

What Suffolk residents think about air pollution: October 2022 public engagement survey

Analysis and next steps

Contents

Executive summary and next steps	3
Listening to a wider range of voices:.....	3
Domestic burning and indoor air quality:.....	4
Switching to electric vehicles:	4
Switching from car journeys to journeys by walking or cycling:	4
Vehicle idling:	4
Alert service:	5
Support for schemes to improve air quality:.....	5
Raising awareness of the health impacts of air quality and what people can do to protect themselves and others:	5
Demographic breakdown of respondents:	6
Respondents by location:.....	6
Respondents by gender:.....	6
Respondents by age:	6
Respondents by disability:	7
Respondents by ethnicity:.....	7
Respondents with responsibility for children under the age of 12:	8
How worried are you about whether pollution might be affecting your health / your family's health?	9
What people think about Ipswich's air quality:	10
How would you describe Ipswich's air?	10
What do you think are the main sources of pollution in Ipswich?	10
Are there any areas of Ipswich that you feel are particularly polluted?	11
Motor vehicle use and behaviours:	12
How often, on average, do you drive within / through Ipswich town?	12
What do you use the vehicle for?.....	14
Do you switch off the engine of your vehicle when you will be stationary for over 10 seconds (e.g. when pulled over, at traffic lights or junctions)?.....	14
Does your vehicle have start/stop technology?	15
Is stop-start turned on, or have you switched it off?	15
Walking and cycling behaviours:.....	17
Do you own any of these?	17
How often do you cycle / scoot, on average?	17
Potential for changing behaviours:.....	19
Would you consider any of the following which could help reduce pollution?	19
Support for schemes to reduce pollution:	23
Would you support any of the following schemes to reduce pollution? Check all that apply	23
Do you have any suggestions for how pollution could be reduced in Ipswich?	24

Executive summary and next steps

In October 2022, a public survey on air quality was launched by Suffolk County Council. The survey was live for one month (October) and received 338 responses. The survey was made available to all Suffolk residents, with a particular focus on targeting Ipswich residents because Ipswich contains four of Suffolk's eight Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs), which are areas where national objectives of Nitrogen Dioxide are being exceeded.

The purpose of this survey was to:

- To begin developing our understanding of existing levels of knowledge about the health impacts of air quality in the general public
- To inform our understanding of where potential opportunities for behaviour change may be, particularly in relation to actions targeted towards the most vulnerable groups
- To inform our future approach to public engagement around air quality in Suffolk

Below is a summary of the key findings, along with how we will take these findings forward through our work to improve air quality, both in Ipswich, and more widely across Suffolk.

Listening to a wider range of voices:

Respondents were asked a series of demographic questions to understand the voices represented in this analysis. Respondents to this survey included a roughly even balance of genders and wide range of ages. However, respondents with a disability, from non-white ethnic backgrounds, and those with responsibility for children are underrepresented in this analysis.

It is important that we listen to a wide range of participants from different groups to ensure that we tackle air quality in a way that meets the needs of all residents in Suffolk. We will build on this by ensuring that future public engagement work includes targeting:

- Younger people – those under 34 years of age, and particularly those who are 24 and under.
- People with disabilities.
- People from non-white ethnic backgrounds.
- Parents, guardians, and others who are responsible for children under 12 years old.
- Those with health conditions that are affected by air pollution.

Further analysis of this survey will also be carried out to better understand whether the responses to the subsequent questions differed across age ranges, between those with and without a disability, across different ethnic groups, between those with and without responsibility for children, and with those living within Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs).

Because the number of respondents to this survey is relatively small, we will also conduct further engagement work to collect additional data from a larger and more diverse audience, including groups who are particularly exposed and / or particularly vulnerable to air pollution and its effects. We will then use these findings to further inform our work.

Domestic burning and indoor air quality:

Respondents showed a good understanding of road transport as a key source of pollution, which reflects evidence that transport is the largest source of air pollution in urban areas in the UK ([Chief Medical Officer's annual report 2022](#)). However, respondents were less certain about domestic burning as a source of air pollution (only 8% of respondents identified it as a source). In addition, 57% of respondents said that they would consider not burning wood or coal at home. Future public engagement work will include raising awareness of domestic burning as an important source of indoor air pollution, and understanding the current barriers and potential facilitators that might encourage people to stop burning these materials at home.

Switching to electric vehicles:

The majority of respondents own a petrol (43%) or diesel (26%) vehicle. There are likely to be many factors outside of Suffolk County Council's control that influence people's decisions and ability to switch their vehicle to hybrid or electric vehicles. However, through our SCC Air Quality Strategy, we will work with our partners to encourage the public and businesses to switch to low emission vehicles, as well as switch our own council small fleet vehicles to electric vehicles. We are also working to increase the number and availability of standard and Ultra-Rapid charging EV stations across the county.

Switching from car journeys to journeys by walking or cycling:

Many people reported driving within or through Ipswich town on a regular basis - 13% reported doing so daily, and 31% several times per week – most commonly for shopping and work. Many also live within the Ipswich borough boundary. Additionally, despite 58% of respondents having a bike, only 13% use it daily and 50% of respondents use it once per month or less. However, 81% of respondents said they would consider walking or cycling short journeys. Many respondents who own a bike and would consider walking or cycling short journeys also live within the Ipswich borough boundary.

Future public engagement work will include understanding the reasons for making these journeys by car, and what the barriers to swapping these journeys to walking or cycling might be. In addition, through the SCC Air Quality Strategy, we will work with our partners to look at ways to incentivise swapping car journeys for walking or cycling.

Vehicle idling:

Although 29% of respondents reported switching off their vehicle engine when stationary, 35% reported rarely or never doing so. However, 77% of people said they would consider switching off their vehicle when stationary. Future work will include understanding the current barriers to this and how we can encourage the public to do so through anti-idling campaigns.

Alert service:

61% of respondents said they would consider signing up for an alert service to let them know when pollution levels are high. Future work will include looking at evidence-based initiatives and best practice to consider potential solutions to such a service, and through our public engagement work, understanding what features of such a service the public might find helpful.

Support for schemes to improve air quality:

When asked about their support for schemes to improve air quality, around 50% of people were supportive of each of the schemes suggested. However, 20% of respondents said they would not support such schemes. Future public engagement work will consider the reasons behind this response to understand whether this is due to a current lack of awareness about how such schemes will improve air quality and why this is important for health, or whether there are other reasons for this.

Raising awareness of the health impacts of air quality and what people can do to protect themselves and others:

Our future public engagement work will also include measuring the public's current levels of awareness around the health impacts of air pollution, and developing information and advice about why air quality is important for health and wellbeing and what individuals can do to protect themselves and others.

Demographic breakdown of respondents:

Respondents were asked a series of questions about their demographic information, so that we could understand the types of people whose views were represented in this analysis. Analysis of each of these questions is provided below.

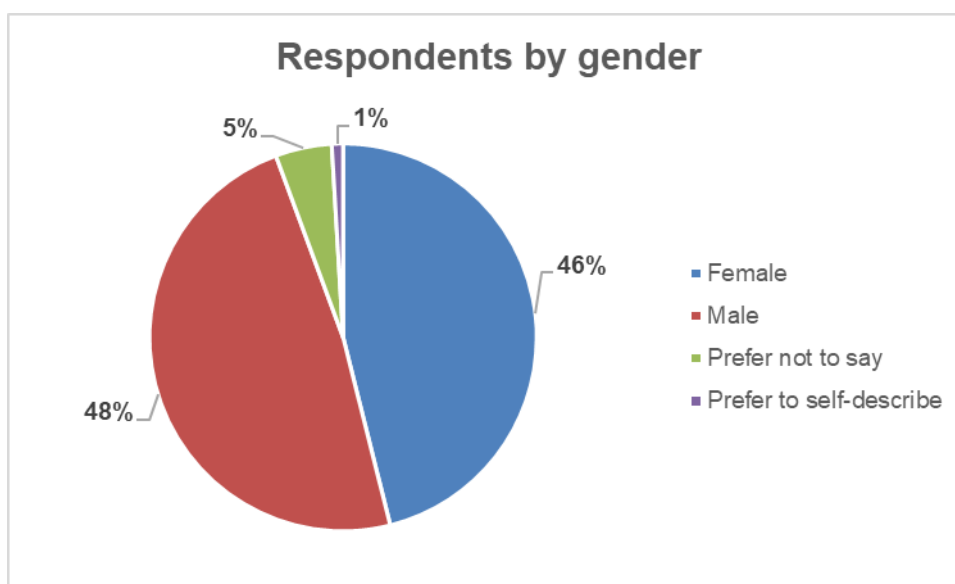
Respondents by location:

70% of responses from residents living in Ipswich (postcodes beginning IP1, IP2, IP3 and IP4) and 30% from the rest of Suffolk.

