

Agenda Item No: 9
Report To: Cabinet
Date of Meeting: 14 March 2019
Report Title: Environmental update
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Portfolio Holder Cllr Brad Bradford
Portfolio Holder for: Community safety and wellbeing



Summary: This report highlights some of Ashford's cross council activity to achieve a high quality environment during 2018/19 and seeks approval for the air quality strategy 2019/20 – 2021/22 and related green taxi scheme.

Key Decision: Yes

Significantly Affected Wards: All

Recommendations: The Cabinet is recommended to:

- I. Note the highlighted cross council achievements over 2018/19 to deliver highest quality environmental standards**
- II. Note the emerging priority for 2019/20 and beyond to maintain and improve our environment – as recognised by our 'Year of the Environment 2019' campaign, being led by the environment and land management department**
- III. Approve the air quality strategy and action plans to deliver the strategy, including approving the establishment of a green taxi scheme**

Policy Overview: The council has a corporate plan 2015-20 priority - Attractive Ashford – focused on creating a high quality environment for our residents.

Air quality has been identified as an issue through a number of mechanisms, including our Overview and Scrutiny Committee, our service planning processes and through national policy changes and prioritisation e.g. the new Clean Air Strategy 2019. There are a number of relevant regional strategies that also have an impact.

Financial Implications: A dedicated staffing resource will be required beyond 2019/20. Based on approval of this by Cabinet, this will then

be managed through the council's budget processes.

It is likely some specific projects within the air quality strategy will require funding. This will happen through the council's project initiation document (PID) process.

Legal Implications

In relation to the green taxi scheme, most sites that pay carbon offsetting contributions as part of the Section 106 agreements sign up to a standard agreement.

This agreement stipulates that the carbon off-setting contribution can be used to cover costs including relating to the designing, procuring, delivering, administering and project managing of works or services or the repayment and reimbursement of expenditure and forward funding (irrespective of when incurred).

It is the legal view that therefore this fund can be utilised to provide a grant to a taxi driver towards the acquisition of an electric taxi in place of a fossil fuel one. Substitution must be demonstrated.

Equalities Impact Assessment

See attached

Other Material Implications:

None

Exempt from Publication:

No

Background Papers:

None

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Environmental update

Introduction and background

2018/19 activity

1. A significant amount of work has been undertaken across council services in 2018/19 to deliver the Attractive Ashford corporate plan priority. Some highlights of this activity are detailed below:

Recycling figures to be proud of

2. Our resident survey 2018 showed that **77%** of our residents are satisfied with the bin collection services.
3. We have built on our successes in our recycling services - Ashford was top of the league in Kent for the fourth year in a row, with the highest percentage of household waste recycled and composted and for the lowest residual waste tonnages per household. . ABC is now **27th** in the country for recycling – up from **35th** place last year – and **10th** place for the amount of residual waste produced by households. This is an incredible achievement by residents and we will work to ensure continuous improvement.
4. Ashford's garden waste recycling service continues to grow and has more than **15,400** customers – a growth of nearly **1,000** customers in the past year.

Supporting a sustainable future

5. The council submitted the final draft of the **Local Plan 2030** to the Secretary of State on 21 December 2017. The independent examination process into the Local Plan was held over the summer of 2018 and the inspectors notified the council in January 2019 that, subject to modifications, the Local Plan 2030 was sound and compliant with the relevant legislation. This brings to a close the examination process, and the Local Plan was formally adopted by the council in February 2019.
6. We continue to support the switch to electric and hybrid vehicles - we have specified high levels of electric vehicle charging points within new developments, as well as providing **14** charging points in our own car parks. No charge is made by the council for electricity used at our own electric vehicle charging points.
7. A **community transport scheme** was designed and launched, with the first pilot starting in July 2018 in Rolvenden. The community transport scheme is primarily a wellbeing initiative, designed to connect those who would otherwise be isolated for a variety of reasons. The community bus also means a reduction in car traffic and the number of older minibus vehicles on the road by creating a shared asset that can be used by community groups – which improves our environment and in particular our air quality.

8. **Create** music festival organisers committed to reducing plastic waste at this 2018's free festival in support of our recycling commitments. Key changes included:
- The use of paper straws instead of plastic ones
 - The use of wooden stirrers instead of plastic ones
 - The use of PolyEthylene Terephthalate (PET) 100% recyclable bottles and the provision of recycling bins accordingly
 - The used of compostable bin liners
 - The introduction of a reusable cup scheme

Parks and open spaces

9. Our resident survey 2018 showed that **71%** of our residents are satisfied with our parks and **62%** of residents are happy with our play areas.
10. We continue to invest in our parks and opens spaces. **Bridgefield park and play area** was opened in 2019 - the first of its kind to be commissioned in the borough for over 20 years, after several years of planning, consultation and development by the council and Kingsnorth Parish Council.
11. The refurbishment of **Newtown play park** was completed, with various different zones created including an under six zone, an over six zone, an inclusive zone that has incorporated paths and equipment suitable for wheelchair users and a brand new outdoor gym area.
12. The council secured initial funding to develop a **£3.7million** restoration and improvement project in Victoria Park, from the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Big Lottery Fund. We have since been consulting on further detailed proposals and our detailed funding bid has been submitted.
13. The Aspire team continues to go from strength to strength since being brought in house. In this year alone Aspire has achieved **ISO 14001, 9001 and 45001**. ISO 14001 is an independent assessment that Aspire is environmentally friendly. Not only is it unusual for one ISO to be applied for and achieved by a council service, but to achieve three standards simultaneously is remarkable and an achievement of which the council is incredibly proud.

Proposals / issues for consideration

Looking forward – 2019/20 and beyond

14. A broad range of activity is scheduled for 2019/20 and beyond. Some highlights of this activity include:

The Year of the Environment

15. 2019 has been identified on a national level as the **year of the environment**. The council is taking action in support of this, and we are designing activity to demonstrate that we can improve the environment through shared and collective action. The year will provide an opportunity to generate momentum as we work with all communities to take action to improve the planet.

16. We will be delivering various events, campaigns and initiatives throughout the year to support these causes and promote the environment. Our aim is to have Ashford connect, protect and enhance the environment. Each event will be centred on one or more of our five key themes:
- **Recycle** – encourage residents to waste less and recycle more
 - **Clean** – keep Ashford clean by tackling litter and encouraging residents to get involved with volunteer schemes
 - **Grow** – encourage residents to grow fruit and veg in their own homes, gardens and allotment sites
 - **Nature** – encourage residents to use parks and open spaces in the borough whilst encouraging wildlife and biodiversity
 - **Air** – encourage residents to use active transport to reduce pollution and improve health and well-being
17. There are numerous events planned throughout the year focused on green action, for example litter picks, implementing the refill scheme and a big art project in conjunction with Create. **The Great British Spring Clean** will take place from 22 March – 23 April 2019.

