# Thurrock Council launches dust hotline amid rising health concerns in Tilbury



Thurrock Council is set to launch a dedicated hotline to enable residents of Tilbury to report issues related to dust pollution emanating from the town’s port. This initiative is part of the council’s immediate response to a longstanding problem that has raised serious health concerns among the local community. Michael Dinneen, assistant director for community protection and enforcement services, detailed the council’s commitment during a recent place overview and scrutiny committee meeting. He described proactive engagements with the Tilbury Residents’ Forum and local councillors, aiming to better understand the extent of residents’ experiences with dust pollution, which many believe has worsened since the opening of Tilbury2.

In addition to creating the hotline, the council has established an out-of-hours call-out process specifically designed for Tilbury dust complaints. This service is a new provision that will allow for a more immediate response to incidents reported by the community. Dinneen also referenced a collaborative dust management meeting involving key stakeholders such as the Port Health Authority, Environment Agency, port operators, and the council’s air quality officer, signalling a concerted effort to tackle the issue through joint oversight. Follow-up discussions with the Environment Agency are scheduled to address regulated sites and enhance enforcement capabilities.

The health implications of dust pollution in Tilbury have been a focal point of concern. Labour councillor Steve Liddiard highlighted alarming statistics showing that mortality rates in Tilbury are notably higher and occur earlier than in other parts of Thurrock. He attributed these disparities to the dust pollution from port activities, a view widely shared by residents. Previous studies cited by campaigners detected traces of heavy metals within the dust, pointing to long-term exposure risks even at low levels. These findings have intensified calls from the community for more rigorous regulation and independent testing to verify health threats and hold polluters accountable.

The issue has a broader history of community mobilisation. The Tilbury Community Forum, led by Craig Austin, has been instrumental in raising awareness by launching a ‘dust dashboard’ to compile statistical data on dust levels and deploying a detailed survey to capture residents’ experiences. This grassroots effort has been described as a critical element in building a strong evidential base to bolster the campaign for better air quality controls. Despite these community-led initiatives, frustrations remain over what some see as sluggish progress by regulatory authorities and port operators in curbing the persistent dust problems. Residents routinely report the fallout from dust pollution, including black dust deposits on homes, gardens, and vehicles, which has affected their wellbeing and quality of life.

The port itself is currently expanding, a development that promises economic growth and increased employment opportunities. However, this growth has coincided with intensifying pollution concerns, with locals like campaigner Anne Pyman articulating a sense of neglect and inadequate regulatory response. Councillor John Allen has also called for urgent identification of dust sources and stronger emissions controls from the port to protect communities from ongoing environmental harm.

Thurrock Council’s monitoring of air quality includes designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) across the borough, including parts of Tilbury. These areas are specifically monitored for pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter, underscoring the council’s responsibility to uphold environmental standards and safeguard public health. Within this framework, the introduction of the hotline and enhanced dust complaint processes represent tangible steps aimed at addressing Tilbury’s dust crisis more effectively.