Respondents by gender:

There was a roughly equal number of responses between males and females as shown in figure 1 below. Of those respondents who provided a gender (319), there were 48% identifying as males, 46% identifying as females, 5% who preferred not to say, and 1% who preferred to self-describe.

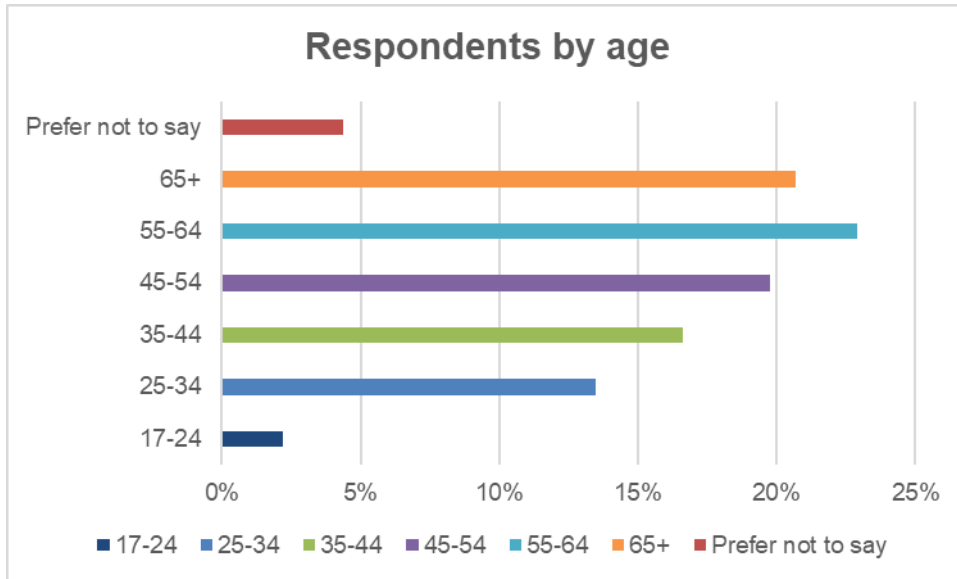
Figure 1:



Respondents by age:

Most respondents (64%) were aged over 45 years old. Of those respondents who provided an age (319), the age breakdown is shown in figure 2 below.

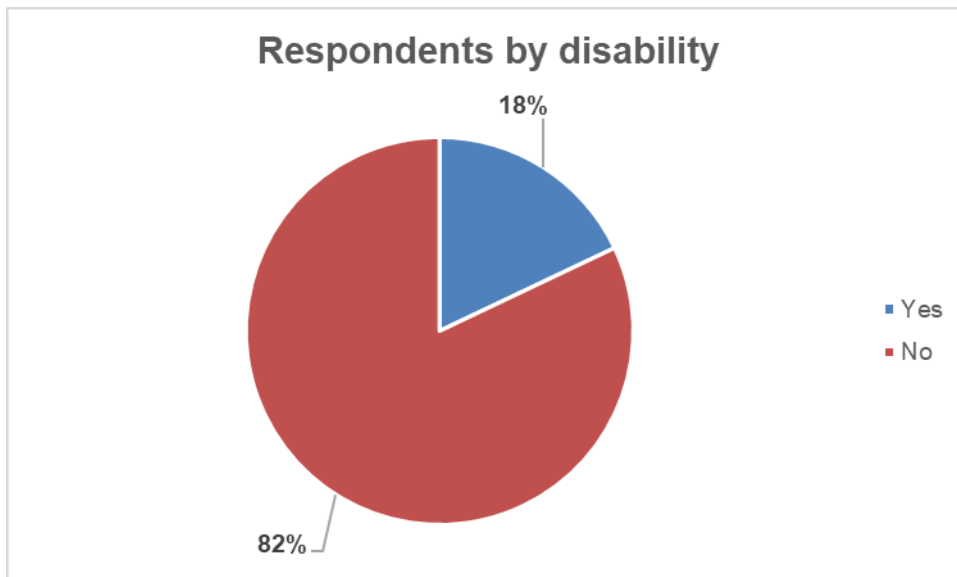
Figure 2:



Respondents by disability:

Of those who responded to this question (312), most respondents (82%) reported that they did not consider themselves to have a disability, as shown in figure 3 below.

Figure 3:

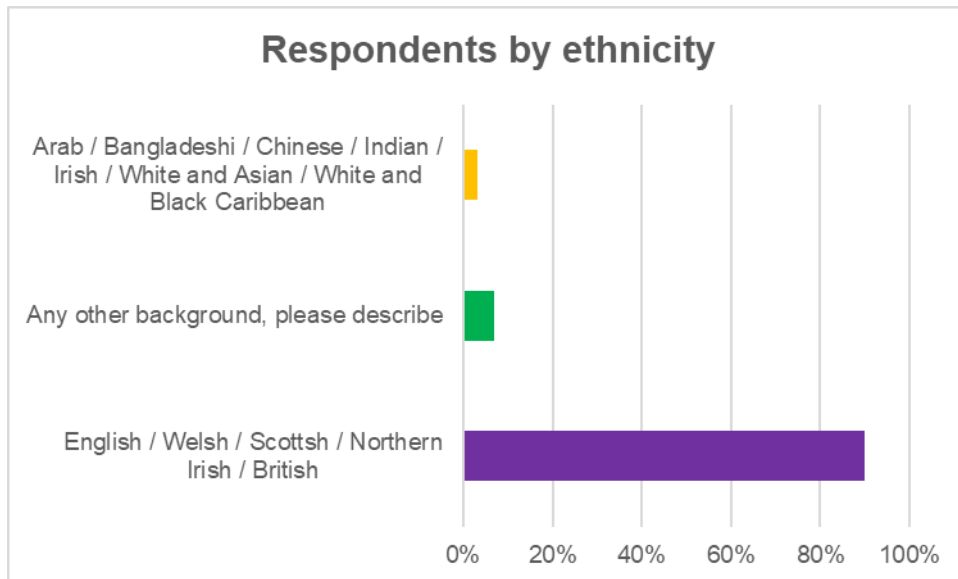


Respondents by ethnicity:

Of those who responded to this question (308), the majority (90%) reported identifying as 'English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British'. Those reporting an identity of either Arab (1), Bangladeshi (1), Chinese (1), Indian (1), Irish (2), White and Asian (1), or White and Black Caribbean (3) have been grouped together for this analysis due to the small number of respondents

selecting one of these categories, and together form 3% of respondents. A further 7% of respondents chose 'any other background, please describe'. The breakdown is shown in figure 4 below.

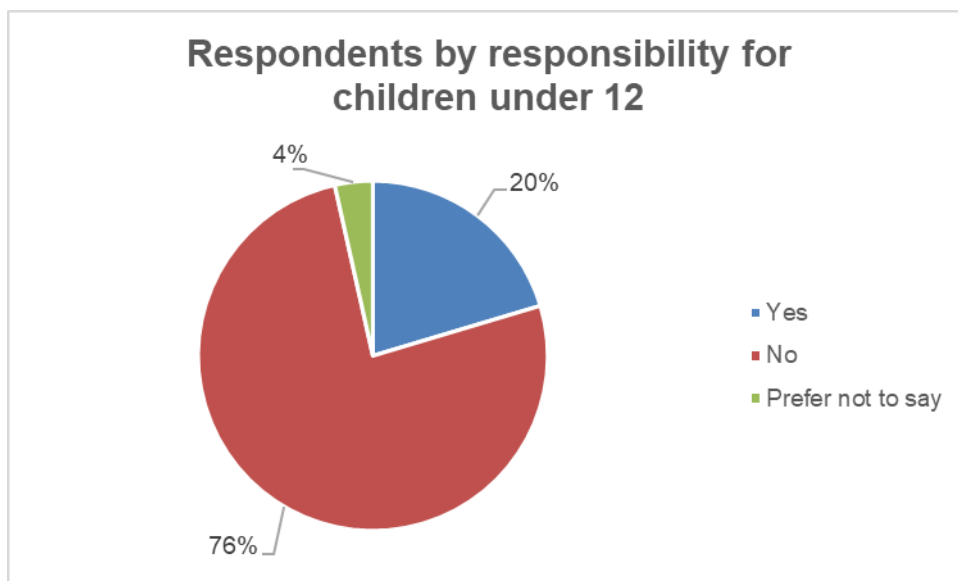
Figure 4:



Respondents with responsibility for children under the age of 12:

Of those who responded to this question (314), most respondents (76%) reported that they were not responsible for children under 12, as shown in figure 5 below.

