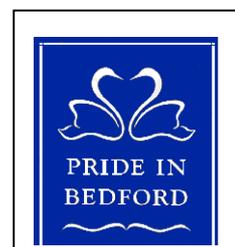




Bedford Borough Council Environmental Health Unit

*Pollution Control Report
April 1999 - March 2001*



***Bedford Borough Council
Environmental Health Unit***

***Pollution Control Report
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Foreword

This is the third pollution report summarising the work of the Pollution Control Section and covers a wide range of environmental issues, responding to the direct concerns of residents and the wider implications of national legislation.

This report aims to provide an insight into our work and raise awareness of environmental issues in the Borough. In May 2001 the Council published its first Community Plan setting out the priorities for responding to the problems and challenges facing the Borough, working towards the Council's overall vision of sustainable communities. The work of the Pollution Control team can have significant impact on the health and well-being of the community and contributes to this plan.

Noise remains the major concern of residents, affecting the quality of life for many people. With a growing variety of lifestyles and the move to 24-hour working we all have to achieve a balance between what is reasonable behaviour and what is a reasonable expectation. Through this report I hope we can raise awareness of these issues to promote social harmony and consideration.

Air quality continues to be of interest in the Borough. Importantly the first air quality review, completed in December 2000, did not justify the declaration of an air quality management area. However there is still much we can all do to improve the local air quality for the benefit of all residents and some ideas of how we, as individuals, can all help are given in this report. The team will continue to work in partnership with the community and respond to concerns of residents.

Whilst the formal work on the Council's Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy has only recently started, much preparation has already been done. This important new role for the team will feature significantly in coming years.

I hope you find the report of interest. Any comments you may have are welcome and we would invite discussion for any further areas of work.

Ian Smith

Service Manager (Public Health and Housing)

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1 About Pollution Control

This is the third edition of this report, and the work of Pollution Control continues to change in response to changes in our environment. In addition to physical changes in the levels of pollution, our scientific understanding and the issues which concern us are changing too. For this reason, the response of government, not only local but also at national and European levels, must also change.

All human activities give rise to unwanted side effects, or “pollution”, in one form or another, particularly in our modern consumer society.

Pollution is usually classified in terms of the three main “media” through which it passes: air, water and land. All of these are included in the work of Pollution Control, and are discussed in this report. Controlling pollution may involve reducing it at source, perhaps through new technologies, such as improved car engine and fuel design; dispersing it over a wider area, for example by building taller factory chimneys; or transferring it from one medium to another, for example through incinerating solid waste, which reduces the need for landfill but contributes to air pollution.

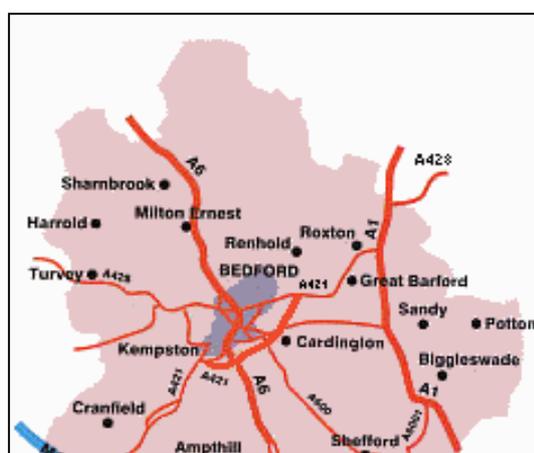


The law gives us all certain rights and responsibilities related to the everyday environment. Under legislation such as the Environmental Protection Act (1990), the Environment Act (1995) and the Clean Air Act (1993), Local Authorities have duties and responsibilities for the environment in their area and to respond to complaints and enquiries from the public about environmental nuisances. In Bedford, this role is carried out by the Pollution Control Section of the Environment and Community Service Group.

The purpose of this report is to provide a record of what has happened in our local environment over the last two years, our response, and how that response is changing. Although much of the work of the Pollution Control Section remains the same, new legislation has meant the introduction of new duties and concerns for Local Authorities. Thus this report will not only cover the changes in levels of pollutants

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which have been recorded by the Section as part of its on-going work, but also the ways in which the work is changing and adapting to new problems and new understanding of the nature of old problems. Just as the environment is constantly changing, so our means of reacting to it must also change in response, in order to deal with new problems as they arise, and anticipate new ones which may be of concern as we enter the new millennium.



Map of North Bedfordshire

Discussions about “the Environment” sometimes seem to concentrate on big, remote problems involving complicated science, such as holes in the ozone layer. But our environment also refers to where we live, the air we breathe, the water we drink, the things which surround us every day in our homes, workplaces, schools, streets and countryside. Problems in our immediate environment can affect our health, cause stress and degrade our quality of life, but often we may also (perhaps unwittingly) be contributing to them.

As well as monitoring conditions and responding to public complaints and queries, the Pollution Control Section also provides information and advice to the Planning Department on the environmental implications of planning applications, and collaborates with other bodies outside the Council, such as other Local Authorities, environmental organisations, and local educational institutions.

This report presents a summary of the work which has been done over the last two years by the Pollution Control Section, both in terms of regular monitoring and responses to complaints from the public. In doing this, it will highlight some of the main problems facing us all in the Bedford area.

2 Pollution Control in Our Area

A major part of the work of Pollution Control is dealing with complaints and enquiries from the public. We are striving to increase the responsiveness of this aspect of our work, in order to establish the kinds of issues members of the public in our area are concerned about, and improve relationships with our community. As a Local Authority, we have certain statutory functions which are laid down by the Central Government, and have to act within the role and using the legislative “tools” provided by the Government. However, we are always mindful of our responsibility to the community and look for ways to provide services which are relevant to the Bedford area and the needs of local people.

With this in mind, over the last few years the procedures for handling complaints have been reviewed with the aim of involving people more closely. New procedures on how to manage contact with the parties to a complaint were introduced in June 1999, and their effectiveness will continue to be monitored. In June 2000, new procedures were introduced for setting priorities for work to be dealt with, with the aim of responding to complaints in Priority 1 immediately or within 24 hours (see Table 1).

