

Quality of Life Report



2007

Hertfordshire
Environmental
Forum



County's future lies in managing growth sustainably

Following our reports of high employment, a hot dry, summer and environmental concerns last year, the compilation of this year's report exposed a few contrasting surprises, not least in an area the county has historically prided itself on.

News that the county experienced high amounts of rainfall is hardly surprising, given flooding throughout the country, but the little difference it made to consumption and future supply may be. Reports that the county's wildlife sites appear to have improved, partly due to more sustainable planning policies and conservation efforts, is welcome but species remain under threat. Health appears to be improving, but obesity is still on the increase, particularly in children. Adult NVQ achievement is still high, but no longer lies above the rate for England.

The discovery that the county's 'knowledge-based' sector appears to be suffering is something we need to keep a close watch on. This employment sector accounts for over half of the county's jobs. This includes computing, one of the 'brightest' prospects, so research into alternative economic growth areas is important for the county.

Climate change continues to achieve a growing focus; it is increasingly recognised that it is happening and is accelerated by carbon dioxide emissions. The UK is taking an international lead and is the first to introduce carbon reduction targets into statute with the Climate Change Bill. This will impact on everyone's quality of life as emissions reduction receives a greater priority. You can find more details on this throughout the report and on our website where you can contact us.

This year's report introduces a new section on leisure, a topic of increasing importance to Hertfordshire resident's quality of life.

Abbreviations used throughout this report (see charts)

BBC	-	Broxbourne Borough Council
DBC	-	Dacorum Borough Council
EHDC	-	East Hertfordshire District Council
HBC	-	Hertsmere Borough Council
NHDC	-	North Hertfordshire District Council
SACD	-	St Albans City & District Council
SBC	-	Stevenage Borough Council
TRDC	-	Three Rivers District Council
WBC	-	Watford Borough Council
WHDC	-	Welwyn Hatfield District Council



Fifteen years of quality reporting

This year's Quality of Life Report is the 15th in a line of continuous reporting recognised by the Audit Commission for best practice. In 1992 it was called "The State of the Environment". It has since been trimmed from 300+ printed pages to become more readable and environmentally-friendly, especially now that all issues are available on the web and printed in a sustainable way. Meanwhile we have expanded the range of topics written by experts amongst our partners and now includes social and economic issues alongside environmental factors.

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Hertfordshire's first eco-school, Howe Dell, was opened in 2007. A heatstore is located under its playground (above) whilst Photo Voltaic panels also provide electricity for the school (front cover).