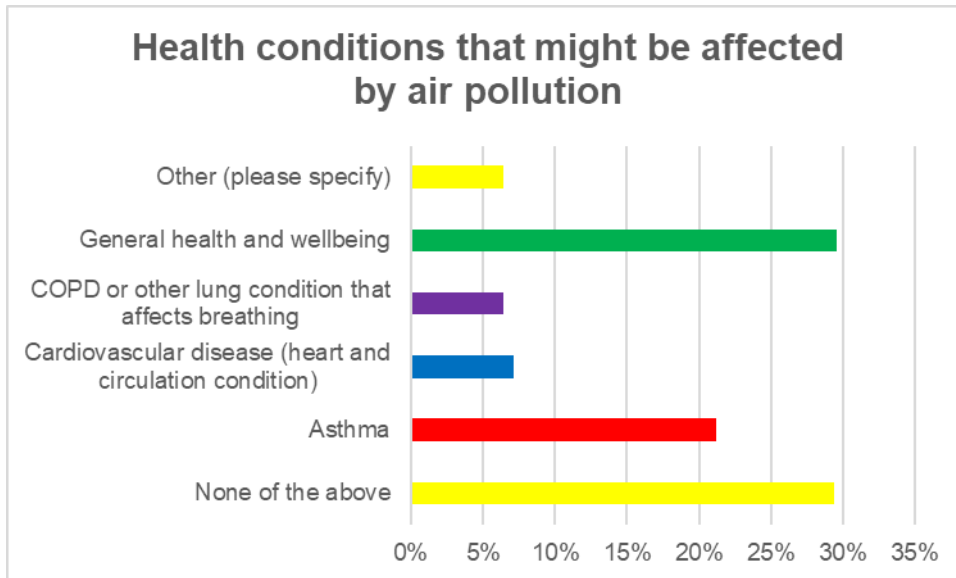
Figure 5:



Do you have any health conditions that might be affected by pollution?

Respondents were given a range of choices and could select as many as they felt were relevant. Of those who responded to this question (324), 30% of respondents said that air pollution affected their general health and wellbeing, and 21% said it affected their asthma. Of those reporting 'other' (6%), responses included long covid, allergies, and depression. The breakdown is shown in figure 6 below.

Figure 6:



How worried are you about whether pollution might be affecting your health / your family's health?

Respondents used a numerical sliding scale, with 'not at all concerned' at one end (zero), 'somewhat concerned' in the middle (50), and 'extremely concerned' at the other end (100).

Of those who responded to this question (331), the average of all responses was 66. This suggests that most residents are moderately concerned about the health impacts of air pollution.

What people think about Ipswich's air quality:

Because the survey was particularly focused on Ipswich, a series of questions were asked to understand residents' perceptions of air quality in Ipswich.

Respondents were asked a series of questions about what they think about Ipswich's air quality, sources of air pollution, and areas of perceived high pollution. Analysis of each of these questions is provided below.

How would you describe Ipswich's air?

Respondents used a numerical sliding scale, with 'very polluted' at one end (zero), 'neither clean nor polluted' in the middle (50), and 'very clean' at the other end (100).

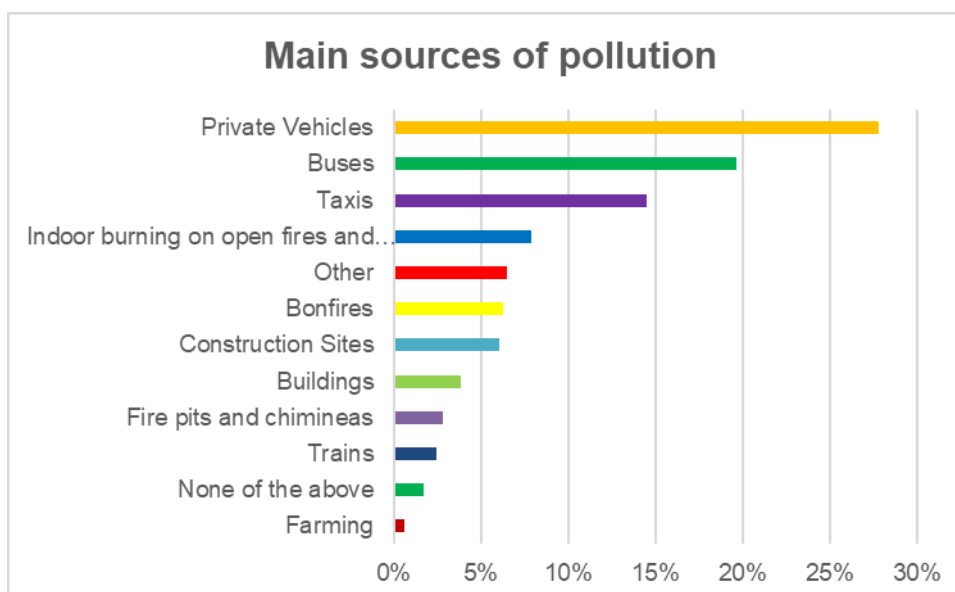
Of those who responded to this question (330), the average of all responses was 33. This suggests that most residents perceive the air quality as moderately poor.

What do you think are the main sources of pollution in Ipswich?

Respondents were given a range of choices and could select as many as they felt were relevant. Of those who responded (338), the three most frequently reported responses were types of road traffic: private vehicles (28%), buses (20%) and taxis (15%). Indoor wood or coal burning was the fourth most popular response (8%). A breakdown is shown in figure 7 below.

Respondents were also given an option to state other sources of pollution, which comprised 6% of responses overall. These included sources such as lorries / HGVs, ships and transport associated with Felixstowe docks, and temporary traffic lights causing traffic congestion.

Figure 7:



Are there any areas of Ipswich that you feel are particularly polluted?

This was an open-ended question (respondents could enter free text into the response box) and the responses were analysed based on the number of times an area or road was mentioned. Areas were included in the analysis if they were mentioned three times or more. Roads were included in the analysis if they were mentioned ten times or more.

Of those who responded (338):

- the three areas that were reported most often were the one-way system / gyratory (27%), 'town centre' (25%), and Norwich Road (20%). A breakdown is shown in figure 8 below.
- Norwich Road was the most commonly reported road (22%), which was mentioned twice as many times as the next most mentioned roads: Bramford Road (11%) and the one-way system / gyratory (11%). A breakdown is shown in Figure 9 below.

Figure 8:

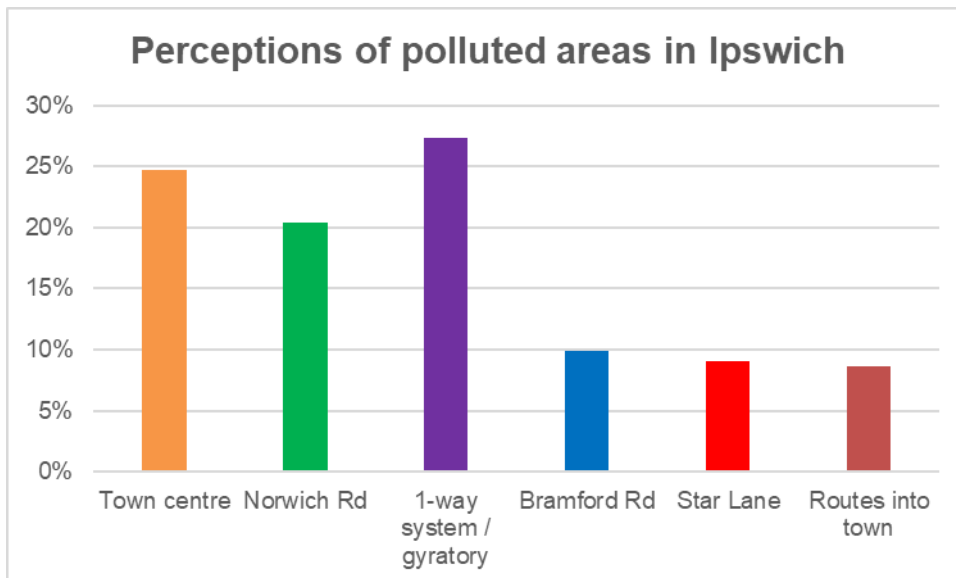
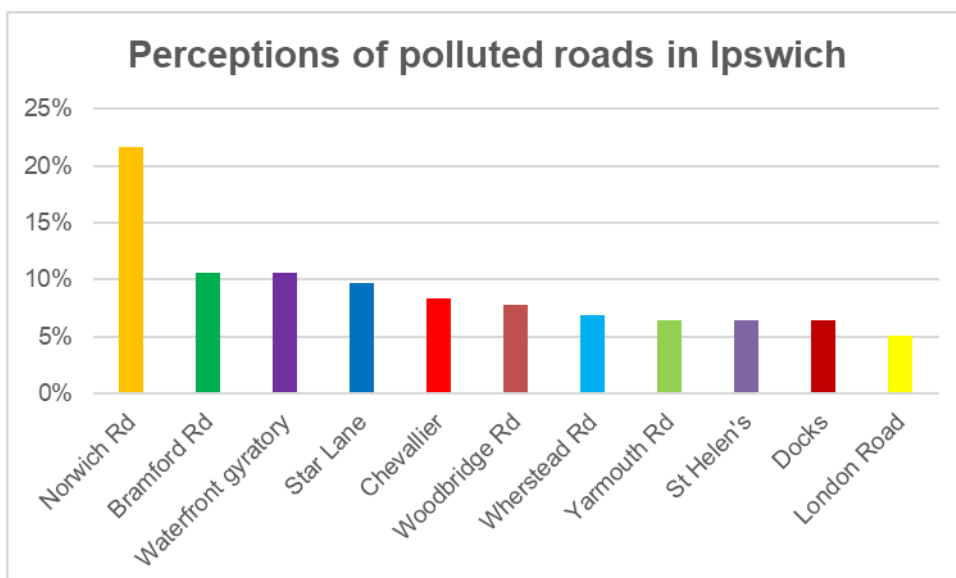