Cycling and walking strategy

18. The **draft Ashford cycling and walking strategy** has been developed. The strategy brings together policies and related actions to promote cycling and walking and the delivery of related infrastructure. The strategy provides a basis for making bids for improvements to cycling and walking infrastructure at key routes serving the town, urban extensions and rural areas. The strategy also seeks to increase cycling and walking participation by promoting safer cycling, active promotion of cycling and walking and the support for cycling and walking based tourism.
19. The draft strategy will go out for public consultation and the final strategy will be considered for approval and adoption in 2019/20.

Air quality

20. Air pollution is the **greatest** environmental risk to public health in the UK. It is the **fourth** greatest threat to public health after cancer, heart disease and obesity. It causes more harm than passive smoking.
21. Air pollution also has a direct impact on our natural environment, contributing to climate change, reducing our crop yields and polluting our oceans. We are dependent on the health of the planet on which we live – from the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat and the energy that powers our homes and businesses. Protecting our natural environment protects our way of life – this is particularly true of air quality.
22. We know air pollution has a significant impact on the health of the borough. Public Health England has estimated that air pollution is a contributory factor in **50** deaths in Ashford each year. PHE has also estimated that there are **539** years of life lost in our population due to exposure to air pollution – meaning many of our population are dying earlier deaths than necessary. Improving

our air quality will lead to our communities living longer, healthier and happier lives.

23. In Ashford our pollutant concentrations are below the national limit, which is positive. This doesn't mean we have no work to do. No amount of air pollution is safe. Even lower levels of air pollution can have a detrimental impact on our health, as evidenced by the statistics above. We know we must aim to reduce levels of air pollution as far as possible.
24. Following on from the Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) task force on air quality, a report was produced and considered by Cabinet in February 2018. This report contained a number of recommendations, which were agreed by Cabinet to form the basis of a strategy moving forward. Included in these recommendations were the appointment of an officer to focus on air quality activity. This was agreed.
25. Taking the report from O&S, plus some further work on the part of officers (acknowledging the increasing national, regional and local importance of air quality and latest developments), an air quality strategy (AQS) has been produced (please see Appendix 1).
26. The air quality strategy (AQS) (appendix 1) has been developed by officers and builds on the work of the Overview and Scrutiny air quality task force. The AQS has three priorities as following:
 - **Ensuring we lead the way** – actions the council will undertake to set a high standards for ourselves
 - **Working with our partners** – actions to council will undertake with its partners to safeguard and where possible improve standards of air quality
 - **Enabling behavioural change** – actions the council will undertake to facilitate lasting behavioural change within the population of the borough
27. The district deal with Kent County Council will be a key mechanism for the delivery of the 'working with our partners' priority. Officers are working on this accordingly.

Green taxi scheme

28. The O&S task force on air quality report included a recommendation to encourage the uptake of electric and hybrid vehicles within our taxi and private hire fleet. This has become a project contained within the new AQS. Currently diesel vehicles make up the majority of the Ashford taxi fleet.
29. The green taxi scheme has been designed as follows:
 - The scheme will subsidise in full the annual licensing fee for green taxis for the first three years they are on the fleet
 - The scheme will apply defined criteria to what a 'green' vehicle is (based on pre-existing criteria developed by other relevant schemes)
 - The scheme will provide for **ten** vehicles per annum for **three** years, and will operate on a first come, first served basis
 - Using the licence fee for 2019/20, the funding requirement from Section 106 over the three year lifetime of the scheme is **£28,800**. This funding allocation has been confirmed

30. We do not know what the uptake of the scheme will be. Any leftover monies will remain in the Section 106 pot. If demand outstrips supply we will review options and report back to Cabinet as required.

Community transport scheme

31. We will be seeking to increase the number of pilot community transport schemes in 2019/20, with funding for a further three schemes currently being identified. We will develop an information pack based on our learning from these scheme in order to support other communities who may wish to invest in their own community transport scheme.

Implications

Resource implications

32. In order to deliver the AQS meaningfully, a staffing resource is required to lead the work. There are also a number of other work streams across the wider environmental portfolio that require support. In 2019/20 this work will be led by the Public Practice environmental project manager. Resource commitment beyond 2019/20 will be agreed as part of the council's budgeting processes as detailed in the Cabinet approved recommendations of the O&S task force (Agenda item 6: Report from Overview and Scrutiny Committee – findings of the air quality task group, Cabinet 8 February 2018).

Financial implications

33. It is likely some specific projects within the air quality strategy will require funding. This will happen through the council's project initiation document (PID) process.
34. The green taxi scheme is ready to launch for 2019/20 and will be funded from Section 106. Based on the proposed licence fee for 2019/20, the funding requirement from Section 106 over the three year lifetime of the scheme is £28,800. We do not know uptake of the scheme. Any leftover monies will remain in the Section 106 pot. If demand outstrips supply we will review options and return to management team with proposals.

Equalities impact assessment

35. Please see appendix B for the equalities impact assessment. There are no specific or immediate issues arising from it.

Consultation planned or undertaken

36. We have used consultation evidence from our residents' survey 2018. We have also undertaken informal consultation with some specific interest groups, for example the Taxi Drivers' Forum. This information has shaped policy development and interventions so far.

37. Consultation is also planned as we start to develop some of the further project activity, for example creating our community education and behaviour change campaign.

Other options considered

38. The council could decide not to adopt the air quality strategy and continue with statutory air quality activity only. This, however, would not enable us to safeguard our environment effectively. This would also include not delivering the green taxi scheme.

Reasons for supporting option recommended

39. Protecting and enhancing our environment is an emerging priority for our developing corporate plan 2020 onwards. Environmental protection, including our air quality, is of increasing importance to our communities, particularly our younger generations.

Next steps

40. Officers are working together to prioritise the activity of the resource identified to deliver year one of the AQS. The first step will be to establish any new delivery mechanisms required to drive the action plans forward.
41. Ashford Borough Council's wider environmental approach will be explored in full as part of the corporate planning process, which will begin in 2019/20.

Conclusion

42. Ashford Borough Council is committed to excellence in our environment and work will continue in 2019/20 and beyond to ensure we deliver against our commitments.