Table 1: Pollution complaint priorities

<i>Priority</i>	<i>Nature of complaint/enquiry</i>	<i>Response</i>
<u>PRIORITY ONE:</u>	Serious potential risk to health Out of hours calls Breaches of legislation	<i>Immediate or response within 24 hours</i>
<u>PRIORITY TWO:</u>	Consultations On-going complaints	<i>Agreed Timescales</i>
<u>PRIORITY THREE:</u>	Low or no health risk Repeat complaints	<i>Initial response within 10 days</i>

Feedback to date suggests that the new procedures are helping us to serve the public more successfully, but we still rely on people being willing to co-operate. The next step after improving our responsiveness and finding out more about people’s concerns will be to improve the ways in which we deal with problems at source.

Unfortunately, we are not always able to deal with all the issues which are raised, as we are limited to dealing with those which are specifically covered by legislation.

Box 1 What is.....

A Statutory Nuisance

Part III of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 enables Local Authorities and individuals to take action against industry or neighbours causing a health risk, or nuisance, which affects enjoyment or use of land or property. Certain categories of statutory nuisances are defined within the legislation, including:

- smoke
- fumes or gases
- dust, steam, or smells
- accumulations or deposits
- animals which are not properly kept
- noise

Local Authorities have a duty to inspect their areas from time to time to detect whether a nuisance exists or is likely to occur or recur, and must also investigate any alleged nuisances which are brought to their attention by members of the public.

If the Local Authority is satisfied that a statutory nuisance exists, they will contact the person or business responsible saying that a complaint has been made and asking for action to be taken to rectify it by service of a formal abatement notice. If those responsible do not comply, or take action to reduce the nuisance, they may be taken to court.

After the large rise in complaints from 1477 in 1996/97 to 1906 in 1997/98, discussed in the previous report, complaint numbers have settled down to 1487 in 1998/99, 1425 in 1999/2000 and 1408 in 2000/01, although this is still higher than in the early 1990s.

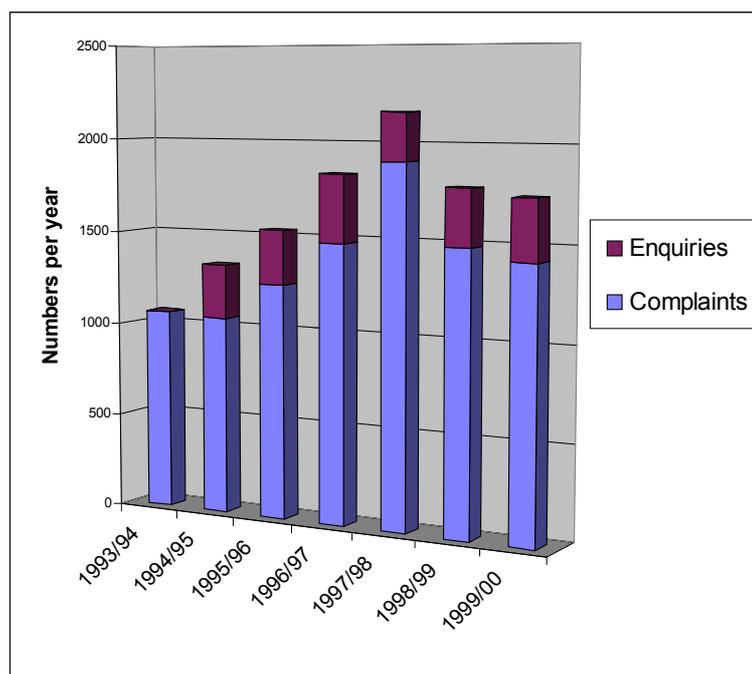


Figure 1: Complaints and enquiries received, 1993-2001

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However, the number of enquiries is rising, from 297 in 1998/99 to 320 in 1999/2000 and 456 in 2000/01, and this is an increasingly significant part of our work.

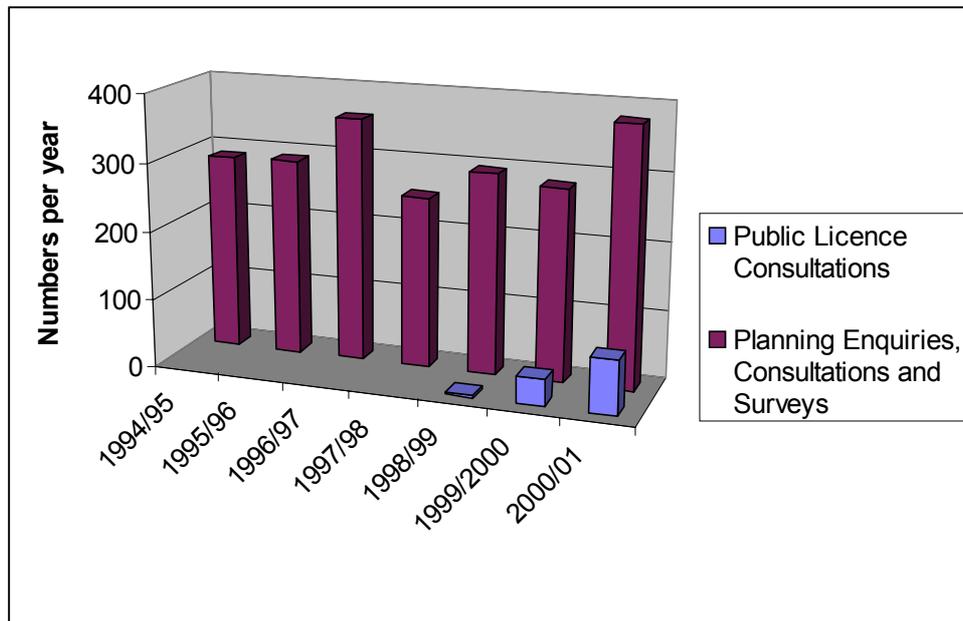


Figure 2: Enquiries and Consultations Dealt With by Pollution Control

Most of these enquiries (301 in 2000/01, or 66%) are planning consultations and this has increased from 219 in 1998/99, and 213 in 1999/2000. However, the largest increase has been in public licence consultations, which have risen from 3 in 1998/99 (the first year in which they were recorded separately) to 39 in 1999/2000 and 78 in 2000/01, and now make up 17% of enquiries.