Figure 9:



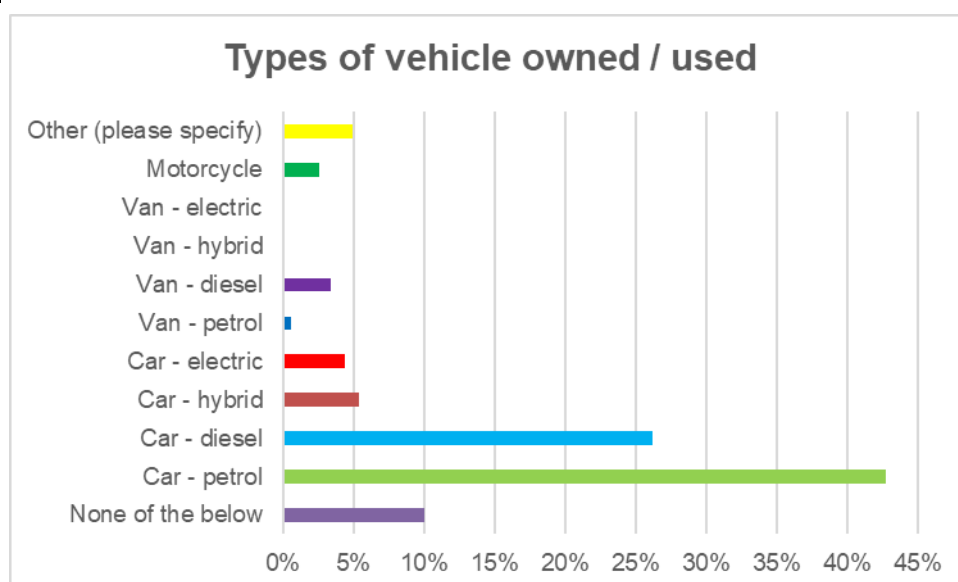
Motor vehicle use and behaviours:

Respondents were asked a series of questions about vehicle use and behaviours. These questions help us to form an understanding of where potential opportunities for behaviour change may be. Analysis of each of these questions is provided below.

Do you own or use a vehicle or motorcycle?

Respondents were given a range of choices and could select as many as they felt were relevant. Of those who responded (333), petrol cars (43%) and diesel cars (26%) were most frequently reported vehicle types. A total of 9% of respondents reported owning or using a hybrid car (5%) or electric car (4%). 10% of respondents reported not owning or using a vehicle at all. A breakdown is shown in figure 10 below.

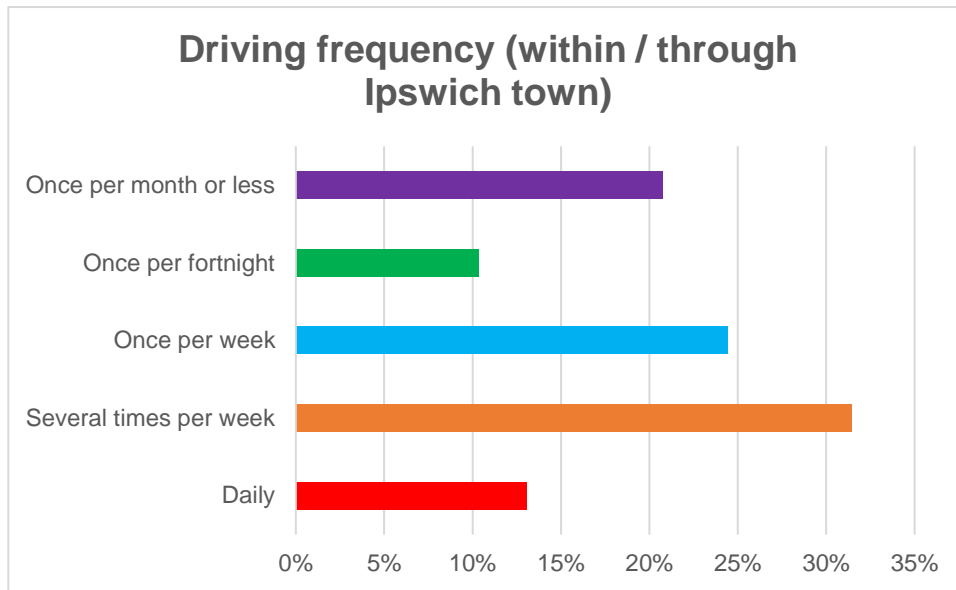
Figure 10:



How often, on average, do you drive within / through Ipswich town?

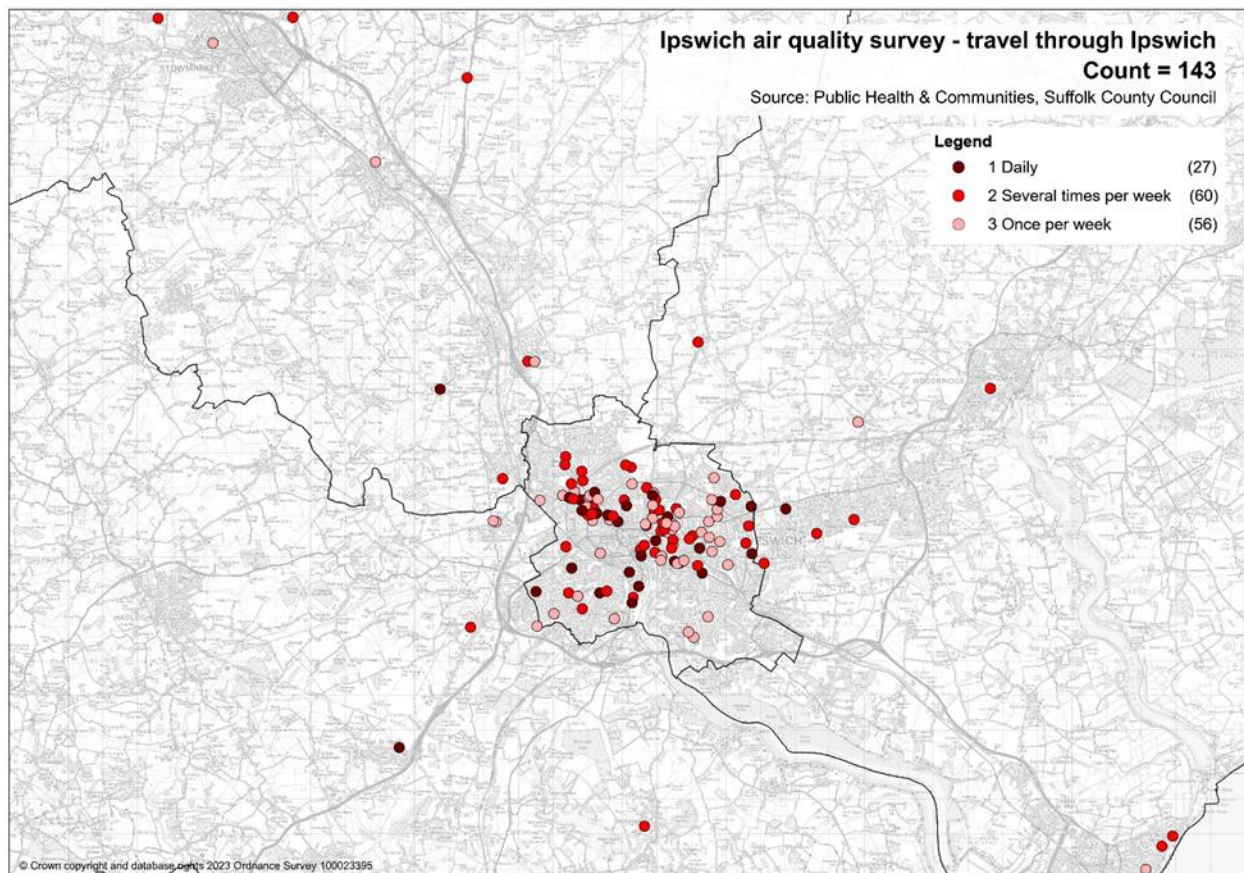
Respondents were asked to select one answer from a list of choices to best represent the frequency they drove within or through Ipswich town. Of those who responded (299) the most popular responses were 'several times per week' (31%) and 'once a week' (24%). 13% of respondents reported using their car daily. A breakdown is shown in figure 11 below.

