

March 2023 Newsletter

AIR POLLUTION THEME OF THE MONTH: ACTIVE TRAVEL

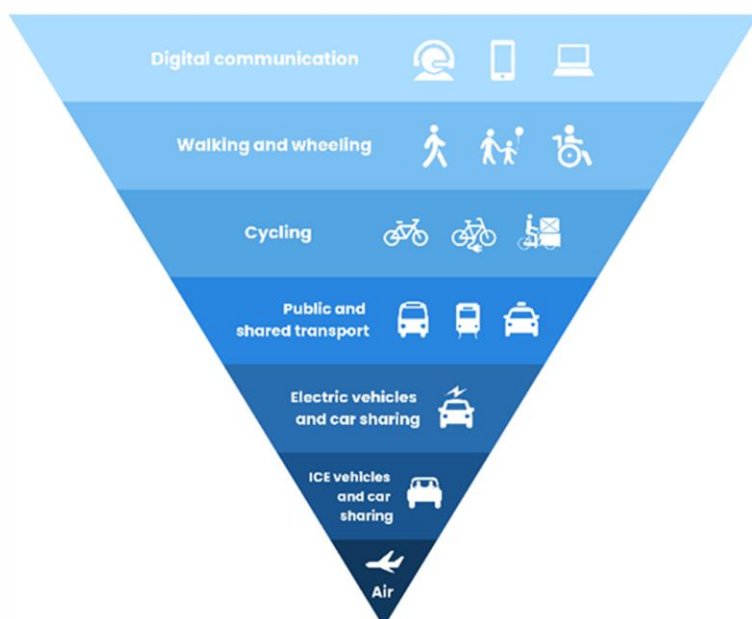


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What is Active Travel?

Active travel is simple - it is using your own body to make a journey. Basically, getting from point A to point B without using fossil fuels. Travelling actively also helps you live a healthier lifestyle, as it improves your mental and physical health.



This sustainable travel hierarchy is a useful tool for thinking about how to improve the impact of your journeys. The higher up the hierarchy, the more sustainable and environmentally friendly the travel option. Walking and wheeling are the most sustainable travel options.

Tackling Air Pollution Through Active Travel

Road transport is the biggest contributor to poor air quality and is responsible for about 80% of roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations. Currently 95% of all vehicles on the road run on diesel or petrol. When fuel is burned inside a car's combustion engine, the fuel's chemical structure degrades, the result is tail pipe emissions of toxic chemicals and particulates. Whilst brake pads, tyres, and road debris create even more particulate matter (PM) pollution.



On average, a litre of diesel emits **442 times more nitrogen oxide (N₂O)** than a litre of petrol, making diesel the most highly polluting fuel type. It is important to keep in mind however, that both petrol and diesel

vehicles produce dangerous pollutant and carbon emissions. The table below shows the difference in emissions from different vehicle types.

Vehicle	Fuel type	N ₂ O g per mile	CO ₂ e g per mile
Average motorbike	Diesel	0.95	185.89
Average car	Petrol	0.61	291.03
	Diesel	2.97	279.01
Average van (up to 3.5 tonnes)	Petrol	1.14	380.53
	Diesel	2.96	405.76
Average load heavy goods vehicle	Diesel	20.55	1,394.57

The cleanest on-road vehicles are pure electric automobiles, which have no exhaust emissions but even better is taking an **active travel option**. If you choose to walk just one mile a week instead of driving, you'll save 26kg of carbon dioxide a year.

According to a study, it was found that the average CO₂ emissions per person per day 3.18kg. Interesting 70% (2.23kg) of these daily total emissions are from car travel at 2.23kg. Whereas cycling accounts for only 0.03 kg of our average daily CO₂ emissions.

Active travel choices such as walking, and cycling are not only great ways to stay healthy but can also be easily fitted into your normal lifestyle. Just 30 minutes of walking a day can increase your heart and lung fitness, while reducing risk of chronic and cardiovascular disease.

Cycling is also one of the quickest and healthiest forms of active travel. There are many benefits to cycling which aren't just about reducing carbon emissions. Cycling is faster than public transport, saving you time as you filter



through traffic. It's also a great step towards a healthier lifestyle, building muscle, and improving your heart and lung capacity.

So, it's good to know that when you choose active travel, you're not only helping the environment but also helping yourself live a healthier life.

Sandwell's Active Travel Potential

Analysis of Sandwell census data, demonstrates that most residents of Sandwell work in Sandwell. This is great news as it means there is real potential for Sandwell residents to be able to commute to work using more active means rather than having to rely on private vehicles to travel great distances. As the transportation sector is a major source of NO₂ emissions, if Sandwell's residents can shift to more active modes of transportation this will really help Sandwell meet its 2030 vision of helping residents live healthier lives for longer. Positively, many of Sandwell's residential areas are already 20mph zones or are proposed to be 20mph zones in the future. These zones provide more pleasant cycling and walking conditions.

Active Travel Options in Sandwell

The current infrastructure in place in Sandwell for active travel can be found on the Sandwell Interactive Cycle Map here <https://sandwell.activemap.co.uk/>. This contains cycle routes, cycle parking and public transport links.

British Cycle in partnership with SMBC are also delivering led rides in Parks across Sandwell to build cycling confidence before going on to cycle on the road and Smethwick park is currently running some rides. The first of these is on the 6th of April 2023 <https://www.letsride.co.uk/rides/west-smethwick-pedal-in-the-park-5>. If you want to find out more about other cycling opportunities in Sandwell, please visit <https://letsride.co.uk/>

For more information on active travel options, please contact our Active Travel Officer at Susan.streethall@sandwell.gov.uk.

Introducing #CarFreeFridays!

As part of our ongoing air quality project with Faith Centres across Sandwell, we are now promoting active travel in Faith centres with #CarFreeFridays. This is to encourage worshippers to ditch the car and simply walk or cycle to their various faith centres on Fridays! If you worship on another day of the week, then please feel free to ditch the car on that day and walk or cycle instead.