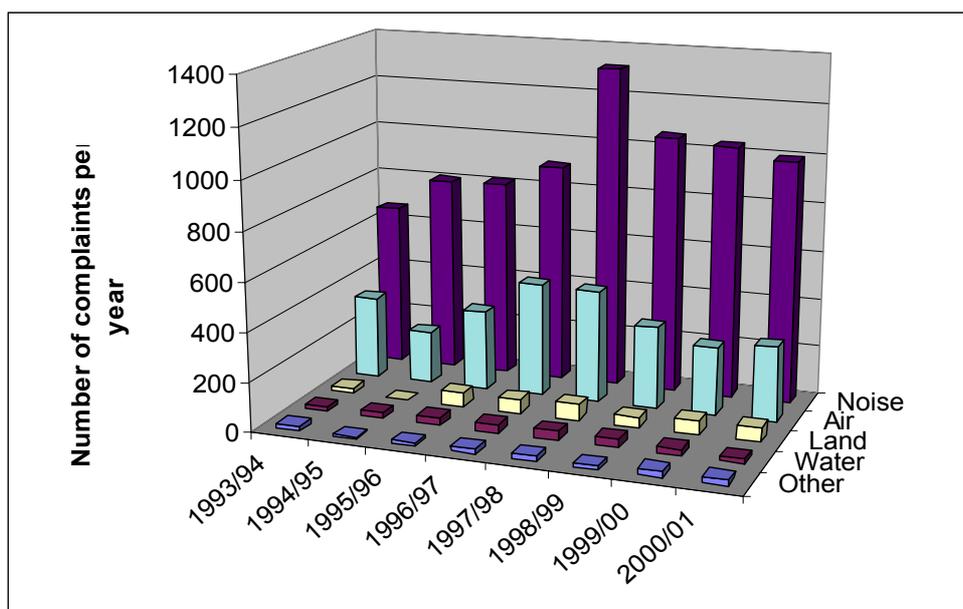


Figure 3: Complaints Received by Pollution Control

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Noise remains the largest category of complaints (see Section 3), and although overall numbers are continuing to fall from 1320 in 1997/98 to 1057 in 1998/99, 1036 in 1999/2000 and 996 in 2000/01, its share of overall complaints remains the same at 71%. The proportion of complaints relating to air quality has stabilised at 23% in 1998/99, 20% in 1999/2000 and 22% in 2000/01, after falling from 32% in 1996/97 to 24% in 1997/98 (See Section 4). Land pollution problems (see Section 5) have risen slightly from 3% in 1998/99 to 4% in 1999/2000 and 2000/01. The share of complaints which refer to water has fallen slightly from 2% in 1998/99 and 1999/2000 to 1% in 2000/01, while Other has increased slightly from (1%) in 1998/99 to 2% in 1999/2000.

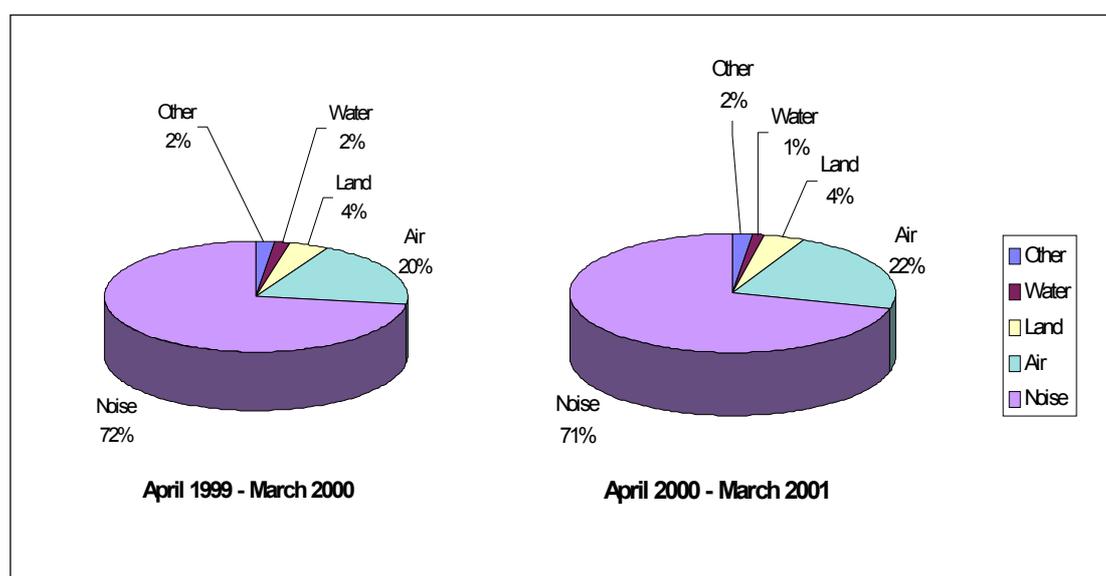


Figure 4: Complaints by category (% of total)

The Pollution Control Team has a range of legal (formal) actions it is required to take to enforce the various pieces of legislation for which it is responsible. Our policy is to seek informal resolution, by the co-operation of all parties, as far as possible.

However, sometimes informal action is not enough to resolve the problem, or the situation may be so serious as to justify immediate action. In such cases, Officers will not hesitate to exercise this enforcement role to protect members of the public and the wider environment. The number of occasions when formal action has been used during the period 1999-2000 is listed in Table 2. Action to deal with statutory nuisances is taken under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA). Most cases

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the Pollution Control Section deals with are about noise and this is reflected in the data given in Table 2.