Figure 11:



Furthermore, most respondents who said that they drive within or through Ipswich town either 'daily', 'several times per week', or 'once per week', and who provided a full postcode, live within the Ipswich borough boundary (see figure 12 below).

Figure 12:

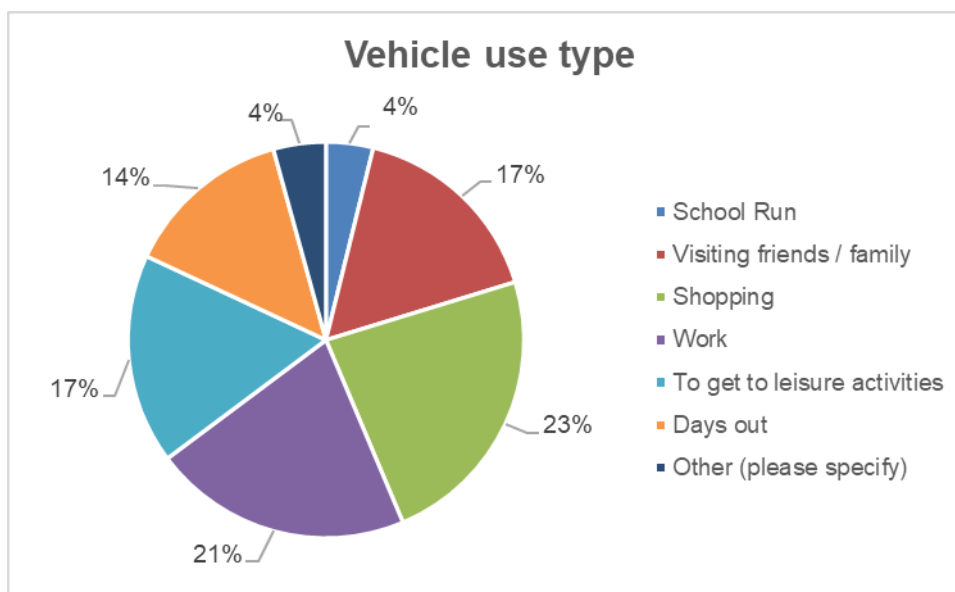


What do you use the vehicle for?

Respondents were given a range of choices and could select as many as they felt were relevant. Of those who responded (299), shopping (23%) and work (21%) were the most frequently reported reasons for driving through or within Ipswich town, with. School runs comprised 4% of the overall reasons reported. A breakdown is shown in figure 13 below.

Of those reporting 'other', medical-related appointments such as hospital, GP or dentist visits were frequently reported.

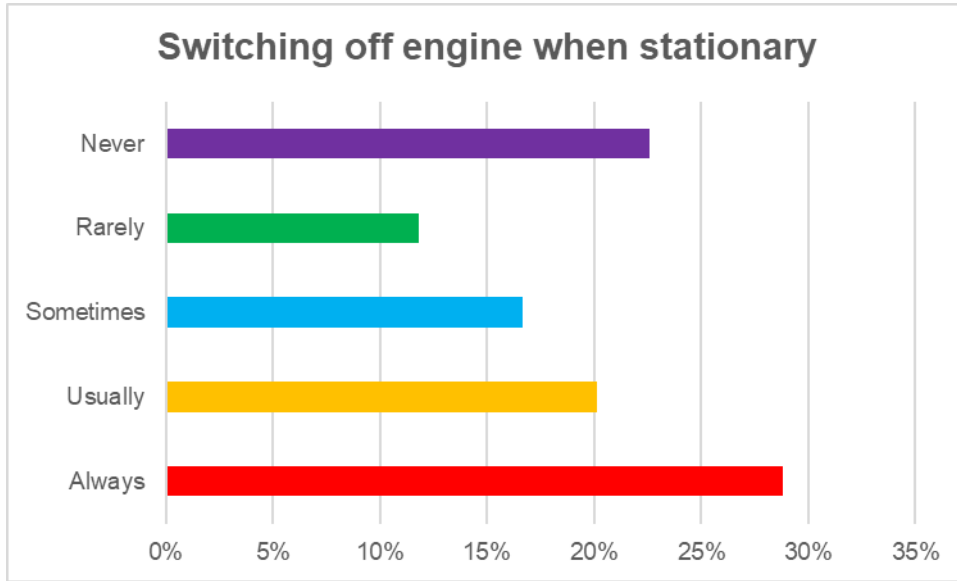
Figure 13:



Do you switch off the engine of your vehicle when you will be stationary for over 10 seconds (e.g., when pulled over, at traffic lights or junctions)?

Respondents were asked to select one answer from a list of choices to best represent the frequency they switched off their engine when stationary. Of those who responded (296), 29% of respondents reported that they always switch off their engine, and 20% reported 'usually' doing so. However, the second most popular response was 'never' (23%). A breakdown is shown in figure 14 below.

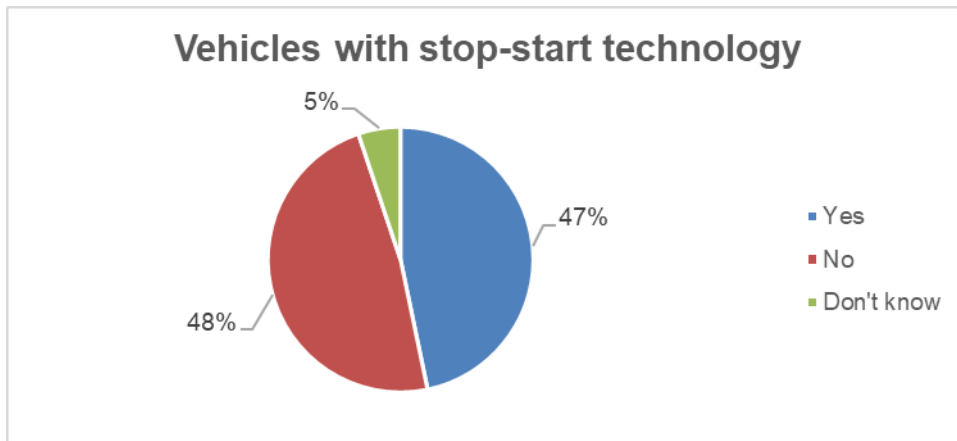
Figure 14:



Does your vehicle have start/stop technology?

Respondents were asked to select one answer from a list of choices. Of those who responded (291), 48% of respondents reported that their vehicle does not have stop-start technology, and 47% said their vehicle does have the technology, as shown in figure 15 below.

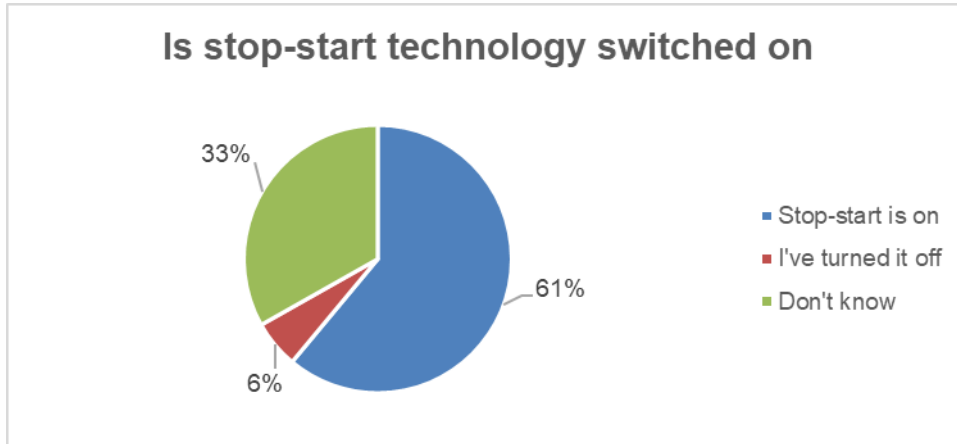
Figure 15:



Is stop-start turned on, or have you switched it off?