Portfolio holder's views

43. This report shows the excellent work that happens across the council to deliver best quality environmental services and standards. I would like to recognise the work of other Cabinet colleagues in driving this agenda forward in their own areas.
44. In terms of the air quality strategy I would also like to thank again my colleagues on the O&S air quality task force in developing the recommendations that formed the basis of this new approach. I look forward to seeing the successful delivery of the strategy and the safeguarding of our air quality for all residents, especially our younger generations.

Contact and email

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Air Quality Strategy
2019/20 – 2021/22

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Introduction

Air pollution in the UK

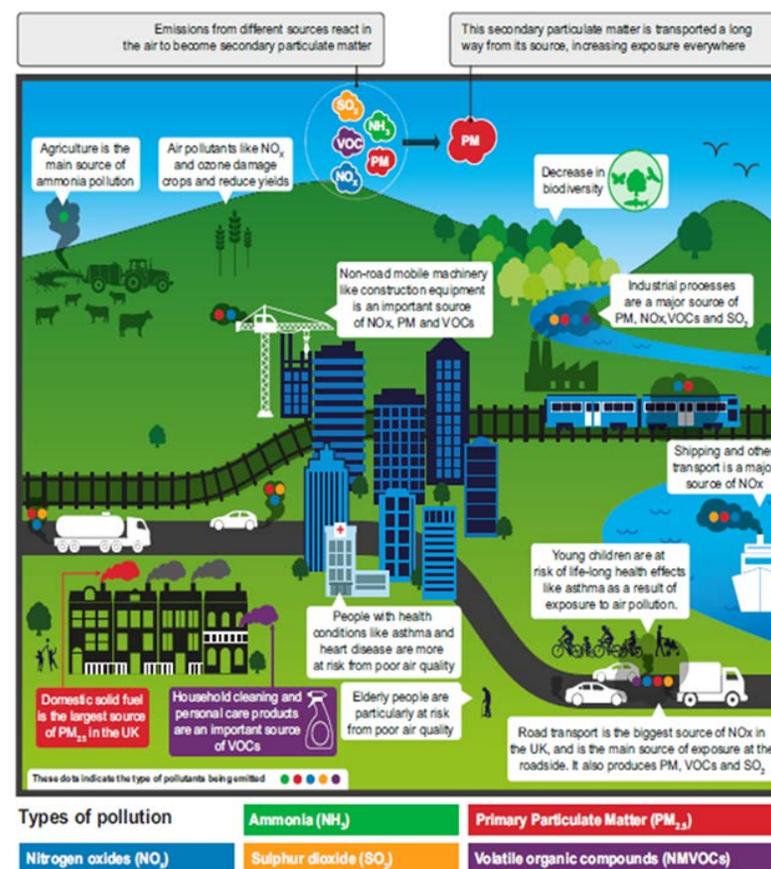
Air pollution leads to the early death of tens of thousands of people each year in Britain and negatively affects the health of hundreds of thousands more. Put bluntly, poor air quality shortens lives and contributes to chronic illness.

Air pollution is the greatest environmental risk to public health in the UK. It is the fourth greatest threat to public health after cancer, heart disease and obesity. It causes more harm than passive smoking.

In 2010, the Environment Audit Committee considered that the cost of the health impacts of air pollution was likely to exceed a previous estimate of £8 - £20 billion. People are less able to work and need more medical care, which results in higher social costs and demands on the National Health Service.

Air pollution also has a direct impact on our natural environment, contributing to climate change, reducing our crop yields and polluting our oceans. We are dependent on the health of the planet on which we live – from the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat and the energy that powers our homes and businesses. Protecting our natural environment protects our way of life – this is particularly true of air quality.

The sources of air pollutants and their effects



It is acknowledged that there is extra effort required to effectively tackle air pollution. For example:

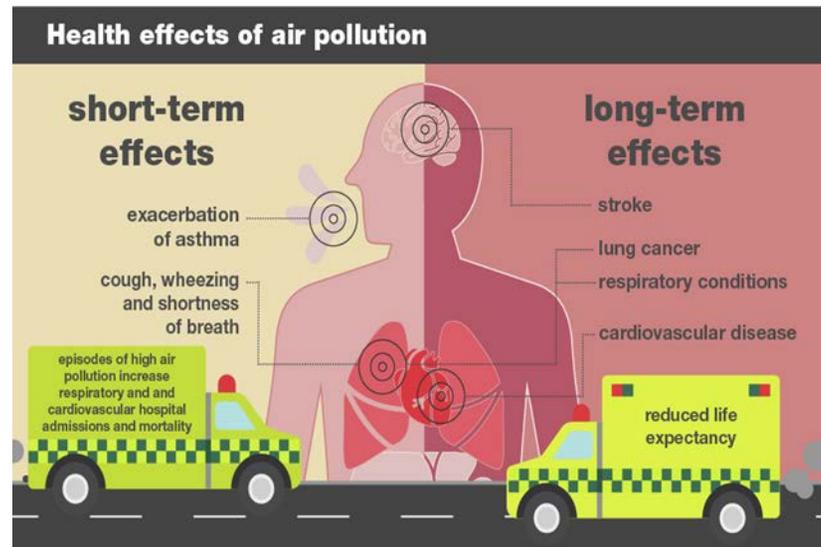
- In October 2018, the United Nations warned that the UK government was endangering people's health by denying their right to clean air
- The world's biggest children's charity, Unicef, has stated it has refocused its British operation to tackle air pollution because of the scale of the "health crisis" facing young people in the country
- In October 2018, the World Health Organisation said that air pollution was the "new tobacco", causing 7 million deaths around the world and harming billions more

The UK national government is taking action to tackle air pollution, as outlined in the Clean Air Strategy 2019. The UK government has set stringent targets to cut polluting emissions by 2020 and 2030. The aim of the national Clean Air Strategy is to reduce harm to human health from air pollution by half. We know that we need to tackle air pollution locally to ensure that we achieve national targets and improve air quality for future generations.

Air pollution is everyone's problem, and taking action to improve our air quality is everyone's responsibility.

There are small things we can all do that would make a big difference to pollution levels, both locally and nationally.

We must work together to protect each other from harm, as well as our environment.



What is air pollution?

Air pollutants are emitted from a range of man-made and natural sources. Every day activities such as driving, heating our homes, manufacturing goods and farming our land can and do have a detrimental impact upon air quality. Pollutants can travel long distances and combine with each other in the air to create different pollutants. The impact of pollution can depend upon how much is emitted, how harmful the emission is and how it interacts with other substances already in the air.