Table 2: Official action taken on complaints – number of cases per year

Nature of complaint	Formal Notice served		Equipment Seized		Prosecution	
	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000
Noise: <i>Car alarm</i>		1				
<i>Property alarm</i>	5					
<i>Domestic - Hi-Fi</i>	2	6	1	1	3	
<i>Domestic – other</i>					3	
<i>Commercial – entertainment</i>	2	1				
<i>Commercial – factory</i>	1					
Smoke		3				

The EPA legislation empowers the Council to serve a formal Abatement Notice to resolve cases of Statutory Nuisance (Box 1). If the problem continues despite service of formal Notice the person responsible is liable to prosecution in the magistrates’ courts. In certain circumstances the Council has the power to obtain a warrant from the magistrates to enter a property to take action in default to deal with a nuisance. The Pollution Control Section uses this power most frequently to deactivate an intruder alarm attached to a property or seize noise making equipment (normally hi-fi). We can also deal with car alarms by towing the vehicle away to a secure compound or deactivating the alarm. For all of these situations the Council is able to recover the costs from the person responsible.

Other formal action taken during 1999-2000 was for incidents where black or dark smoke was produced from bonfires on industrial or trade premises, or open ground. This is an instantaneous offence under the Clean Air Act 1993.



3 Noise

Sound surrounds us all the time, but noise, it can be said, is in the ears of the beholder! Hard though it is to define, noise is very much considered to be a form of pollution, and can cause irritation, stress and health problems. The importance of noise pollution can be seen in the predominance of noise as a cause of complaints received by the Pollution Control Section (see Figure 5). As mentioned in the previous section, the number of complaints about noise has fallen from a peak of 1320 in 1997/98 to 1057 in 1998/99, 1036 in 1999/2000 and 996 in 2000/01. Noise complaints usually go up during the summer, when windows are left open, and people spend more time outdoors.

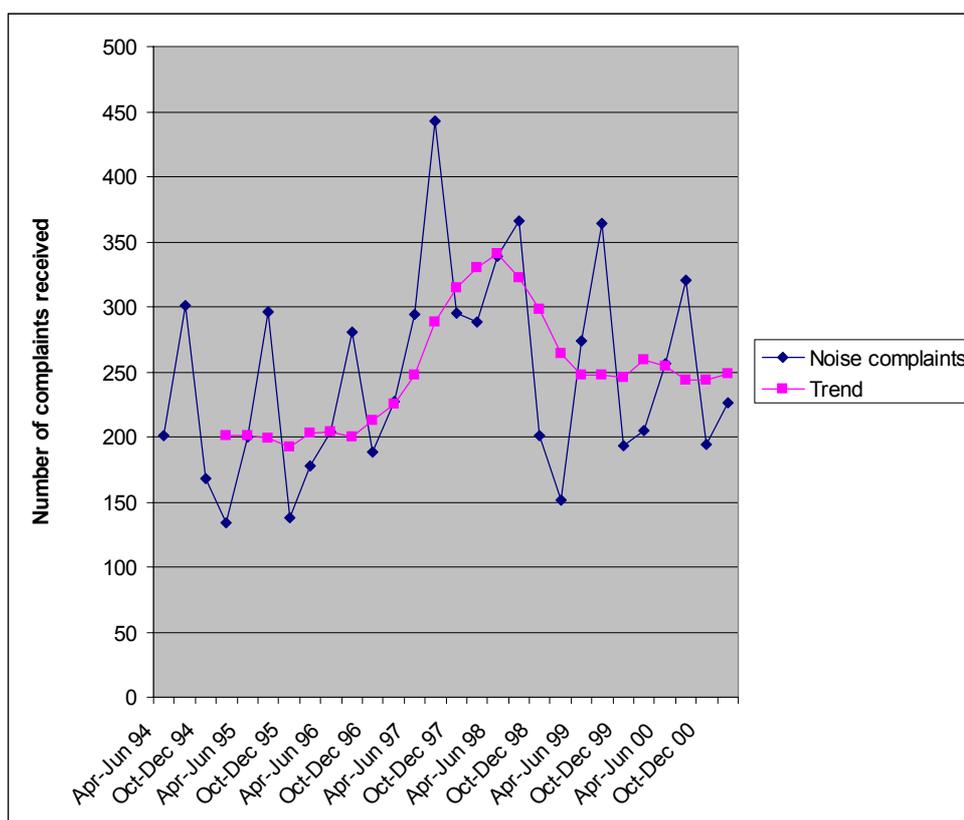


Figure 5: Noise complaints by quarter

The 1990 Environmental Protection Act (EPA) and the 1993 Noise and Statutory Nuisance Act give local authorities powers to deal with noise pollution where it constitutes a statutory nuisance (see Box 2).

Box 2 What is.....

Noise

Noise can be defined as “unwanted sound”. It might be too loud, too intrusive, constant and repetitive or sudden and startling, or just happen at the wrong time or without warning. It can lead to hearing difficulties, irritation, stress, and generally interfere with an individual’s right to peace and quiet in their own home.

Local authorities are empowered by Part III of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to take legal action against certain categories of noise when it constitutes a statutory nuisance (see Box 1). The law covers noise from fixed premises, including factories, shops, pubs, houses and stationary vehicles, but excludes traffic noise and noise from aircraft and railways.

The types of noise which may constitute a statutory nuisance include:

- music
- burglar alarms
- car alarms
- dogs
- industrial machinery
- DIY and household equipment
- Entertainment
- Machinery in the street, such as compressors, stationary cars etc, known as “fixed machinery and equipment” (FME).

If your neighbours or a local business are making a noise which you feel might constitute a nuisance, try a friendly, informal approach directly to those responsible first. Pollution Control can provide advice leaflets on how to handle situations of this



kind. However, if this is ineffective, Pollution Control may also be able to help more directly.