Respondents who said their vehicle had stop-start technology were given a follow-up question about whether they had switched the technology off. They were asked to select one answer from a list of choices. Of those who responded (208 – many who responded with 'don't know' to the previous question also answered this question), 61% of respondents reported that it was switched on, as shown in figure 16 below.

Figure 16:



Walking and cycling behaviours:

Respondents were asked a series of questions about behaviours relating to cycling, scooting, and walking. These questions help us to form an understanding of where potential opportunities for behaviour change may be.

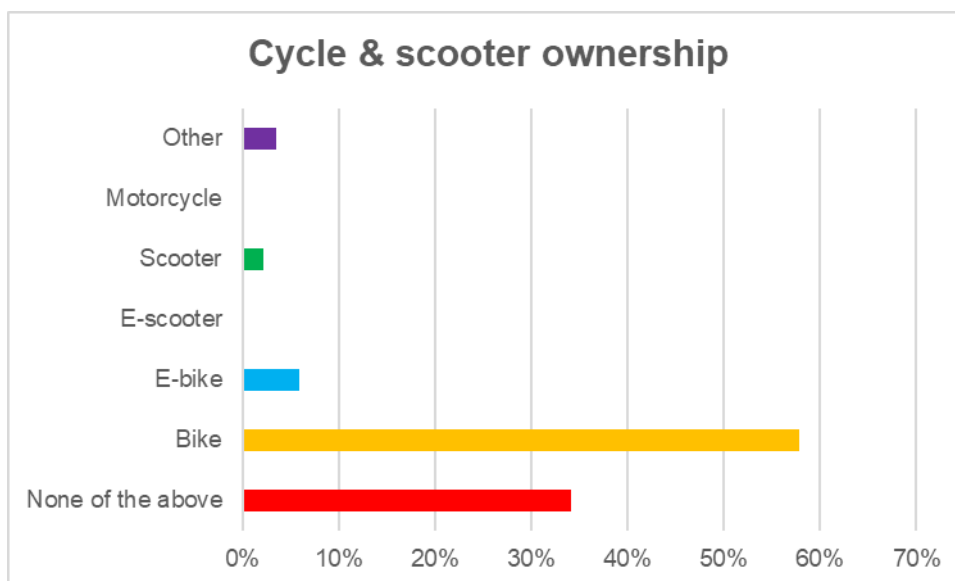
Future engagement will need to develop an understanding of the barriers to these changes in behaviour.

Do you own any of these?

Respondents were asked about their cycle and scooter ownership. They were given a range of choices and could select as many as they felt were relevant. Of those who responded (320), 58% said they owned a bike and 6% reported owning an electric bike (e-bike). A breakdown is shown in figure 17 below.

Of those responding 'other' (3%), mobility scooter was frequently reported.

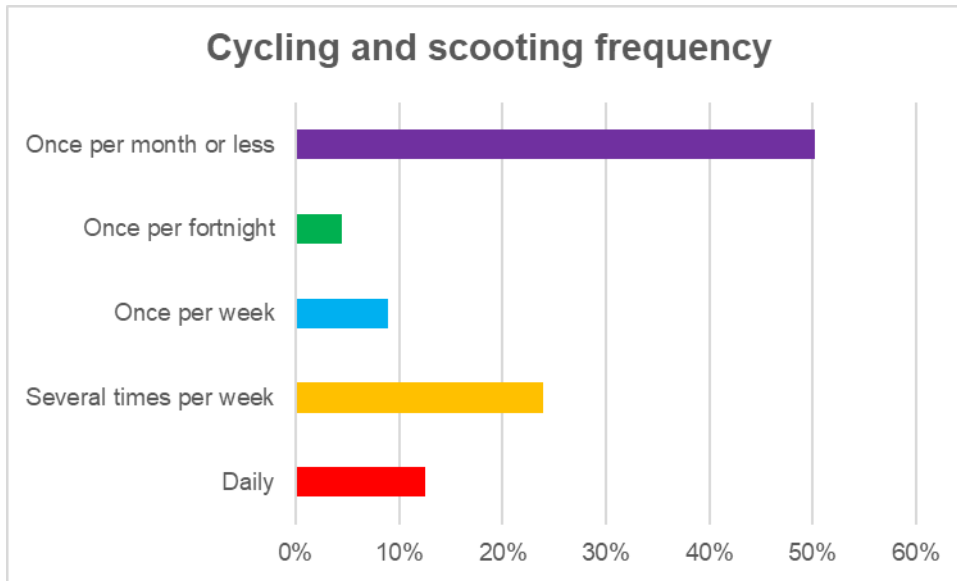
Figure 17:



How often do you cycle / scoot, on average?

Respondents were asked to select one answer from a list of choices to best represent the frequency they travelled by cycle or scooter. Of those who responded (247), 50% of respondents reported that they cycle or scoot once per month or less. However, 24% reported doing so several times per week and 13% reported doing so daily. A breakdown is shown in figure 18 below.

Figure 18:



Potential for changing behaviours:

Respondents were asked a series of questions about what behaviours they might be willing to change in relation to cycling and walking. These questions help us to form an understanding of where potential opportunities for behaviour change may be.

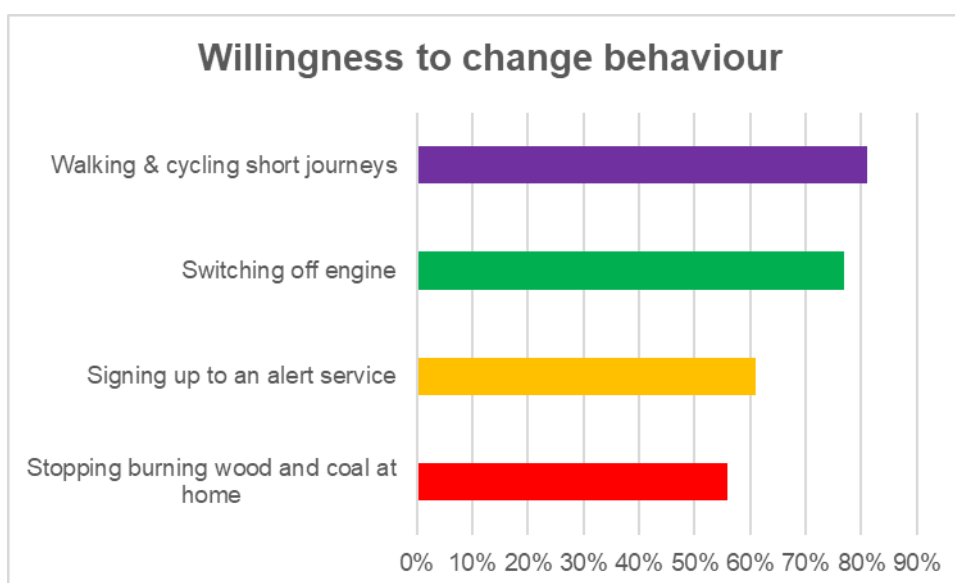
Future engagement will need to develop an understanding of the barriers to these changes in behaviour.

Would you consider any of the following which could help reduce pollution?

Respondents were asked about whether they would perform certain behaviours more often. They were asked to one answer from a list of choices that best represented them for each behaviour.

Of those who responded to each question, the percentage of people responding that they would consider changing their behaviour is summarised in figure 19 below. A further breakdown of responses to each question is shown below.