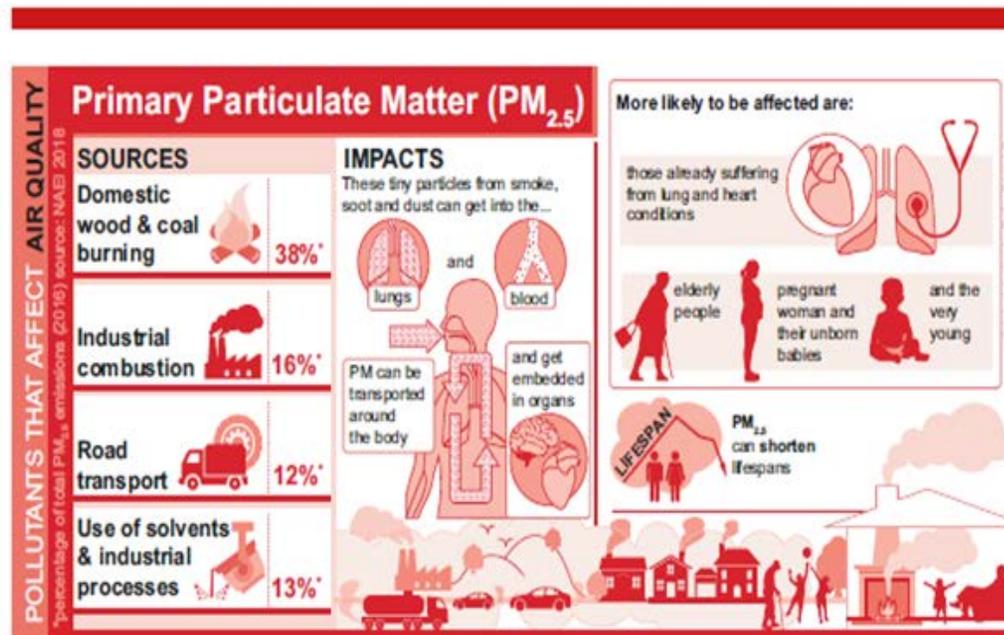
Concentrations occur where pollutants build up in large quantities in a particular location, for example by a busy road, a large industrial estate or an intensive farming operation. Emissions from distant sources can also build up into high local concentrations of pollution. Exposure to high concentrations is most likely to directly result in adverse impacts, although our health can be affected by both short term exposure to high pollution levels and by long term exposure to lower levels of pollution. We are exposed to air pollution in all aspects of our lives – at home, when travelling, at school and at work.

There are different types of pollutants, and we are focusing on three of the most damaging ones in our first air quality strategy. These are detailed in the next sections.

Particulate matter

PM is a generic term used to describe a complex mixture of solid and liquid particles of differing size, shape and composition. PM is simply everything in the air that isn't gas. Sizes range from a few nanometers in diameter (about the size of a virus) to about 100 micrometres in diameter (about the size of a human hair). These particles include carbon, trace metals and mineral components. PM_{2.5} is less than 2.5µm (micrometers) across, is the main type of PM which is regulated and that causes the most harm to health. The UK has made legally binding commitments to further reduce the amount of PM_{2.5} that we emit into our air by 30% by 2020 and 46% by 2030, based on a 2005 baseline.

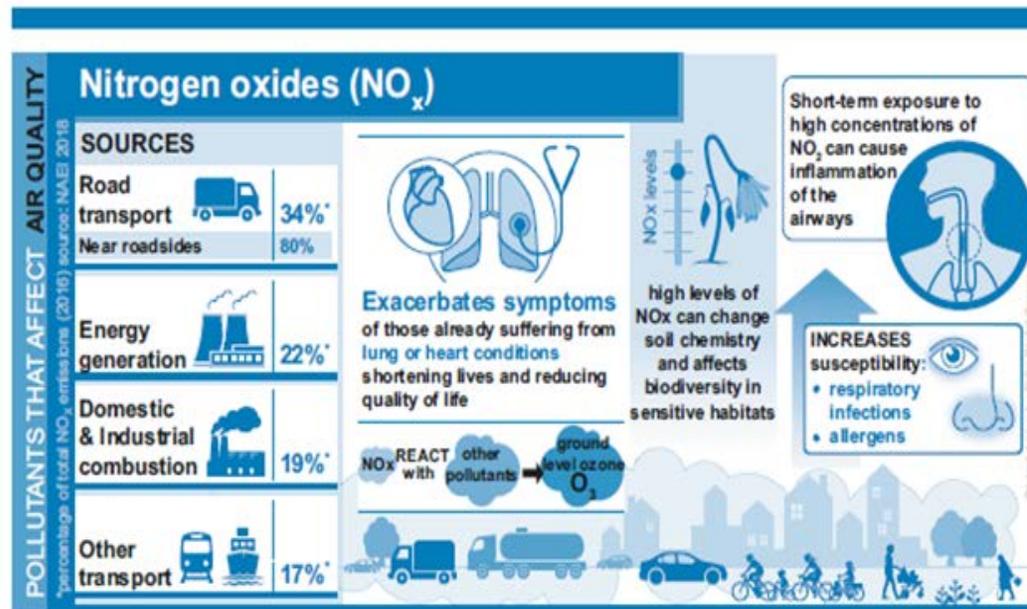
The below shows the main sources of PM_{2.5} on a national level, some of the health impacts and those who are most likely to be affected:



Nitrogen oxides

Nitrogen oxides (NO_x) are a group of gases that are mainly created from burning fossil fuels. This includes nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). The UK isn't meeting the current limits of nitrogen dioxide concentration. DEFRA estimates 80% of NO_x emissions (particularly in places where the UK is exceeding the NO₂ limit) is due to transport, mainly smaller vehicles such as cars and vans. The UK aims to reduce emissions of nitrogen oxides (from a 2005 baseline) by 55% by 2020 and 73% by 2030.