The port operators were approached for comment on the matter but had yet to respond at the time of reporting. Meanwhile, discussions continue around commissioning updated dust analyses, given the residents' concerns that the opening and operation of Tilbury2 has exacerbated pollution levels.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.yellowad.co.uk/hotline-to-be-launched-over-tilbury-port-dust-concerns/), [[2]](https://www.yourthurrock.com/2025/10/08/thurrock-council-urged-to-reject-cafe-extension-plan/), [[3]](https://thurrock.nub.news/news/local-news/council-to-launch-dust-reporting-line-as-it-gets-serious-about-health-concerns-in-tilbury-274683)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.yellowad.co.uk/hotline-to-be-launched-over-tilbury-port-dust-concerns/), [[2]](https://www.yourthurrock.com/2025/10/08/thurrock-council-urged-to-reject-cafe-extension-plan/), [[3]](https://thurrock.nub.news/news/local-news/council-to-launch-dust-reporting-line-as-it-gets-serious-about-health-concerns-in-tilbury-274683)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.yellowad.co.uk/hotline-to-be-launched-over-tilbury-port-dust-concerns/), [[2]](https://www.yourthurrock.com/2025/10/08/thurrock-council-urged-to-reject-cafe-extension-plan/), [[3]](https://thurrock.nub.news/news/local-news/council-to-launch-dust-reporting-line-as-it-gets-serious-about-health-concerns-in-tilbury-274683), [[5]](https://thurrock.nub.news/news/local-news/business-success-and-pollution-concern-are-side-by-side-in-tilbury-port-celebrates-expansion-that-will-boost-jobs-and-put-trade-on-tracks-but-concern-is-in-the-air-over-dust)
* Paragraph 4 – [[4]](https://thurrock.nub.news/news/local-news/how-dust-dashboard-can-be-pivotal-in-fight-for-a-better-environment-in-tilbury-260112), [[6]](https://thurrock.nub.news/news/local-news/new-initiative-in-ongoing-battle-against-dust-blight-in-tilbury-141333)
* Paragraph 5 – [[5]](https://thurrock.nub.news/news/local-news/business-success-and-pollution-concern-are-side-by-side-in-tilbury-port-celebrates-expansion-that-will-boost-jobs-and-put-trade-on-tracks-but-concern-is-in-the-air-over-dust), [[6]](https://thurrock.nub.news/news/local-news/new-initiative-in-ongoing-battle-against-dust-blight-in-tilbury-141333)
* Paragraph 6 – [[7]](https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/air-quality/air-quality-management-areas), [[1]](https://www.yellowad.co.uk/hotline-to-be-launched-over-tilbury-port-dust-concerns/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.yellowad.co.uk/hotline-to-be-launched-over-tilbury-port-dust-concerns/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.yourthurrock.com/2025/10/08/thurrock-council-urged-to-reject-cafe-extension-plan/> - Thurrock Council is establishing a dedicated hotline for Tilbury residents to report dust pollution issues from the town's port, following years of complaints and health concerns. Michael Dinneen, assistant director for community protection and enforcement services, stated that the council is taking immediate steps to address the longstanding issue. He met with the chairman of the Tilbury Residents' Forum and councillors Roy Jones and Mark Hooper to discuss residents' experiences with dust pollution. A dust management meeting involving the Port Health Authority, Environment Agency, port operators, and the council's air quality officer has taken place, with plans for further engagement. A new out-of-hours call-out process for Tilbury dust complaints is being introduced to allow immediate council response. Discussions with public health officials are underway to determine if a new dust analysis should be commissioned, given residents' concerns that Tilbury2 has increased dust levels. Labour councillor Steve Liddiard highlighted the health impact of dust on Tilbury residents, noting earlier mortality rates compared to other parts of Thurrock. The move comes amid renewed community pressure for stronger regulation and independent testing, with previous studies finding traces of heavy metals in the dust and concerns about long-term health risks from exposure. The port was approached for comment.
3. <https://thurrock.nub.news/news/local-news/council-to-launch-dust-reporting-line-as-it-gets-serious-about-health-concerns-in-tilbury-274683> - Thurrock Council is setting up a dedicated hotline for Tilbury residents to report dust pollution issues from the town's port, following years of complaints and growing health concerns. The issue of dust from various sources in Tilbury has been well-documented, leading to calls for action from residents and the Tilbury Community Forum. Earlier this year, the forum launched a 'dust dashboard' to help build a statistical analysis of the problem. Michael Dinneen, assistant director for community protection and enforcement services, stated that the council is taking immediate steps to improve its response to the longstanding issue. He met with the chairman of the Tilbury Residents' Forum and councillors Roy Jones and Mark Hooper to discuss residents' experiences with dust pollution. A dust management meeting involving the Port Health Authority, Environment Agency, port operators, and the council's air quality officer has taken place, with plans for further engagement. A new out-of-hours call-out process for Tilbury dust complaints is being introduced to allow immediate council response. Discussions with public health officials are underway to determine if a new dust analysis should be commissioned, given residents' concerns that Tilbury2 has increased dust levels. Labour councillor Steve Liddiard highlighted the health impact of dust on Tilbury residents, noting earlier mortality rates compared to other parts of Thurrock. The move comes amid renewed community pressure for stronger regulation and independent testing, with previous studies finding traces of heavy metals in the dust and concerns about long-term health risks from exposure. The port was approached for comment.
4. <https://thurrock.nub.news/news/local-news/how-dust-dashboard-can-be-pivotal-in-fight-for-a-better-environment-in-tilbury-260112> - Residents in Tilbury have expressed growing concern about the impact of dust on their health and well-being. Over recent years, reports have increased about dust settling on homes, gardens, and cars, with suspicions that recycling plants at the Port of Tilbury or independently owned land to the east of the town are contributing to the problem. The Tilbury Community Forum, led by chairman Craig Austin, has launched a 'dust dashboard' to build a comprehensive body of evidence on the issue. Austin described the situation as a 'dust crisis' and emphasized the need for residents to report incidents to strengthen the campaign for improved air quality. The forum has also collated a 20-question dust survey for residents to complete. The next meeting of the Tilbury Forum is scheduled for Tuesday, 27 May at 7pm at Tilbury Community Centre on Civic Square.
5. <https://thurrock.nub.news/news/local-news/business-success-and-pollution-concern-are-side-by-side-in-tilbury-port-celebrates-expansion-that-will-boost-jobs-and-put-trade-on-tracks-but-concern-is-in-the-air-over-dust> - The Port of Tilbury is celebrating its expansion, which is expected to boost jobs and trade. However, this development has raised concerns about dust pollution affecting the local community. Residents have reported black dust settling on their homes and gardens, leading to health issues. Local resident Anne Pyman, who has campaigned for three years about the dust, expressed frustration over the lack of action. Councillor John Allen highlighted the escalating problem, noting that the dark-coloured magnetic dust compound is covering the whole town. He called for the source to be identified and for the port to regulate its emissions to minimize pollution. Despite previous commitments from the council, there has been criticism over the lack of progress in addressing the issue.
6. <https://thurrock.nub.news/news/local-news/new-initiative-in-ongoing-battle-against-dust-blight-in-tilbury-141333> - Residents in Tilbury have formed a new campaign group to address the ongoing issue of dust pollution in the town. The campaign, backed by the council's former portfolio holder for air quality, Allen Mayes, aims to improve air quality and reduce dust blight. The initiative follows previous reports on the impact of dust on residents' lives, including a video report from a local couple whose garden and standard of living are affected by it. Local resident Craig Austin is leading the campaign, which has been supported by the community. The campaign group is working to raise awareness and advocate for measures to combat dust pollution in Tilbury.
7. <https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/air-quality/air-quality-management-areas> - Thurrock Council monitors air pollution levels in 16 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) across the borough, including areas in Tilbury. These AQMAs are designated based on pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide (NO2) and particulate matter (PM10). The council is responsible for monitoring and managing air quality in these areas to ensure compliance with air quality standards and to protect public health. The identification of AQMAs reflects the council's commitment to addressing air pollution and its impact on residents, particularly in areas like Tilbury where dust pollution has been a longstanding concern.