Figure 19:

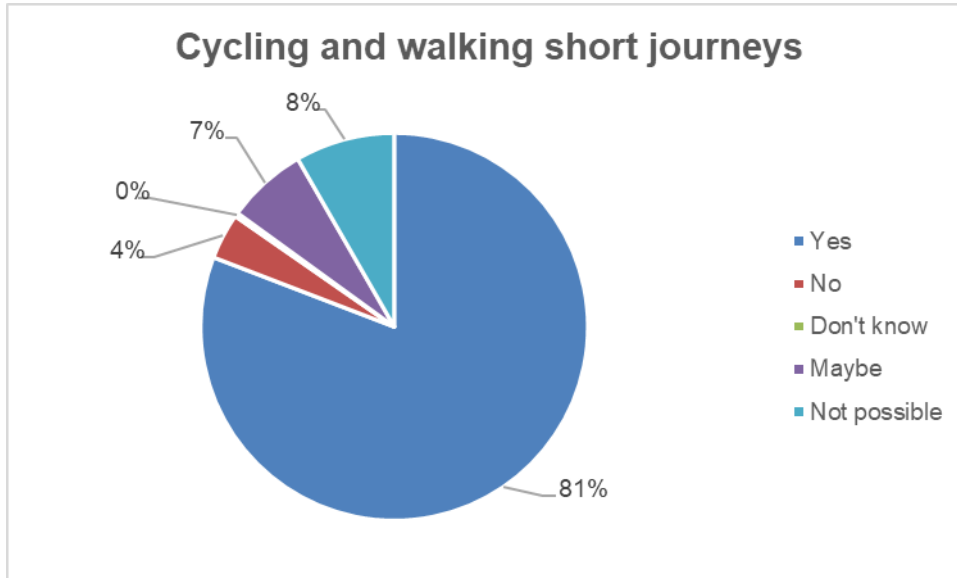


Walking and cycling short journeys more often:

Respondents were asked if they would consider cycling or walking short journeys more often. Despite 50% of people reporting that they currently cycle once a month or less, of those who responded (313), 81% of respondents reported that they would be willing to walk or cycle short journeys, as shown in figure 20 below.

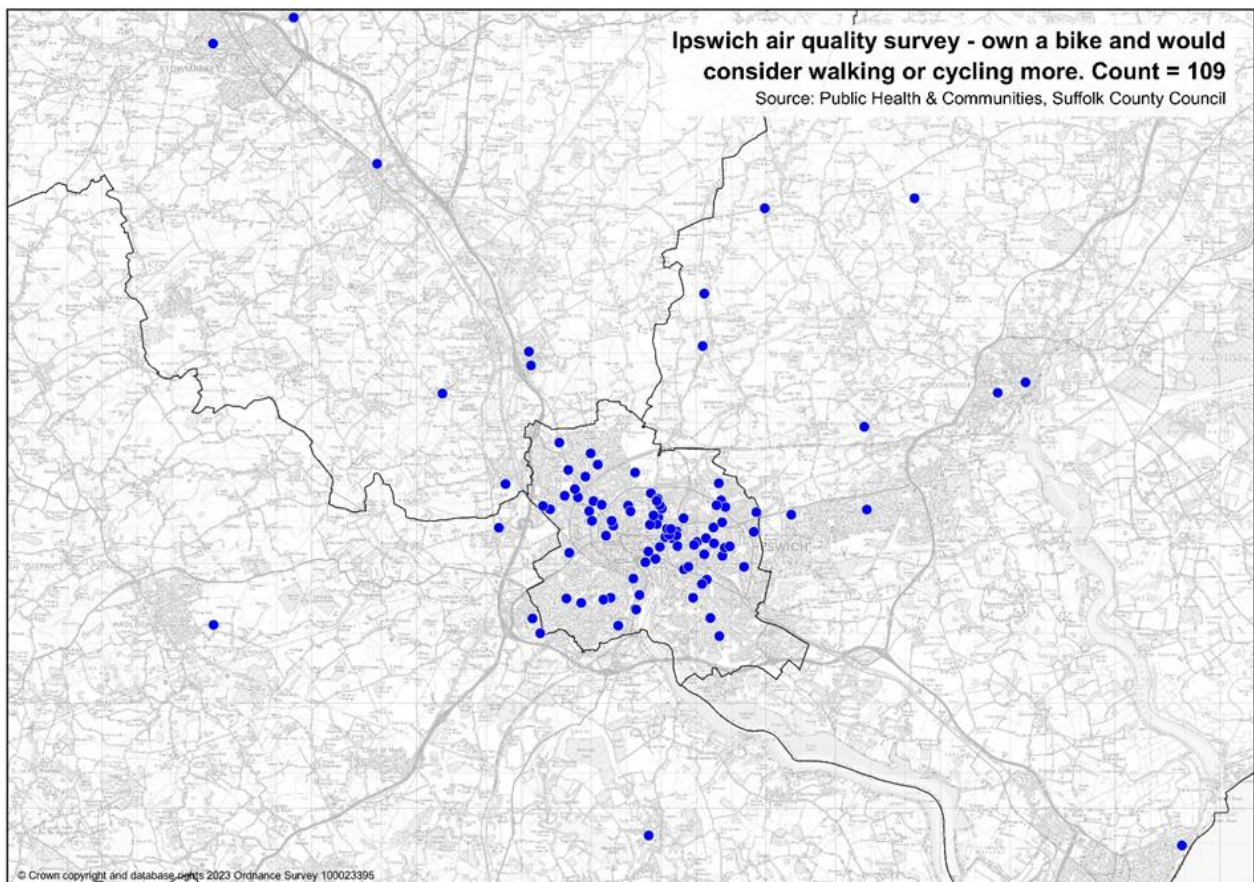
In addition, when analysing responses from residents from Ipswich postcodes (IP1, IP2, IP3 & IP4), the percentage of respondents willing to cycle and walk short journeys increased to 84%.

Figure 20:



Furthermore, most respondents who said that they own a bike and would consider walking or cycling more, and who provided a full postcode, live within the Ipswich borough boundary (see figure 20 below).

Figure 21:

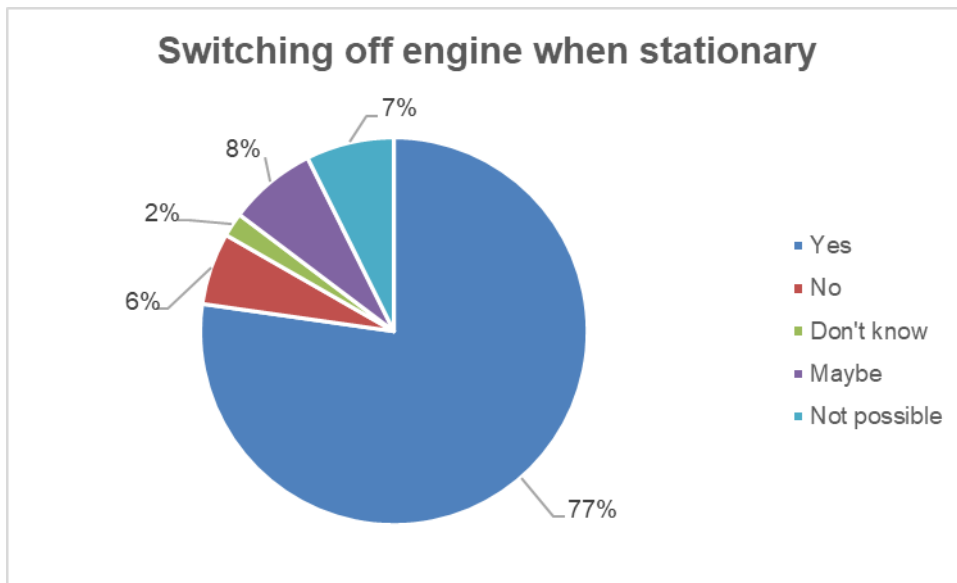


Switching off vehicles when stationary:

Respondents were asked if they would consider switching off their engine when stationary for a minute or longer. Despite 35% of people saying they currently never or rarely switch off their vehicle when stationary, of those who responded (299), 77% of respondents reported that they would be willing to do so, as shown in figure 21 below.

When analysing responses from residents from Ipswich postcodes (IP1, IP2, IP3 & IP4), the percentage of respondents willing to switch off their vehicle when stationary was also 77%.

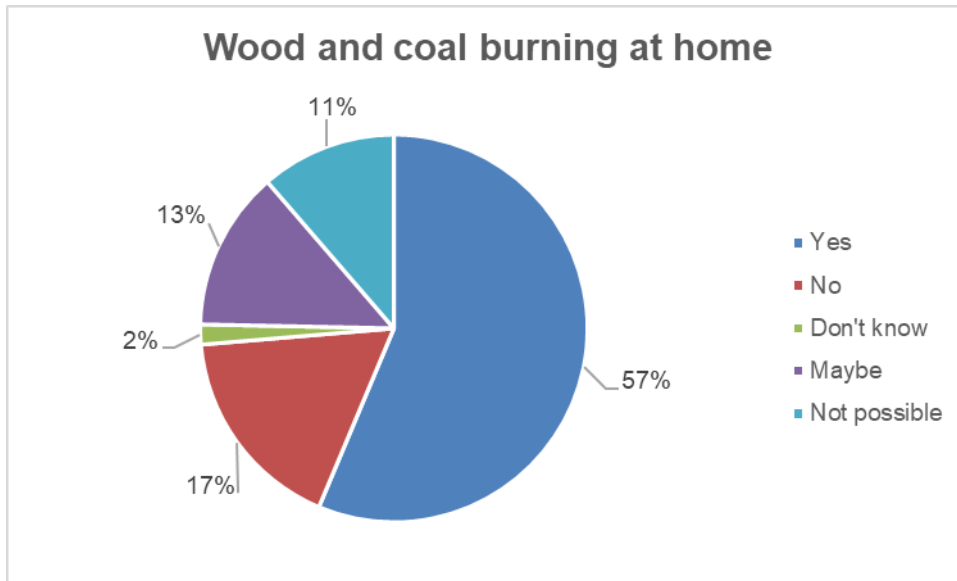
Figure 22:



Wood and coal burning in the home:

Respondents were asked if they would consider not burning wood or coal in the home. Of those who responded (300), 57% of respondents reported that they would be willing to do so, as shown in figure 23 below.