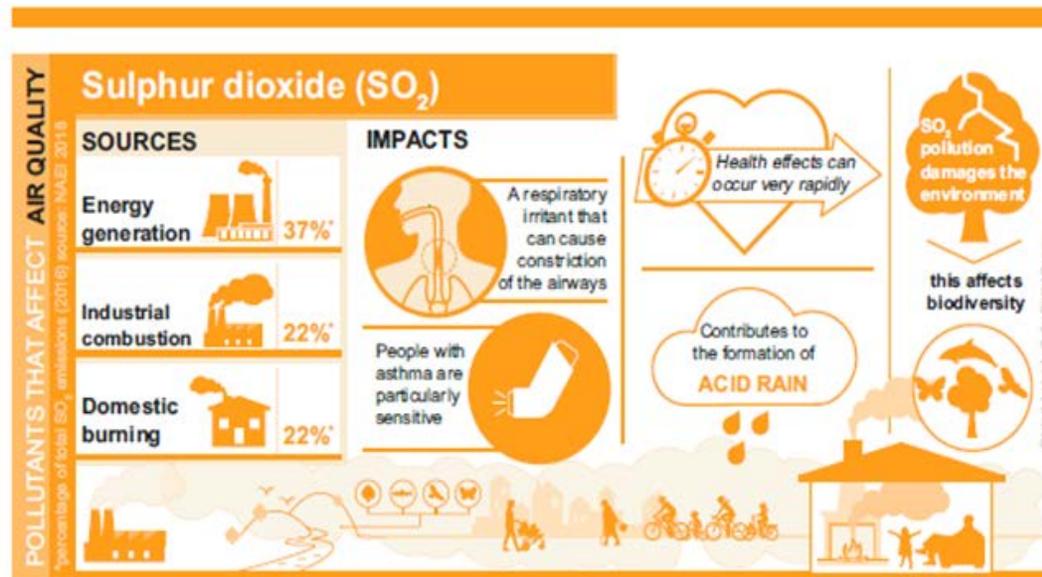
The below shows the main sources of NO_x on a national level, some of the health impacts and those who are most likely to be affected:



Sulphur dioxide

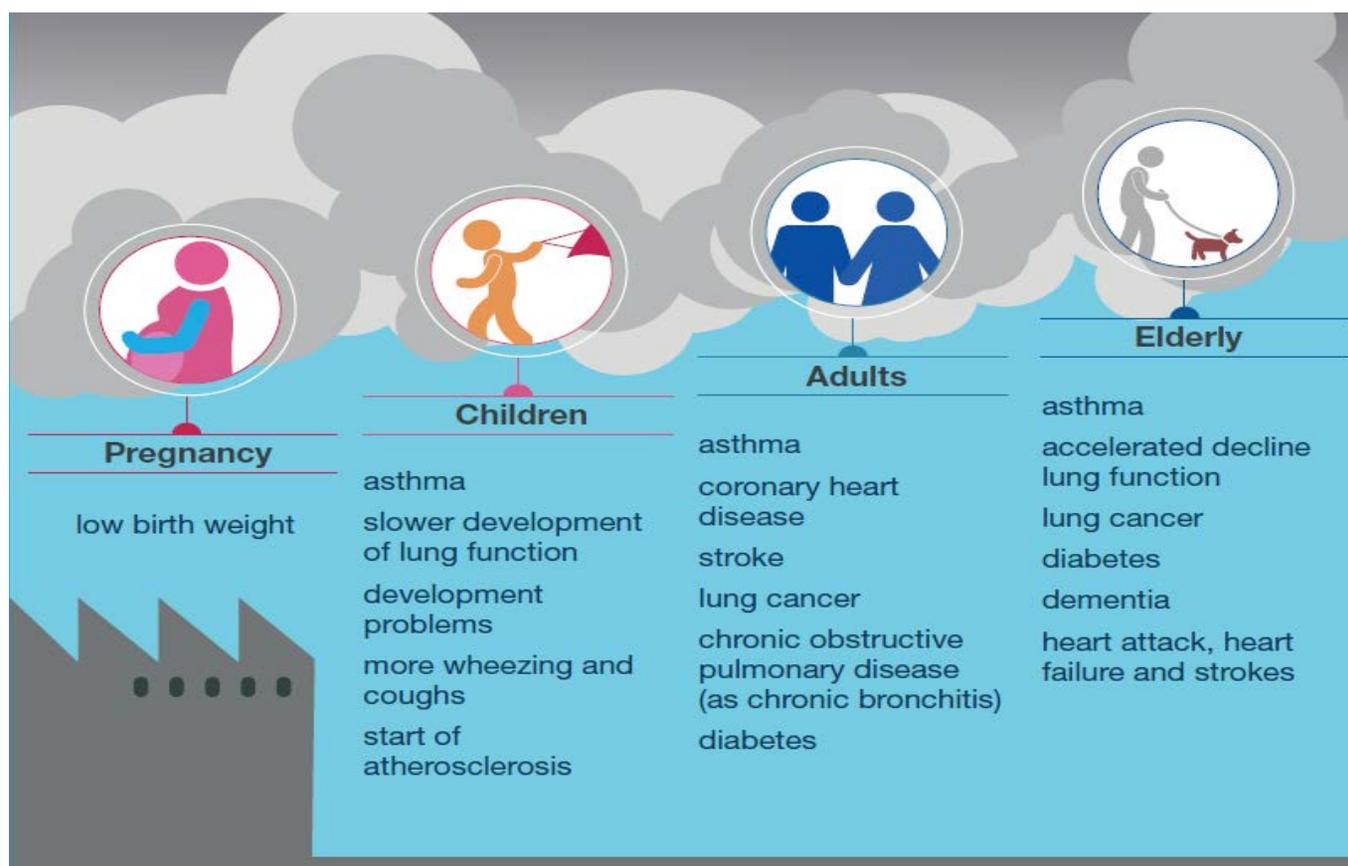
Sulphur dioxide (SO₂) is an acidic gas which can combine with water vapour in the atmosphere to produce acid rain. Sulphur dioxide is an irritant that can affect airways, particularly in those who have asthma. Emissions of SO₂ are decreasing and have fallen by 97% since 1970, although there is still more work to do. The UK aims to reduce emissions of SO₂ (from 2005 baseline) by 59% by 2020 and 88% by 2030.

The below shows the main sources of SO₂ on a national level, some of the health impacts and those who are most likely to be affected:



What are the health impacts of air pollution?

Poor air quality can affect health at all stages of life. Those most affected are the young and old. In the womb, maternal exposure to air pollution can result in low birth weight, premature birth, still birth or organ damage. In children there is evidence of reduced lung capacity, while impacts in adulthood can include diabetes, heart disease and stroke. In old age, a lifetime of exposure to air pollution can result in reduced life expectancy and an increased risk of disease and lower quality of life at the end of life. There is also emerging evidence for a link between air pollution and an acceleration of the decline in cognitive function. People with pre-existing health conditions – such as asthma or heart disease – are also at greater risk from air pollution.



Deprived communities are more likely to experience adverse health effects from poor air quality. There are many reasons for this, for example:

- They are more exposed to air pollution by living closer to major roads.
- They 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.

However, air quality can also be poor in areas that are generally considered affluent, such as central London. This is reflected by the overall national distribution of air pollution with highest average levels in South East England and lowest levels in the North of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

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Considerations in developing Ashford's Air Quality Strategy

What about air pollution in Ashford?

