



# Quality of Life Report 2003

Hertfordshire  
Environmental  
Forum



## Hertfordshire Environmental Forum

- St. Albans City and District Council
- Dacorum Borough Council
- East Hertfordshire District Council
- Hertfordshire Association of Local Councils
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Hertfordshire NHS Environmental Group
- Hertsmere Borough Council
- North Hertfordshire District Council
- Stevenage Borough Council
- Three Rivers District Council
- Watford Council
- Welwyn Hatfield Council

# introduction



In a year where war and natural disaster have caused social and environmental change across the world, the UK's policy makers have been addressing several subjects with important impacts on sustainable development at home.

The Deputy Prime Minister launched the Sustainable Communities Plan in February, which addresses the state of housing - supply, affordability and quality - in the UK. The Plan identifies areas for accelerated development, including the Thames Gateway and the corridors between London-Stanstead-Cambridge and Milton Keynes-South Midlands. This will mean almost 200,000 additional houses, and calls for greater greenbelt protection. Rural areas have also been the focus of policy and research, in particular, the sourcing of food, and the future of farming in the UK.

Climate Change is now accepted as sound science rather than theory. Caused by greenhouse gas emissions (the greatest proportion of which is carbon dioxide), climate change results from our own use of fossil fuels in our homes and cars, our consumption of goods and services, and increasingly our desire for foreign holidays and imported products.

Aviation has become the fastest growing contributor to carbon dioxide emissions in this country - accounting for more than 5% of UK CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in 2002. According to the Department for Transport, flying will continue to increase between 3-4% a year. If this is the case, the resulting growth in emissions would seriously impact on the Government's recent commitment to a 60% cut in carbon dioxide emissions by 2050.

December 2003 saw the production of the Government's Aviation White Paper that includes plans to expand runway capacity at Stansted and Luton airports to deal with some of the projected increase in demand for flights. This would have serious impacts on Hertfordshire. Increased noise and pollution are key concerns and the county's infrastructure will require significant expansion to cope with the extra demand. For example, widening the M11 and increasing rail capacity on the West Anglia line will be required before an extra runway is built at Stansted.

In the same way that we are affected by global problems locally, it is our own behaviour which contributes to these issues, and equally it is our individual behaviour which can help to address these challenges. By increasing our own energy efficiency in our homes, flying and driving less, and supporting our own economies by buying locally produced goods, we are improving local quality of life (less local air pollution, congestion, better local shops and services) and contributing to global sustainability (reducing carbon emissions and therefore addressing climate change).

## Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Involvement in Decision Making</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Energy</b>	<b>3-4</b>
<b>Wildlife and Habitats</b>	<b>5-6</b>
<b>Housing</b>	<b>7-8</b>
<b>Waste</b>	<b>9-11</b>
<b>Crime</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Water</b>	<b>13-14</b>
<b>Education</b>	<b>15-16</b>
<b>Air Quality</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Transport</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Employment</b>	<b>19-20</b>
<b>Health</b>	<b>21-23</b>
<b>Noise</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Social Exclusion</b>	<b>25-27</b>
<b>Land Use</b>	<b>28-29</b>
<b>Economy</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Legislation Update 2003</b>	<b>31-32</b>
<b>Population Census</b>	<b>33-34</b>

Front cover: The wind turbine next to the M25 powering Renewable Energy Systems new eco-friendly head office at Kings Langley.