If a member of the public contacts Pollution Control to complain about noise, the complainant will be asked to provide information about what is troubling them. This usually takes the form of reporting occurrences of the alleged nuisance on a

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diary sheet. If the diary sheets show that the problem is continuing, the Pollution Control Officer may arrange to visit both the complainant and the person responsible, although not at the same time, in order to protect the confidentiality of the complainant. The Officer may also install noise monitoring equipment. If, on the basis of this measurement and observation, the Officer considers that a statutory nuisance exists or is likely to occur (or recur), the Council is empowered to serve an abatement notice to the people responsible. In extreme circumstances, a warrant may be obtained to enter the premises and take steps to stop or prevent a nuisance, for example by seizing equipment or deactivating alarms.

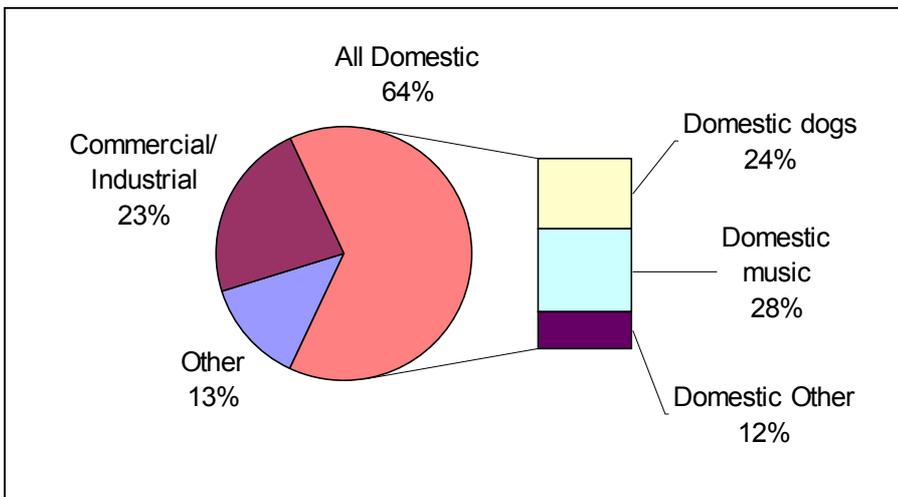


Figure 6: Noise Complaints, 1999/2000 (% breakdown by type)

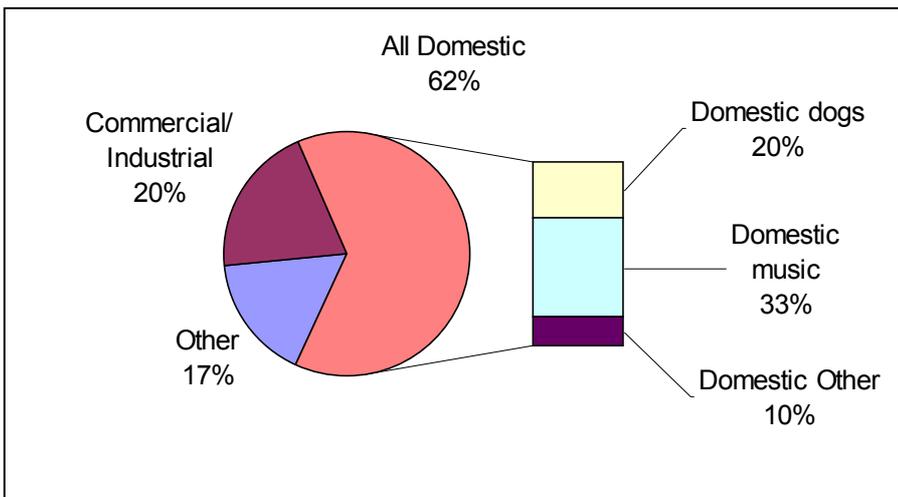


Figure 7: Noise Complaints 2000/01 (% breakdown by type)

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On the other hand, it is also worthwhile being aware that a noise which you are making and which you think is quite acceptable may be causing a nuisance for somebody else. In 1999/2000, 64% of all noise complaints were concerned with noise from domestic premises, and of these, 43% (28% of the overall total of noise complaints) were caused by music. In 2000/01, the equivalent figures were 62% domestic, of which 53% (33% of the whole) were music, so that the share of domestic music complaints has gone up as a proportion of all noise complaints. (For advice on reducing your contribution, see the “Good Neighbour’s Guide” on Page 41).

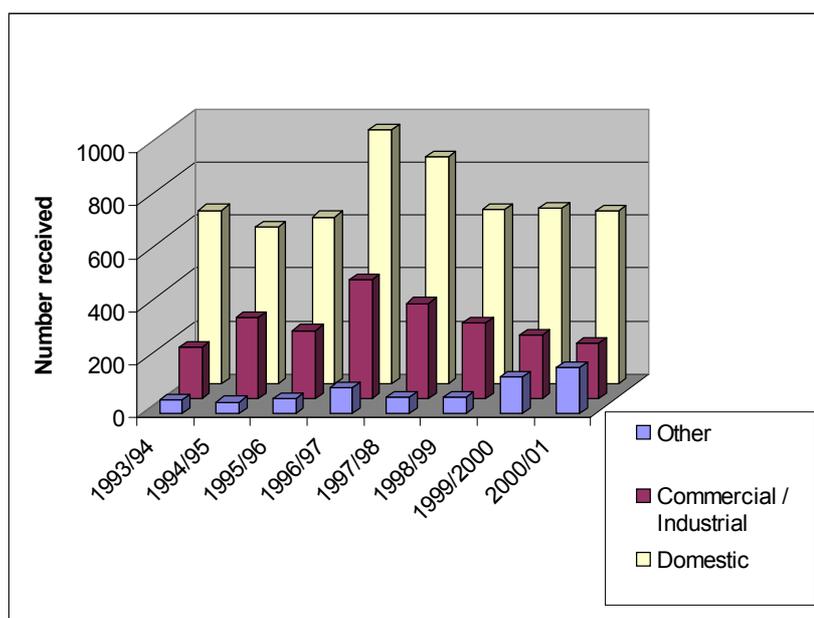


Figure 8: Categories of noise complaints over time

Over time, as can be seen from Figure 8, the number of complaints about domestic noise has stabilised at about 650 over the last 3 years, from a peak of over 900 in 1997/98, while the number of complaints about noise from commercial or industrial premises is continuing to fall.