We know air pollution has a significant impact on the health of the borough. Public Health England has estimated that air pollution is a contributory factor in **50** deaths in Ashford each year. PHE has also estimated that there are **539** years of life lost in our population due to exposure to air pollution – meaning many of our population are dying earlier deaths than necessary. Improving our air quality will lead to our communities living longer, healthier and happier lives.

In Ashford our pollutant concentrations are below the national limit, which is positive. This doesn't mean we have no work to do. **No amount of air pollution is safe.** Even lower levels of air pollution can have a detrimental impact on our health, as evidenced by the statistics above. We know we must aim to reduce levels of air pollution as far as possible.

That is why we are taking action to accelerate the improvements to our air quality. We aim to reduce the risks to health for current and future generations. This strategy is evidence of a compelling case for action so we reduce public exposure to air pollution in order to save lives and improve quality of life for all.

Opportunities and challenges ahead

We also know there are a number of opportunities and challenges on the horizon, which will inform the delivery of our air quality strategy. A PESTELGO (political, economic, societal, technological, environmental, legal, governmental and organisational) analysis was conducted as part of the strategy's development – key highlights include the following:

Political

- Brexit planning and implications for all partners - the EU Withdrawal Act preserves some EU law after our exit, but leaves potential for disruption and instability. Risks for Ashford include road transport (risks of queues at Dover and impact on the rest of the county) and a downturn in the economy which might affect partners' financial situations
- EU funding and funding for sustainable vehicles dropping out

Economic

- Continuing investment and development in Ashford town centre, including the expansion of the Ashford Outlet Centre and the Chilmington Green development for almost 6,000 new homes – bringing with them potential increased air pollution levels, for example an increase in the number of vehicles, dusts associated with building sites etc.
- National funding streams available to deliver work to improve air quality often focus on the major cities and those with declared exceedances in the UK

Societal

- Health inequalities and disproportionate impact of air pollution on our most vulnerable community members, for

example the young and the old, those with pre-existing health conditions, those living in our most deprived communities

- An increased awareness of and concern about air pollution in the general population, with an increased expectation of action taken by the local authority

Environmental

- The new M20 junction 10a scheme is scheduled to complete in spring 2020
- Enhancement of some of our major green spaces, for example Victoria Park and Conningbrook Lakes,

Legal/Governmental

- Challenges in the High Court to national government over failure to deliver against international air quality standards
- Consultation on air quality strategy and potential new statutory instruments

Organisational

- Partners are developing new strategies and are currently in the consultation phases, for example the Kent County Council Energy and Low Emission Strategy.
- Ongoing public sector budget cuts are affecting all partners and services, resulting in priorities around core business

What have we achieved so far?

Although this is Ashford Borough Council's first specific air quality strategy, we have always been working to safeguard our air quality. In 2018/19 for example, we have:

- Specified high levels of electric vehicle charging points within new developments, as well as providing 14 charging points in our own car parks
- Invested in A-rated condensing boilers to update older, inefficient boilers as part of our planned maintenance of our council housing stock
- Delivered a number of energy efficiency improvements to the key buildings within our property portfolio, resulting in a year on year reduction in greenhouse gases from the council's managed estate
- Launched a community transport scheme – with the pilot scheme 'Rolvenden Rocket' up and running since July 2018
- Worked to set up a green taxi grant scheme, which will launch in 2019/20
- Invested in electric transport options for our staff, such as the e-bikes used by our civil enforcement officers and the electric pool car used by our housing officers



Priority outcomes for this strategy

Based on the evidence of the problem at a national and local level, we will seek to improve air quality in Ashford and safeguard excellent air quality for future generations. In order to achieve this, this strategy will achieve the following outcomes:

- **Ensuring we lead the way** – actions the council will undertake to set a high standards for ourselves
- **Working with our partners** – actions to council will undertake with its partners to safeguard and where possible improve standards of air quality
- **Enabling behavioural change** – actions the council will undertake to facilitate lasting behavioural change within the population of the borough

Ensuring we lead the way

We will show commitment and leadership to show what is possible when tackling air pollution, modelling the behavior we expect to see in others.

Action plan

Objective	Key actions	Key performance measures	Lead
Create an in house resource to deliver the Air Quality Strategy	Appoint an officer, with key tasks to include establishing a cross council delivery group, developing a lobbying and funding strategy and developing behaviour change campaigns. (recommendation 25, 26)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officer in post Delivery group set up Additional funding levered in 	Angela d'Urso, community safety and wellbeing manager
Increase the number of staff using public transport, cycling, walking or car pools in their journeys to, from and within work	Conduct annual staff survey includes questions around journeys to, from and within work to establish current methods and trends (recommendation 23)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New schemes launched to target barriers identified by the survey e.g. car pooling Increase in those using public transport, cycling or walking 	Environmental policy and projects officer
	Review the impact of free car parking permits for staff in terms of the implications for air quality, parity of terms and conditions with staff who use other modes of transport and our income levels	Review completed after six months of free car parking scheme	Angela d'Urso, community safety and wellbeing manager
	Explore the installation of additional shower facilities within the Civic Centre to enable staff to cycle to and from work (recommendation 24)	Increased use of public transport and cycling as primary means of travel to and from work from baseline to be established through staff survey	Michelle Pecci, head of human resources
	Explore the establishing of a pool bike scheme to enable travel whilst in work (recommendation 21)	Reduced levels of claim against vehicle mileage scheme	Michelle Pecci, head of human resources

	Promote mileage rate for cycling scheme (recommendation 24)	Increased take up of cycle to work subsidy	Michelle Pecci, head of human resources
Reduce the pollutants from our vehicle fleet	Explore limits on high polluting vehicles within our leasing and mileage claim schemes (recommendation 19)	Following feasibility, reduced levels of CO ₂ within staff vehicle fleet as recorded in annual greenhouse gas emissions report	Michelle Pecci, head of human resources
	Explore procurement of fuel efficient driver training for essential car users (recommendation 22)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following feasibility reduced levels of CO₂ within staff vehicle fleet as recorded in annual greenhouse gas emissions report Following feasibility reduced fuel consumption within council fleet vehicles 	Michelle Pecci, head of human resources
Ensure the highest standards of development in our borough	A best practice standard is set for future developments and this standard to be applied as is appropriate. The standard includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electric vehicle charging points for residential and non-residential development, including off street car parking for major developments Minimum standard gas fired boilers Major developments carried out in line with guidance from the Institute of Air Quality Management (recommendation 3)	The standard is applied to all new developments as and where appropriate	Tim Naylor, head of planning and development
	A proportion of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) should be set aside for air pollution mitigation measures (recommendation 2)	This will be taken forward dependent on the future of the CIL post national government changes	Tim Naylor, head of planning and development
	Set appropriate planning conditions requiring the delivery of electric vehicle charging points within residential and non-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electric vehicle charging points provided within new developments at a 	Tim Naylor, head of

