



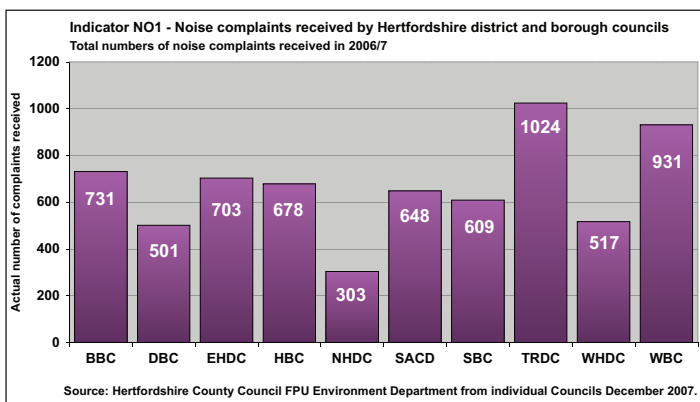
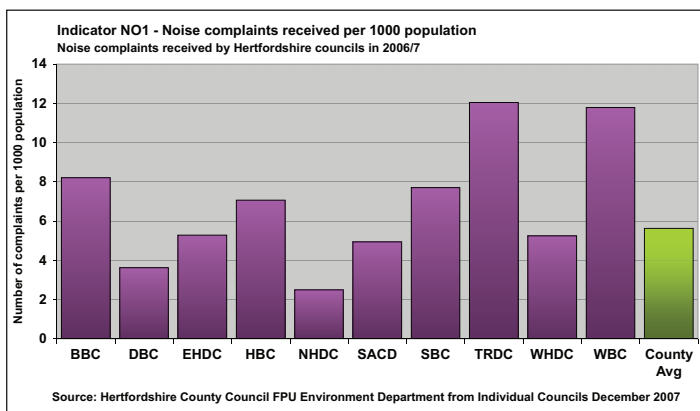
Is Hertfordshire now more tolerant to noise?

Despite its proximity to London, the siting of three major airports nearby seeking expansion, key arterial roads and new construction taking place, the county appears to receive below average noise complaints. Aircraft noise complaints have fallen in the past year, as has the average number of complaints registered with councils. Numbers of registered complaints, however, do not always reflect levels of nuisance.

Many people are attracted to the county for its rural qualities, but, as we discovered in last year's report, it is not necessarily a tranquil place. Whilst tranquillity depends upon the definition chosen, it cannot be disputed that noise does affect quality of life, whether it is merely irritating or seriously affecting your health.

Indicator NO1 - Noise Complaints Received Per 1000 Population

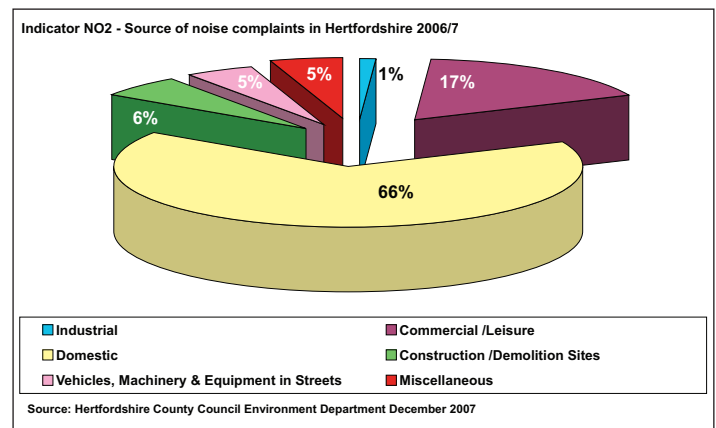
Results were again collected from the county's local authorities directly as these provided the most up to date figures when this report was being compiled. The first graph shows the number of noise complaints made to environmental health departments across the county per 1000 population. The second graph shows actual numbers of complaints.



According to NO1, the number of complaints in the county per thousand in 2006/7 was 5.6, based on a population of 1,058,600 and a total of 5914 complaints. In 2004/5 there were 5251 complaints with a population of 921,100. Historically the county's average has been below the national 7.5 average.

Indicator NO2 - Source of complaints

This indicator is based upon the same data provided in NO1 and may be subjective as the source of noise may not always be correctly categorised. As in previous years, domestic noise complaints are still the most common, showing exactly the same figure as last year at 66%. Commercial/leisure was the second highest and Construction/demolition third, though both were slightly less than last year, as was the Industrial sector. All of the others increased.



Indicator NO3 - Complaints from aircraft noise

Given the interest proposed airport developments¹ have attracted, aircraft noise is a major concern for many residents. Civil aircraft noise continues to be monitored by the airport authorities and the number of complaints they have recorded are shown below. Of these, 949 were county-based complaints about Luton Airport and 1080 were about Stansted Airport, which is a reduction on last year's figures. There were also some complaints about helicopters.

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
Luton	627	1527	1388
Stansted	3063	3641	3331

Source: London Luton & Stansted Airports Consultative Committees Papers 2007

1 Information about consultations and proposals can be viewed online via our website or by searching for airports at www.hertsdirect.org