In addition to responding to complaints from the public, Pollution Control are also involved with assessing potential noise problems involved with planning applications and licensing of premises.



4 Air Quality

The air which surrounds us is essential for human life. Although the main constituents of the air - oxygen (21%), nitrogen (78%) and carbon dioxide (0.03%) - are fairly constant, the overall composition of our atmosphere is constantly changing. Industrial processes, traffic, agriculture and the consumption of fuels to produce electricity for our daily needs all produce gases, dust and particles which enter the atmosphere.

Not all of these foreign substances in the air are harmful, but those which constitute a nuisance or a threat to health are referred to as pollution. Levels of pollution vary widely, according to the time of day, time



of year, weather conditions, day of the week, traffic flows etc. Some types of pollution have an immediate effect close to where they are produced, while others may build up over time, travel great distances, or combine with each other in the air to produce other gases.

Box 3 *What is ...*

Global Climate Change

When the Earth receives energy from the sun, about one third of it is absorbed, warming the Earth, which then radiates heat back into space. Certain gases in the atmosphere absorb some of this radiated heat, acting in the same way as panes of glass in a greenhouse, which allow the sunlight in and prevent the heat from escaping again. These “greenhouse gases” are vital to the Earth, and without them it would be too cold to support life. However, there is evidence that emissions of some greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and ozone, which are increasing because of human activity, may be trapping too much heat.

The long-term implications of this are not yet fully understood. While it seems likely that the Earth will become warmer, which may lead to repercussions such as melting of the polar ice and flooding of low-lying areas, it is also possible that these changes may affect the ocean currents and lead to a cooling of the climate in some areas. In general, the earth’s climate is becoming more unsettled, with greater extremes of temperature and rainfall.

The types of problem which may be caused by air pollution can range from annoyance caused by a bad smell, visibility problems caused by dust or smog hanging in the air, dirty deposits and damage to buildings, adverse effects on plant and animal

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life, to cancers and respiratory problems. On a global scale, pollution may lead to acid rain, and, it is believed, to changes in the earth's climate through the "greenhouse" effect (see Box 3).

Table 3: Major Air Pollutants

Pollutant	Main Sources	Environmental Effects	Health Effects
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	Traffic Emissions		Deprives body of oxygen
Lead	Residual in the environment from lead additives in petrol (now phased out)		May restrict mental development in children
Methane	Landfill, agriculture	Greenhouse gas	
Nitrogen oxides (NOx)	Traffic, domestic heating, power generation, combustion processes	Acid rain. Greenhouse gas. Contributes to production of ozone and photochemical smog	Can affect respiratory system, irritate eyes and increase sensitivity to viruses
Ozone	Generated in the atmosphere from emissions of NOx and VOCs	Growth retardant in plants	Respiratory and eye effects
Smoke and particulates	Industrial processes, traffic, domestic heating, incinerators	Dirt deposits	Fine particles (PM ₁₀) may be toxic or carry toxins and may irritate lungs
Sulphur dioxide	Fuel combustion for domestic heating, power stations, industrial processes, waste incinerators and diesel vehicles	Acid rain, deterioration of stonework and metal corrosion Harmful to plants	Respiratory effects
Volatile organic compounds (VOCs), eg, 1,3 butadiene, benzene	Traffic, industrial processes, solvent use, waste incinerators	Involved in production of ozone	Some are toxic/ carcinogenic.

The government's Expert Panel on Air Quality Standards has defined recommended standards for certain pollutants, including benzene, ozone, 1,3 butadiene, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide, particles and polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs).

Nationally, trends of certain pollutants related to industrial and domestic emissions, such as smoke and sulphur dioxide, have fallen since the implementation of smoke control areas restricting domestic fuel consumption, following the Clean Air Acts of 1956 and 1968. However, the Government's Air Quality Strategy document, "Working Together for Clean Air", published by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions in 2000, noted that those pollutants related to road transport, such as nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), particulates (PM₁₀) and ozone have been increasing.

Box 4 *What are ...*

Smoke and Particulates

Smoke and particulates differ from other types of pollution in that they refer to physical matter suspended in the air, as opposed to specific chemicals. They may be generated by a large number of both man-made and natural causes, including not only combustion of fossil fuels, but also dust from roads, quarries and many industrial processes.

"Smoke" is recognised as discolouration of the air, and is defined and measured using the "Black Smoke Method". This crude but effective technique involves drawing air through a filter paper over a period of 24 hours, and measuring the stain left on the paper. Smoke pollution has been declining since the introduction of the Clean Air Acts in the mid-20th century, which brought about effective control of industrial and domestic smoke.

However, particulate pollution is on the increase. Particulates are measured by more sophisticated gravimetric techniques, which involve weighing the amount of physical matter suspended in the air. The size of particles is extremely important, as small particles may be inhaled and enter the inner passageways of the lungs, causing a range of health effects, particularly for people who already suffer from heart and lung conditions. Particulate pollution is therefore usually monitored by measuring the amount of "PM₁₀", ie particles less than 10µm in diameter (1µm = 1 micron = 1 millionth of a meter). Diesel fumes are a major source of particulate pollution.

4.1 A new approach to air quality

The 1995 Environment Act introduced a new national Air Quality Strategy, aimed at identifying areas of high (or potentially high) air pollution, and adopting measures to tackle these pollution "hot-spots". The strategy requires all local authorities to evaluate the air pollution in their area, to determine what, if any, measures need to be

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taken to tackle pollution locally. National Air Quality Standards and Objectives (NAQSOs) have been proposed for eight pollutants: benzene, 1,3-butadiene, carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, particles, sulphur dioxide and ozone, using guidelines issued by the Government's Expert Panel on Air Quality Standards, based on the findings of the World Health Organisation and the with the aim of protecting public health.