	residential development (recommendation 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> minimum of 1 per residential property with a dedicated parking space Electric vehicle charging points provided within new non-residential development at a minimum of 10% of parking provision Increased number of charging points within the borough 	planning and development
	Set appropriate planning conditions for enabling cycling to work within new commercial development (recommendation 15)	Cycle storage, shower and changing facilities provided within appropriate non-residential development	Tim Naylor, head of planning and development
	Maintain high standards of green space, including effective planting strategies to support pollutant mitigation and street ventilation (recommendation 4)	Improved green spaces around the areas with the highest air pollution levels	Environmental policy and projects officer
Ensure we understand our air quality	Ongoing monitoring of our air quality making best use of available resources and information	Annual air quality status reports compiled and submitted to the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)	Trevor Ford, environmental protection and licensing team leader

Working with our partners

We know we cannot do this alone. A great many of the changes we know we need are not within our gift. Crucial to achieving our strategic aims will be effective partnership working – lobbying and influencing others to secure the changes we need.

Action plan

Objective	Key actions	Key performance measures	Lead
Increasing the use of sustainable transport	Lobbying bus companies and KCC to provide low emission buses within Ashford and maintain good, high quality, frequent and well used services (recommendation 11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bus vehicles at Euro IV standard or higher Reduced levels of private car use within Ashford and consequential reduction in pollutant concentrations 	Environmental policy and projects officer
	Lobby rail companies to ensure services continue to be frequent and regular	There is a positive impact in decision making	Environmental policy and projects officer
	Lobby KCC regarding the outcomes of The Big Conversation	Community preferred rural public transport options maintained in Ashford, particularly serving rural communities	Environmental policy and projects officer
Minimising the impacts of poor air quality	Work with KCC to deliver roadside planting that seeks to mitigate air pollution (recommendation 4)	Roadside planting delivered and impacting positively on pollutant concentrations along key transport routes	Environmental policy and projects officer
	Lobby KCC to consider air quality impacts in the design of road layouts and traffic calming measures (recommendation 4)	Reduced pollutant concentrations along key transport routes	Environmental policy and projects officer
	Lobby KCC to use urban traffic management control to optimise traffic flow within Ashford (recommendation 7)	Reduced pollutant concentrations along key transport routes	Environmental policy and projects officer

	Work with KCC to explore options for providing on street electric vehicle charging points (recommendation 6)	Feasibility is assessed and a project developed accordingly	Environmental policy and projects officer
	Collaborate with KCC over the use of variable message signing (VMS) to promote air quality information (recommendation 28)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced pollutant concentrations along key transport routes • Reduced incidents of vehicle idling in high risk areas 	Environmental policy and projects officer
	Work with Kent Police to tackle vehicle idling in key locations such as outside schools (recommendation 18)	Reduced incidents of vehicle idling in high risk areas	Environmental policy and projects officer
Driving a collaborative approach to air quality	Continue to work with our KCC partners, including in the development and delivery of the Kent energy and low emissions strategy	Positive impact on the developing strategy and the direction of travel	Environmental policy and projects officer
	Influence any legislation emerging nationally, lobby the national government to ensure we are able to take action where we need to	Positive outcomes in the national environment, for example in terms of funding allocated to district authorities	Environmental policy and projects officer
	Work with the Ashford Health and Wellbeing Partnership to ensure all partners are playing their part in tackling air quality, for example the NHS.	The Ashford Health and Wellbeing Partnership develops the action plan across the partnership and drives delivery accordingly	Environmental policy and projects officer
	Work with the big employers in Ashford to reduce the number of employee journeys made to and from work by single occupant vehicles	A scheme is developed and key big employers sign up to it	Environmental policy and projects officer

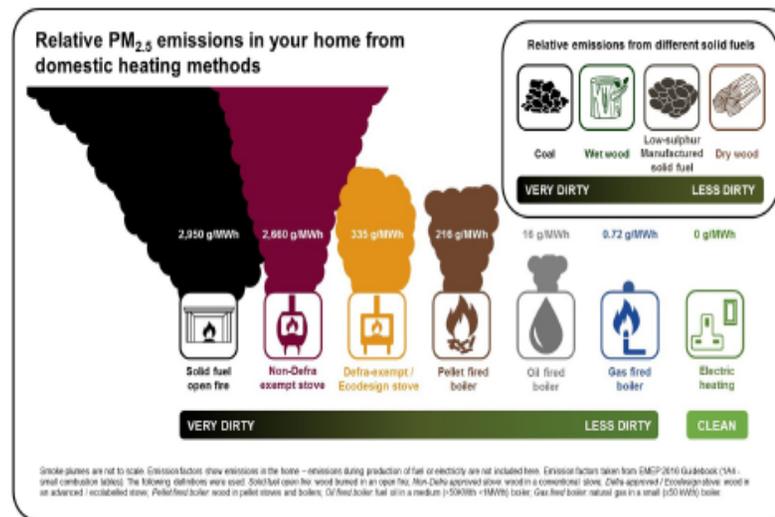
Enabling behavior change

Ashford Borough Council will not be able to reduce air pollution alone.

Key to the success of this strategy is everybody understanding air pollution and taking personal responsibility for changing their own behaviours to positively impact air pollution levels.

Small actions – ones that we can all make - will make a big difference. This might seem like an unsurmountable task, but we have done it before. After action from the council, residents changed their recycling habits, taking Ashford from the district authority with the worst recycling rate nationally, to one of the best.

Public education will be the first step. For example, most people will be aware of air pollution caused by large industrial sites or major urban road networks. Yet many people will be unaware that emissions in their own homes not only increases their personal exposure to pollutants, but contributes significantly to our national emissions. The below shows just how polluting some of day to day activities (such as heating our homes) can be:



Our community leadership role to deliver the necessary changes in behavior will be key in the delivery of this strategy.

