

## Air Quality

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Herefordshire Council has just released its annual Air Quality Progress Report for the county, which interprets data collected from more than 50 sites across the county. Although the report finds that Herefordshire's air quality is generally very good, it does find that pollution from traffic is still increasing in many areas and that the government's objective for a pollutant called nitrogen dioxide is still being breached at three locations.

These are at Hereford city's A49 corridor, Bargates in Leominster and the A40 corridor from Wilton to Pencraig in south Herefordshire.

The report also finds that the Air Quality Management Area declared in Hereford in 2001 will need to be extended further down Whitecross Road to take into account raised levels found there since the last report.

It also concludes that rural ozone seems to be increasing, being formed by pollution drifting into the county from industrialised areas such as South Wales, the Midlands and the Bristol area.

The progress report and its later revisions will provide an excellent benchmark to review the impact of the council's newly released 'Hereford City Air Quality Action Plan', which was approved by the government in January.

This January action plan looked at and recommended 15 traffic management measures that are currently being or can be implemented to reduce congestion in the city and therefore lower traffic pollution.

The action plan used computer models to predict the impact of these traffic improvements over the coming years, including the development of the Edgar Street Grid, new park and ride facilities and the effects of an outer distributor road.

The recently published progress report also provides invaluable information to help finalise the draft 'Bargates Air Quality Action Plan' and an emerging A40 action plan.

Further information on either the new Air Quality Progress Report or the Hereford City Air Quality Action Plan can be found on the council's web page at:

<http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/environment/pollution/2264.asp>