The strategy also sets out a three-stage process by which local authorities are required to assess air quality in their areas, to determine whether they will meet the targets by the required dates. At each stage, if results indicate that the standards are likely to be breached for a particular pollutant, a more detailed assessment is carried out at the next stage. If the third and final stage assessment indicates that the standards are likely to be breached in 2005, the Local Authority must declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), and produce an action plan detailing measures to help ensure that the standard will be

met. Ozone is not included in the target pollutants for Local Authority review and assessment, as it is generated in the atmosphere from other pollutants which may travel across boundaries, and hence cannot be tackled effectively at a local level. The standards were reviewed and revised by the national government, and new standards were set in April 2000.



Pollution Control has carried out a Review and Assessment (R&A) for the Bedford area, and published a consultation report in December 2000. Copies of the report are available from Pollution Control (see list of contacts on Page 42). Stages 1 and 2 of the Review and Assessment indicated that the standards were unlikely to be breached for six of the seven target pollutants, although there was a possible concern over nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) in the area close to the A1. NO₂ has now been assessed

Table 4: Pollutants Covered by the Review and Assessment

Pollutant	Current Standard		Specific Objective to be achieved by 2005	Review and Assessment
	Concentration	Measured as		
Carbon monoxide (CO)	11.6µg/m ³ (10ppm)	Running 8 hour mean	10 ppm	Passed at Stage 1
Lead	0.5µg/m ³	Annual mean	0.5µg/m ³	Passed at Stage 1
Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂)	200µg/m ³ (150ppb)	1 hour mean	150 ppb, hourly mean	Passed at Stage 3
	40µg/m ³ (21ppb)	annual mean	21 ppb, annual mean	
Ozone (O₃)	50 ppb	Running 8 hour mean	50 ppb, measured as the 97 th percentile	Not assessed at local level
Fine particles (PM₁₀)	50µg/m ³	Running 24 hour mean	50µg/m ³ measured as the 99 th percentile	Passed at Stage 2
Sulphur dioxide	266µg/m ³ (100ppb)	15 minute mean	100 ppb measured as the 99.9 th percentile	Passed at Stage 2
Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs):				
Benzene	16.25 µg/m ³ (5ppb)	Running annual mean	5 ppb	Passed at Stage 1
1-3 Butadiene	2.25 µg/m ³ (1ppb)	Running annual mean	1ppb	Passed at Stage 1

under Stage 3 of the Review and Assessment, and comparisons with computer modelling of NO₂ in a neighbouring area of Mid Bedfordshire suggests that there is no significant risk of a breach of the NO₂ objectives for 2005. However, the situation will continue to be monitored, and the results will be published in a second R&A report at the end of 2003.

4.2 Management of Industrial Pollution

The Environmental Protection Act of 1990 introduced a new preventative approach to control of industrial pollution, known as Integrated Pollution Control, which concentrates on the pollution generated by particular industrial processes, whether to air, water or land. All processes were classified as either Part A processes, which are capable of generating significant pollution in all media, or Part B processes, which have potential for significant pollution to air. Control of industrial pollution was shared between the Local Authorities and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution (HMIP). The 1995 Environment Act later transferred HMIP's responsibilities to the newly formed Environment Agency (see Box 5).

Box 5 *What are ...*

Part A and Part B Authorised Processes

Under Part 1 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 certain industrial processes were prescribed for pollution control so as to prevent, minimise or render harmless their emissions. Processes were split into two broad categories called Part A and Part B processes. Part A processes have potential to emit to air, land and water, are normally large and/or complex and are prescribed for control by the Environment Agency. This part of the regime is known as Integrated Pollution Control (IPC). Part B processes only have significant potential to cause air pollution and are prescribed for Local Authority control. This part of the regime is therefore known as Local Authority Air Pollution Control (LAAPC). For both types of process the regulatory authority (the Environment Agency or Local Authority as appropriate) issues an 'authorisation' document. This document seeks to control the industrial process to the Best Available Technique Not Exceeding Excessive Cost (BATNEEC) standard by means of a set of authorisation conditions which stipulate process controls, abatement, monitoring, staff training and reporting requirements. Breach of the authorisation conditions is a prosecutable offence with a maximum penalty on summary conviction in a magistrate's court of £20,000 and/or imprisonment.

All industries under Local Authority control (Part B processes) must be authorised by the Council before they can operate. The Pollution Control Section is responsible for writing authorisations, setting conditions which must be met, and monitoring performance to ensure that the company is operating within the conditions set. In 1999, Bedford Borough had fifty six authorised processes, which are routinely inspected by Pollution Control staff (see Table 5). For industries not under Local Authority control, the Environment Agency performs the same function.

Table 5: Number of Authorised Processes Under the Control of Bedford Council

<i>Type of process</i>	<i>Main Pollutants associated with processes</i>	<i>Year</i>			
		<i>98/99</i>	<i>99/00</i>	<i>00/01</i>	<i>01/02</i>
Unloading and storage of petrol at a service station where more than 100m ³ is used in 12 months	Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)	22	22	22	22
Non - ferrous metal foundry and related processes	Particulates, Copper compounds, Lead compounds, Amines, VOCs, sulphur compounds	2	2	2	2
Cement batching and manufacture of concrete products	Particulates	7	7	7	6
Other mineral processes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crushing, grinding or other size reduction of mineral products • Coating roadstone with bitumen 	Particulates, fumes (bitumen), polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs)	6	6	6	6
Gasification – odorising natural gas	Methane, VOCs	1	1	1	1
Burning of waste by incineration	Particulates, PCB, odour, Dioxin, NO _x , SO _x , CO	2	2	2	2
Manufacturing process using less than 1 tonne of di-isocyanate per year	VOCs	1	1	1	1
Repainting or respraying process where more than 1 tonne of organic solvents used in any 12 month period eg car resprayers	VOCs, particulates, carbon monoxide, Nitrogen dioxide	13	17	13	12
Manufacture of products wholly or mainly of wood where throughput is likely to exceed 1000m ³ (Including treatment of wood)	particulates, VOCs	1	1		
Maggot breeders	odour, ammonia, amines and amides, sulphur compounds	1	1		
Total		56	60	54	52

Detailed information about local authorised processes is available on Public Register held at the Town Hall. Please contact Pollution Control if you have any queries (see contact numbers on Page 42).