Action plan

Objective	Key actions	Key performance measures	Lead
Making sustainable transport the easy and preferred choice for our community	Delivering the council's Cycling and Walking Strategy, including an audit of what cycling facilities are available in the borough and action to be taken where gaps are found (recommendation 16)	Delivery of the strategic aims contained in the strategy	Simon Harris, community project manager
	Continue to support and enhance walk to school schemes within the borough (recommendation 17)	Increased uptake of walk to school schemes	Environmental policy and projects officer
	Rolvenden Rocket pilot continues, with lessons learned and expansion to other parishes / hosts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of schemes launched, in operation and level of usage Promotion of community transport grant schemes 	Angela d'Urso, community safety and wellbeing manager
	Promotion of Kent Karrier and other sustainable transport schemes, where appropriate	Increased membership recorded in Ashford borough	Environmental policy and projects officer
	Ensuring our network of electric vehicle charging points expands (recommendation 5)	Number of electric vehicle charging points across the borough	Environmental policy and projects officer
	Explore options to reduce or remove parking charges for electric vehicles within our own car parks to encourage increased uptake of these vehicles (recommendation 14)	Options paper developed for consideration	Environmental policy and projects officer
Making sustainable transport the easy and preferred choice for businesses	Launch a scheme to encourage electric and hybrid vehicles in the taxi and private hire fleets in the borough (recommendation 13)	Uptake of scheme among trade	Angela d'Urso, community safety and

			wellbeing manager
	Explore options to deliver fuel efficient driver training for taxi and private hire drivers (recommendation 14)	Interest in scheme established and uptake of scheme	Environmental policy and projects officer
	Explore options for new HGV parking facilities to provide for electric HGV charging and refrigeration (recommendation 10)	Options paper developed for consideration	Environmental policy and projects officer
Advising and informing the public	A long term, overarching behavioural change campaign to be designed and delivered – key messages will need to be identified, as well as target audiences. This campaign will need to include an educational aspect, to ensure people understand the issues around air quality. The campaign will show individuals how they can take action to reduce air pollution and how they can help protect them, their families, neighbours and communities. The campaign should link to existing national, high profile activities, such as Clean Air Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people who recognise air quality and pollution as an important issue, as measured by the resident's survey • Increased use of sustainable transport options • Measured reduction in pollutant concentrations 	Environmental policy and projects officer
	Linked to the campaign, the council's webpages to be updated to ensure full information on air quality is provided to members of the public, including any actions they can take themselves (recommendation 27)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of hits on the new webpages • Number of people who recognise air quality and pollution as an important issue, as measured by the resident's survey • Increased use of sustainable transport options • Measured reduction in pollutant concentrations 	Environmental policy and projects officer

	<p>Work with the Ashford Health and Wellbeing Partnership information for residents living in the worst affected areas in relation to steps they can take to minimise impacts on their health (recommendation 29)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people taking regular physical exercise • Number of people categorized as obese • Number of smokers in the adult population • Reduction in hospital admissions where poor air quality may be a contributory factor • Improvement in health profile of target areas 	<p>Angela d'Urso, community safety and wellbeing manager</p>
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Next steps

We will ensure the success of our Air Quality Strategy by embedding it into three key mechanisms. The mechanisms will take responsibility for one crucial element each, as below:

- Regular policy review and related strong strategic management
- Developing the action plans in this strategy in further detail and ensuring delivery against targets – including the district deal we develop with Kent County Council
- Strong performance management to ensure outcomes are achieved

This strategy is a three year plan from 2019/20 – 2021/22. It will be updated on an annual basis to ensure we make progress and build on our good practice. An annual progress report will be received by the AHWP and Ashford Borough Council.

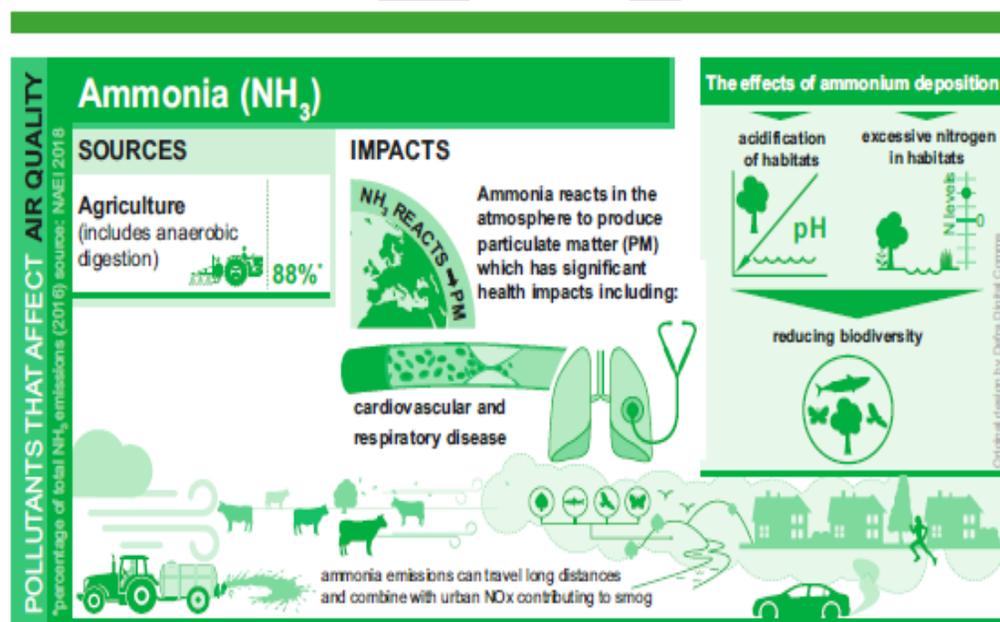


Future updates of this strategy

Future strategies will also look at how we all work together to tackle two other types of pollution, specifically ammonia (NH_3) and non-methane volatile organic compounds (NMVOCs).

Ammonia is a gas that is released into the atmosphere, mostly from agricultural sources like slurry or other rotting farm waste and fertiliser. The agricultural sector accounts for 88% of UK emissions of ammonia, which is emitted during the storage and spreading of manures and from application of inorganic fertilisers. This will be a crucial area for exploration in the development of future action plans as part of this strategy. Emissions from ammonia have fallen by 13% since 1990. However since 2013, there has been an increase in emissions of ammonia. The UK has targets to reduce emissions of ammonia (from the 2005 baseline) by 8% by 2020 and by 16% by 2030.

The below shows the main sources of ammonia, some of the health impacts and those who are most likely to be affected:



Non-methane volatile organic compounds (NMVOCs) are organic molecules, which differ widely in their chemical composition but can display similar behaviour in the atmosphere. These include vapours from every day products we use at work or home like petrol, solvents, air fresheners, cleaning products and perfumes. The government has set targets to reduce emissions of NMVOCs (from 2005 baseline) by 32% by 2020 and 39% by 2030.

The below shows the main sources of ammonia, some of the health impacts and those who are most likely to be affected:

