

The key points from “Air Pollution and health”, Winchester’s Clean Air Day 21 June 2018

On National Clean Air Day, WinACC and partners ran an event on **Air Pollution and Health** to create opportunities for people to learn more about the relationship between clean air and the health of people and the planet, find out what's been done and make their views known.

The key points from “Air Pollution and health”, Winchester’s event to mark Clean Air Day 21 June 2018, are being sent to the relevant Councillors and officers at Winchester City Council and Hampshire County Council.

What we now know

Dr Matthew Loxham from the University of Southampton presentation "[Particulate Matter: A Journey to the Depths](#)" described the harm caused by air pollution. It is linked to problems in our lungs such as asthma and other respiratory symptoms, and also to problems with our heart and blood from insulin resistance to heart attacks. Our air is cleaner than it was when factories and homes burnt coal, but we now know much more about its effects, with recent research evidence suggesting an association with diabetes and even dementia.

Key points

The need for action on traffic

Traffic is a significant cause of air pollution, one which can be addressed by changes in public policy. The meeting called on the City and County Councils, Public Health, GPs, schools and local people to make our air cleaner. We understand that in politics there always need to be trade-offs, but we don't need more consultation. Reducing centre city traffic is the core issue, and we need political will to bring it about.

Publicity for goals and the results of measuring progress

The City Council should do more to **publicise its goals for reducing air pollution**, what the Council has done, **and the progress towards meeting the goals**, using evidence from measuring pollution.

Particulates

We need to **pay more attention to the impact of particulates**, especially of PM2.5 and of the very small ultra-particles which can get into our blood and our brains. So this form of air pollution must also be adequately measured and monitored by the City Council.

As Friends of the Earth Winchester showed, **particulates** – tiny flecks of soot, brake linings and road surfaces – can be measured with a monitor, a gadget costing about £50 and a Raspberry Pi. Schools should monitor pollution at the school gate and use the findings to influence policy, and parents. Parent-teacher associations can raise the issue too, and GPs could do more to press for children to be safeguarded from pollution by walking to school, instead of being driven.

Educating motorists

Motorists need to be educated about the harm that air pollution causes, especially to children. **Few motorists realise that the air they breathe in their cars has more pollution than the air on the road.** Drivers can also be encouraged to reduce the impact of their cars on the environment. They need to drive less, and drive less pollutingly. For example, they should switch off their engines when stationary. The City Council [“No Idling” campaign](#) is welcome. Regular monitoring will show if this makes a difference.

Encouraging walking

To encourage people to walk instead of driving, **walking routes need to be pleasant.** Walking down North Walls was “a dreadful experience”. The City and County Councils need to widen the pavements, fill in the holes, and remove clutter such as bins.

Building health into all County and City Council policies

The Director of Public Health for Hampshire should examine **the impact of poor air quality on the health of people in Hampshire**, perhaps jointly with Southampton and Portsmouth, and report on what the Council needs to do. Both the County Council and the City Council should build “**Health in All Policies**” into their procedures: a requirement to consider the implications for health of all the decisions they make. Winchester City Council should **include air pollution in the role of the Head of Health and Wellbeing.**

An assessment of the **impact on health should be made a formal planning requirement**, with the Public Health and other health bodies, such as Healthwatch Hampshire and the Health and Wellbeing Board, consulted about planning applications. New housing, for example, is likely to increase traffic pollution. Green spaces, even small ones, offer health benefits.

Encouraging public transport

Speakers urged people to respond to the Hampshire County Council [consultation on cuts to bus services](#), which closes on 5 August.

Stopping money going into fossil fuels

Finally, we all need to make space in our busy lives to protect what we value. Clean air has no frontiers. To stop pollution, we need to work globally as well as locally. Everyone can influence big business and banks to take money out of polluting fossil fuels by taking part in [The Big Shift Campaign](#) asking high street banks to invest our money in renewable energy instead of fossil fuels.

Chris Holloway, On behalf of the event organisers
9 July 2018

Partners include WinACC's Built Environment and Transport Action Group, BREATHE for better air, transport, health and environment, Churches Together in Winchester, City of Winchester Trust, Cycle Winchester, FirstBite Winchester, Friends of the Earth Winchester, Hampshire County Council, Healthwatch Hampshire, Living Streets, My Journey Hampshire, the University of Winchester, Winchester City Council and Winchester Walking Strategy Group.