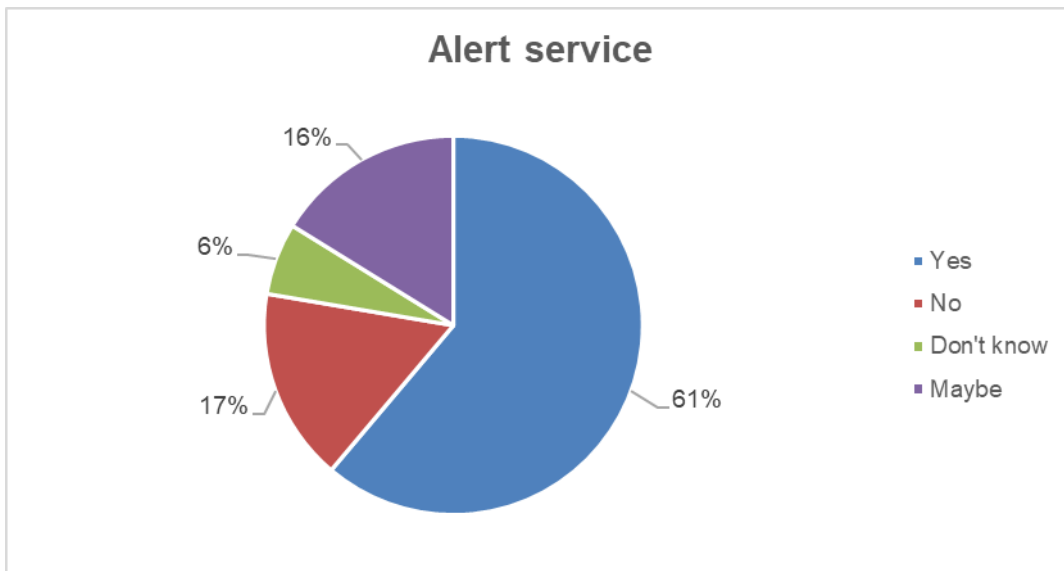
Figure 23:



Signing up to an alert service about high levels of air pollution:

Respondents were asked if they would consider signing up to an alert service to let them know when pollution levels are high. Of those who responded (310), 61% of respondents reported that they would be willing to do so, as shown in figure 24 below.

Figure 24:



Support for schemes to reduce pollution:

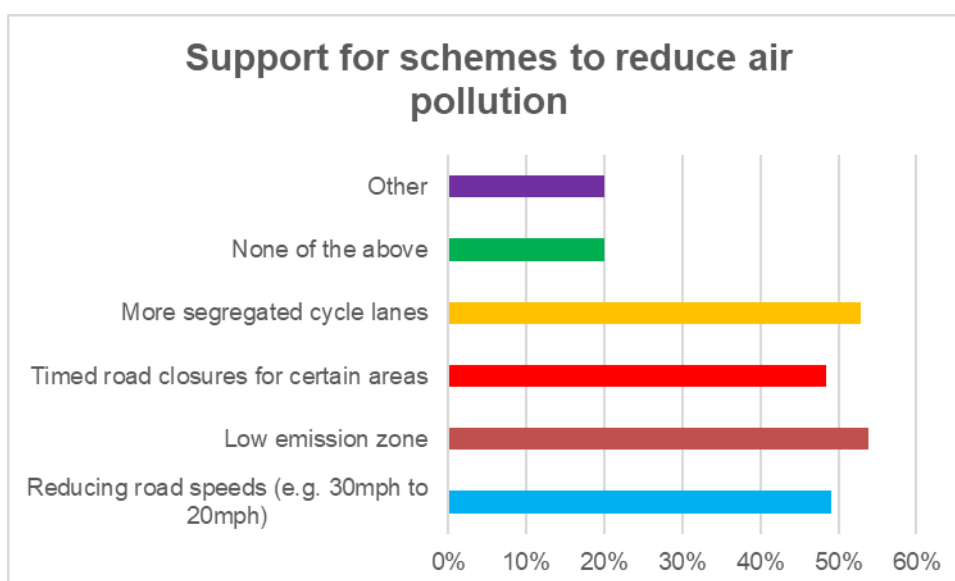
Respondents were asked a series of questions about what schemes they might support to reduce air pollution and what they thought should be done to tackle it. These questions help us to form an understanding of where there is public support for schemes to improve air quality in Suffolk.

Would you support any of the following schemes to reduce pollution?

Respondents were asked about whether they would support certain schemes to reduce air pollution. Of those who responded (310), around 50% of respondents supported all of the schemes suggested, as shown in figure 25 below. Introducing a low emission zone was the most supported (54%), followed by more segregated cycle lanes (53%), reducing road speeds (49%), and timed road closures (48%). However, 20% of respondents reported not being supportive of such schemes.

Of those reporting 'other', suggestions included secure cycling storage in the town centre, 'school street' initiatives (e.g., encouraging walking and cycling to school), traffic-free roads / low traffic neighbourhoods, and improving traffic flow.

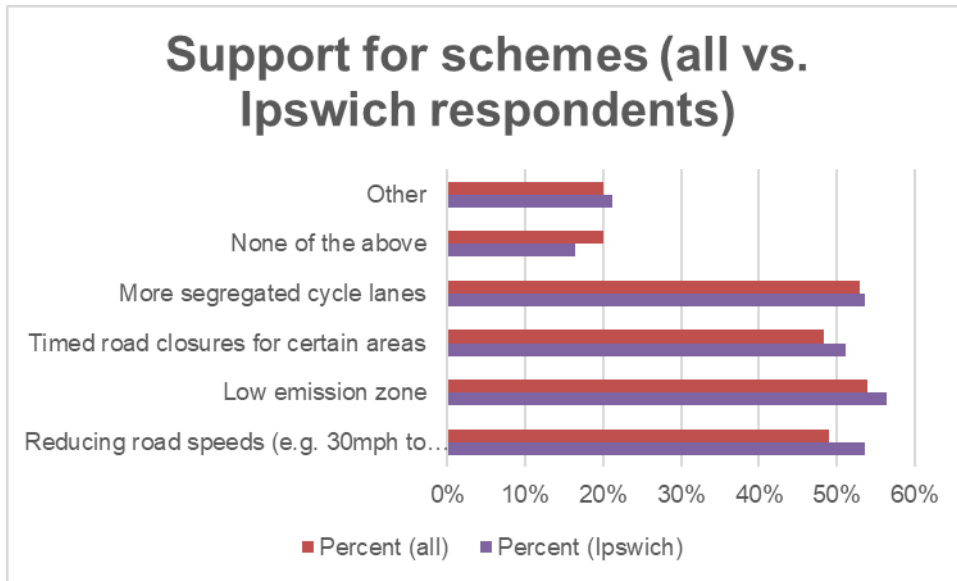
Figure 25:



When analysing responses from residents from Ipswich postcodes (IP1, IP2, IP3 & IP4), the percentage of respondents supporting schemes to reduce air pollution increased slightly for each scheme. Of those who responded from Ipswich postcodes (213), the greatest increase in support was for reducing road speeds (5% increase), followed by timed road closures (3% increase), introducing a low emission zone (2% increase) and more segregated cycle lanes (1% increase).

Similarly, the number of residents reporting 'none of the above' reduced by 4%, from 20% to 16%. The comparison between all responses and Ipswich residents' responses is shown in figure 26 below.

Figure 26:



Do you have any suggestions for how pollution could be reduced in Ipswich?

This was an open-ended question (respondents could enter free text into the response box) and the responses were analysed based on the number of times a suggestion was mentioned. Suggestions were included in the analysis if they were mentioned three times or more.

In general, the suggested solutions proposed by those who responded (194) related to either addressing traffic-related emissions or encouraging more sustainable travel. The solutions that were suggested by those who responded are shown in figure 27 below. More / safer cycle routes was the most frequently mentioned suggestion (21%), followed by electric / greener buses (18%), and improved public transport (17%).

Figure 27:

