



A difficult year with implications for all

The economy remained the overriding theme in 2010 as the impacts of the financial crisis continue to be felt in all aspects of life both in Hertfordshire and beyond. Several indicators within the 2010 Quality of Life Report demonstrate the extensive effects of the latest recession upon Hertfordshire. Although the county is still fairing comparatively better than the national average, Hertfordshire is still experiencing a shrinking economy and its associated implications.

Hertfordshire is depicting characteristics of a slowed economy. These features include an increase in the number of residents claiming unemployment benefits, the lowest number of housing completions for 20 years and a decrease in the county's GVA.

The county remains a safe environment to live with crime figures down. Schools and extended education services continue to produce good attainment levels with a number of successful programmes and initiatives in place to support those underachieving. Hertfordshire remains a healthy county on the whole but this year we have seen a rise in the number of alcohol-related hospital admissions across the entire county.

A strong effort to become a more sustainable county, and the fact that we are experiencing a recession, is resulting in a decrease in the amount of energy being consumed. Although the car remained the dominant mode of transport the volume of traffic has notably reduced. All of these factors have positively impacted on air quality and CO₂ emissions.

There has been a reduction in household waste and an increase in waste being recycled or sent for composting. Unfortunately water consumption levels are high and well above the national average. Water stress is a continuous problem for Hertfordshire and efforts to reduce consumption levels continue to be a key priority.

Indicators: present and future

The report's structure remains unchanged from 2009, with respect to both the sections covered and the mix of traditional and former National Indicators. Under the Coalition Government's localism, decentralisation and Big Society agenda the requirement on local government to report to central Government on several of the National Indicators has been removed. However, these indicators remain a useful tool to local authorities to monitor and benchmark progress.

Report format

This is the first year that the Quality of Life, full report, will not be printed. This decision was taken in order to reduce financial costs and to be more sustainable. Further information and electronic copies of the full report can be found at: www.hef.org.uk/qol

Front cover

The Olympic White Water Rafting Centre,
Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire

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Abbreviations used throughout this report

District Councils

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
WHBC	Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
HCC	Hertfordshire County Council

Government Departments

DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
DECC	Department of Energy and Climate Change