

## What impacts do traffic-related air pollution have on health?

**There is consistent evidence that air pollution from motorised traffic damages our lives and for some people, kills.**

Among other things, it has been shown to:

- Cause chronic bronchitis in children and adults.
- Increase the frequency and severity of asthma attacks as well as making children more likely to develop asthma in the first place.
- Exacerbate chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder (COPD).
- Increase the likelihood of cardiovascular disease including strokes and heart attacks.
- Trigger allergic reactions in adults and children as well as making children more likely to develop allergies.
- Contribute to babies being born with low birthweight – which increases levels of infant deaths and has lifelong negative health impacts including shorter life expectancies.

Air pollution is a particular problem in Leicester already, and the addition of more roads will only spread this problem to a wider population, with many long-term negative health effects.

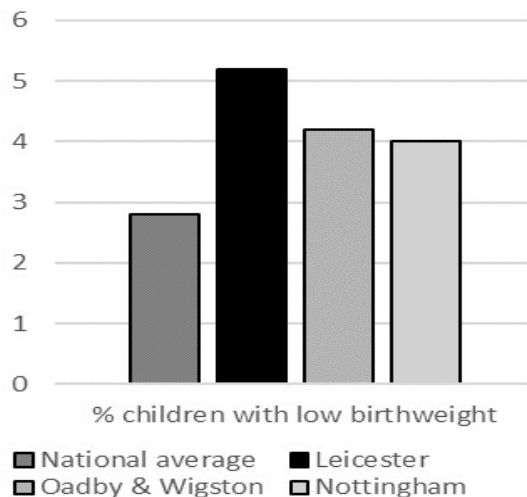
Local government actions regarding transportation and pollution can clearly have a significant effect on the health of urban populations such as Leicester. Reducing air pollution (rather than simply moving it to another part of the city) at the same time as increasing cycling and walking could:

- Improve lives and make people more economically productive as they lose fewer days to illness.
- Lower costs to local health-care providers improving local health care provision overall.
- Increase mental health and well-being as exercise levels increase.

**If the East-West link road was built, it would mean that at best, some pollution was moved from Upperton Road to Evesham Road which is within a few meters of St Marys Fields primary school where over 400 children, many of them already from deprived areas of the West End, attend school. At worst it would not even reduce the pollution hotspots on Upperton Road and Middleton Street for years but would just encourage more car use, generating additional pollution.**

**There are solutions: car use can be managed instead of catered for. Public and active transport can be prioritised resulting in a happier, healthier and cleaner Leicester.**

A large study published in The Lancet in 2000<sup>4</sup> looking at the population of Austria, France and Switzerland found that: "Air pollution caused 6% of total mortality per year.... About half of all mortality caused by air pollution was attributed to motorised traffic."



According to the Office of National Statistics<sup>5</sup>, 4,618 children were born in Leicester in 2016. Of these, 241 were low birth weight (5.2%). This is higher than the England and Wales average of 2.8%. It's also higher than the rate anywhere in Leicestershire that was reported (2<sup>nd</sup> highest was Oadby and Wigston at 4.2%). It is far and away the highest in the cities of the East Midlands reported (next highest: Nottingham at 4%).

A scientific study published in 2005<sup>6</sup> looked at rates of hospital admissions among children exposed to traffic caused air pollution. There was a 6% increase in asthma-related admissions for school-aged children who had experienced a 24-hour increase in nitrous oxide emissions.

A 2009 study published in The Lancet<sup>7</sup> estimated that the effects of a programme to reduce air pollution and increase cycling and walking in London would result in a reduction in years of loss of life in the region of 10-19%.