

Appendix D – Consultation responses

The Draft Strategy was open for wider public consultation on citizen Lab between 18th January and 19th February 2024 with publicity to promote the consultation via Cambridge Matters, Press Releases and social media. 383 responses were received representing both city and south Cambridgeshire.

Question 1 - Do you agree with the objectives of the Strategy?

In summary 71.9% of responders agreed with the objectives and 21.4% of responders disagreed with the objectives.

The main reasons given for disagreeing with the objectives were that they felt air quality in Cambridge was already good and that the Strategy is a pretext for imposing additional costs or taxes on motorists.

Question 2 - Do you agree with adoption of the WHO guidelines?

66.7% of responders agreed with adopting the WHO guidelines for the Strategy with 23.9% of responders disagreeing with adopting the WHO guidelines.

The main reasons given for disagreeing with the adoption of the WHO guidelines were a distrust towards WHO as it was an international body.

Again responders who disagreed felt air quality was good and therefore a more stringent guideline was not required and the guidelines were a pretext for imposing additional costs or taxes on motorists.

Question 3 - Do you think we should have interim targets?

The responses to the consultation showed 64% of people were in favour of having interim targets. Responders who disagreed with the interim targets felt that they weren't necessary, and some felt that they took the focus away from reaching the WHO guidelines.

Question 4 – Put the key priorities in order of importance for you

The key priorities in order of most importance:

Infrastructure improvements

50.2%

Monitoring of pollutant levels

20.2%

Planning policy

16.8%

Awareness raising and communication

12.8%

Question 5 - Put the key priorities in order of least importance for you

Awareness raising and communication.

38.8%

Planning policy

24.2%

Monitoring of pollutant levels

22.3%

Infrastructure improvements

14.7%

Anything else you think should be a key priority?

Summary of responses:

- Need for better traffic management and reduction of vehicle emissions.
- Improvements in public transport infrastructure, such as more frequent buses and buses which run later in the evenings.
- The improvement of cycle lanes to encourage alternative modes of transportation, such as better surfaces, repairing potholes and better lighting for offroad routes.
- Importance of specific and measurable goals, such as the adoption of all-electric buses and the elimination of wood-burning stoves.
- Transparency and accessibility of plans.
- Concerns about overdevelopment and its impact on pollution, with some citizens advocating for a halt to further re-developments and new developments to prevent increasing pollution.
- Reduction of solid fuel burning and the enforcement of smoke control areas.
- The monitoring of pollutant levels and the effects on health.

Question 6 - Please select the three sources which you feel have the most impact on air quality in your day-to-day activities.

The top three sources from the respondents to the survey were:

- Vans / lorries,
- Cars, and
- Idling
- (Chimneys and domestic burning were a close 4th activity which had the most impact on air quality.)

Question 7 - We provide information about air quality in Greater Cambridge on the Cambridge City Council website. Were you aware that this information was available?

There was an even split with the response to the question, with half of respondents saying they were aware and half saying they were not.

Question 8 - Were you aware Air Quality information is provided on our website?

There was an even split with the response to the question, with half of respondents saying they were aware and half saying they were not.

Question 9 - As an individual do you take any of the following actions to reduce your emissions of air pollutants?

Walk or cycle for shorter journeys

25.8%

Buy local more often to reduce freight mileage

16.1%

Only use petrol/diesel vehicles for longer journeys

12.3%

Choose not to burn solid fuel

11.9%

Consider air source/ground source heat pump or solar panels to power your home/business

11.6%

Use public transport to get to work/school/leisure activities

11.5%

Drive an electric car

4.1%

Follow the Burn Better guide to solid fuel burning

3.4%

Ride an electric bike

3.3%

If there are any other actions you take, please specify below.

- use of alternative modes of transportation.
- reducing car usage, with some opting for cycling, walking, or public transport
- car sharing
- using low-emission vehicles
- use of renewable energy sources.
- installing or considering the installation of solar panels, or heat pumps
- insulating homes to reduce energy consumption
- Gardening and growing their own food
- reducing waste and recycling, choose compostable/recyclable packaging, buy in charity shops when possible.

Question 10 - What actions would you like to take and what are the barriers that prevent you from currently undertaking these actions?

- Switch to electric vehicles (EVs), with many citizens citing the high cost of EVs as a barrier. Additionally, the lack of sufficient charging infrastructure is a concern.
- Home energy improvements are also a common aspiration, with many citizens wanting to install solar panels and heat pumps. However, the high costs and complexity of installation are significant barriers.
- Renters, in particular, feel powerless to make such changes due to their housing situations.
- Public transportation improvements are frequently mentioned, with citizens calling for more reliable, frequent, and integrated services, with the lack of evening services as a particular issue.
- Cycling infrastructure is another area of concern, with citizens wanting safer and better-maintained paths. However, the current state of the infrastructure, including dangerous roundabouts and poorly connected lanes, discourages this mode of transport.
- Some citizens have also suggested innovative ideas such as consolidating deliveries to reduce traffic.
- Several responders suggested creating low emission zones.

Question 11 - Do you have any other comments about the draft strategy and action plan or air quality in Greater Cambridge?

- Concerned about the impact of air quality on health and the environment and want this strategy to go further and be bolder.
- Need for a more inclusive approach that considers the financial implications for all income families, especially regarding the push for electric vehicles, which some find prohibitively expensive.
- There is a call for more consultation with specific groups, such as boaters, to find suitable low-emission solutions.
- Some responses suggest that the strategy is not drastic enough and fails to address the root causes of air pollution, such as excessive car use and illegal parking.
- The importance of preserving and planting more trees is also highlighted.
- Enforcement of pollution controls is a concern, with some citizens noting the lack of plans to enforce idling or incorrect fuel burning regulations.
- There are suggestions for live air quality signs on main roads,
- The implementation of all-electric buses,
- Restricting the city centre to electric cars only.
- Delivery hubs to reduce courier van deliveries and the use of electric cargo bikes in the city centre.
- More involvement with schools especially those in urban areas to reduce their impact on air quality and reduce their exposure.

- Public transport improvements, with some citizens urging the authorities to sort out public transport before restricting car access.
- Concerns about the strategy's focus and reach are raised, with some feeling it is not tightly focused on hotspots or essential journeys, such as school runs.
- Several responses criticize the strategy for lacking ambition and not being linked to improved health outcomes or reducing NHS spending on air quality issues.
- The need for random testing of large vehicles in the city to address the removal of diesel particulate filters.
- A few responses express scepticism about the consultation process, suggesting that the council and Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) often ignore consultation results.

Summary

The main comments from the Strategy highlighted the willingness of the general public to undertake actions to improve air quality. However, the barriers to improvements were lack of public transport and the state of roads, cycle paths and footpaths in Greater Cambridge to allow active travel options. The public showed a willingness to convert to more sustainable lifestyles by expressing a wish to purchase EV vehicles but were concerned about the costs and availability of charge points. The public also wants to use sustainable forms of heating such as solar panels, air source heat pumps and ground source heat pumps but were concerned about the lack of information available on how to install these and the associated costs. The responses also highlighted that the public wishes to see more action taken on reducing emissions associated with solid fuel burning, and the planting of more trees to improve the environment. We have amended the strategy and action plan to include these two additional ideas.

We will work with our partners on areas which have highlighted in the Strategy but are not under our direct control these include: public transport, roads, cycle paths and footpaths.

We will also continue to work with our colleagues on biodiversity and raising awareness of smoke control issues.