producing a Clean Air Plan that looks to address both problems.

The Government has set out a framework we have to work within. However, we now have access to Government funds (a total of £255m nationally) to further investigate and implement measures that will quickly reduce air pollution below EU and UK limits. We can use these funds to improve air quality throughout the city.

Our proposals will only be approved and funding given, if:

- they reduce NO₂ levels in the shortest possible time;
- impacts on health, affected residents and businesses have been considered; and
- they show good value for money.

What do we have to do?

Before the end of 2018, we must identify a preferred option and submit a proposal to the Government for reducing NO₂ levels in Bristol by 2021 or earlier.

We are now at a stage where 5 packages of measures have been shortlisted for further assessment. These 5 options have been approved by BCC Cabinet as part of our Strategic Outline Case published in March 2018, which you can read [online](#).

To get to this stage, we have:

- used air quality monitoring data, the Bristol AQAP work and other sources of information, to produce a long list of ideas to reduce air pollution;
- assessed the long list of ideas against various factors, the most important of which is achieving compliance with legal limits of air pollution in the shortest time possible, as well as including social and economic impacts;
- shortlisted 5 options of what we think might be the best packages of measures, 4 of which involve a charging Clean Air Zone (and a combination of non-charging measures) and 1 option of just non-charging measures.

We have a lot of work left to do until a preferred package of measures is proposed, including:

- engaging with stakeholders and the public to get their views on the five options;
- undertake a detailed technical assessment of the options;
- selecting a preferred package of measures;
- prepare an Outline Business Case (OBC) for the preferred package of measures;
- consult on the preferred package of measures and the OBC;
- prepare a detailed design of the preferred package of measures, with a Full Business Case (FBC); and
- submit the final package and FBC for Government approval.

We will focus on measures that reduce levels of vehicle NO₂ emissions and that encourage people to switch to more sustainable modes of transport. We need to consider the impacts of the measures on the city and its people, and we want to engage widely with residents and stakeholders during this process to better understand these impacts.

How will this work be paid for?

All of the work needed to be done to meet the air quality instruction will be paid for by the Government. This means the Council will not have to find funds from its budget. We will get funding to produce our preferred package of measures and, if that is approved, we get additional funds to implement our plans.

Public involvement

December 2018 is not far away and we have a lot of work to do. Air pollution affects us all, so we want a wide discussion and for stakeholders and residents to ask questions and give their views. To gather these views, we are holding a range of events such as drop-in sessions, workshops, briefings and meetings to get feedback from our stakeholders and residents. You can find out details of our events on our website, through this newsletter, by signing up to our emails, or by following us on social media.

Key Project Dates

March 2018	Strategic Outline Case (SOC) approved by Council Cabinet, with five package options to be taken forward for detailed assessment
Late 2018 / Early 2019	Present detailed assessment, a preferred package and Outline Business Case
Early 2019	Present detailed design of preferred package and Final Business Case

If you have any queries, please contact air.quality@bristol.gov.uk