4.3 Nitrogen Oxides

Nitrogen oxides (NO_x) consist of a mixture of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and nitrogen oxide (NO). The relative amounts of each vary according to atmospheric conditions,

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because they are readily converted to each other in the atmosphere through a series of chemical processes depending on levels of sunlight and other pollutants. Nitrogen dioxide is a major cause of acid rain, and is thought to be a contributor to respiratory problems. It is also involved in the production of ozone and other photochemical pollutants.

Nitrogen dioxide has been monitored at a number of sites around Bedford since 1992 (see Table 6) Four of these sites are included in a long-term national monitoring scheme, involving nearly all the Local Authorities in the country and operated by NETCEN (the National Environmental Technology Centre). In January 1999, as part of the Review and Assessment, six new sites were added to the network, at Ampthill Road, Castle Road, Kempston Road, Kimbolton Road, Prebend Street and Woburn Road. These new tubes were placed in areas where nitrogen dioxide levels were expected to be high, in order to assess the “worst case”. The sites at Cambrian Way and Hudson Rd were closed down in December 1999 and replaced by Kirkstall Close and Churchville Rd respectively.

Locations of the monitoring tubes are divided between busy town centre locations, quieter residential areas, and major trunk roads (the A421 and A1). On average, values in the town centre for the three years April 1998 – March 2001 are approximately 27% higher than those in residential areas. The trunk road locations follow the average urban locations very closely, except for differences of 23% lower in Jul-Sep 98, and 17% higher in Apr-Jun 2000. This suggests that villages near a main road, such as Great Barford and Wyboston, may suffer as much from traffic pollution as the town centre, and more than suburban areas.



Table 6: Nitrogen Dioxide Monitoring Sites

<i>Location</i>	<i>National Survey</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>National Classification</i>
High St	Y	Urban	Kerbside
George St	Y	Urban	Intermediate
Arrowleys	Y	Residential	Urban background
The Links	Y	Residential	Urban background
Bromham Road		Urban	Kerbside
Goldington Road		Urban	Kerbside
Bunyan Road		Urban	Intermediate
Kirkstall Close (replaces Cambrian Way)		Residential	Urban background
Riverfield Drive		Residential	Kerbside
Churchville Rd (replaces Hudson Road)		Urban	Intermediate
Great Barford		Trunk road	Kerbside
The Lane Wyboston		Trunk road	Intermediate
Great North Road, Wyboston		Trunk road	Intermediate
Horne Lane		Urban	Kerbside
Woburn Road		Urban	Kerbside
Kempston Road		Urban	Kerbside
Amphill Road		Trunk road	Kerbside
Castle Road		Residential	Intermediate
Kimbolton Road		Urban	Intermediate
Prebend Street		Urban	Kerbside

Definitions of categories used by NETCEN for national survey:

- **Kerbside:** 1.5m from the kerb of a busy road.
- **Intermediate:** 20-30m from the same or an equivalent road.
- **Urban background:** Over 50m from any busy road, and typically in a residential area.

The site with the highest annual average level for the year 1998/99 was in Great Barford, followed by the High Street, the Great North Road Wyboston, Bunyan Road, Horne Lane, Goldington Road and Bromham Road. All of the six new sites mentioned above were in the highest 10 readings in 1999/2000 and 2000/01, with Prebend Street having the highest annual reading for both years.

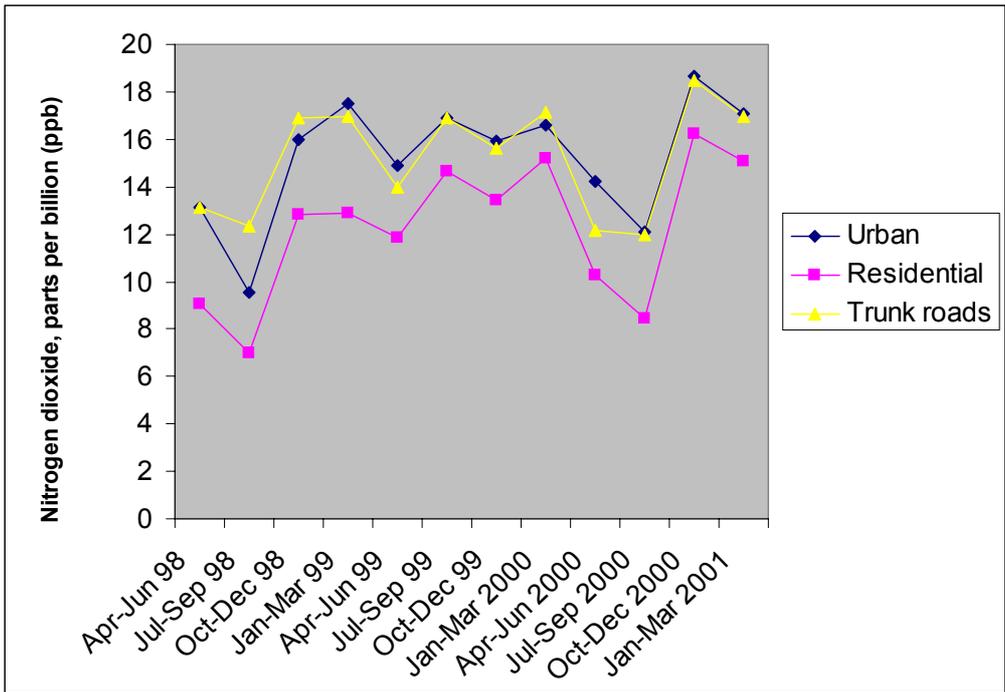


Figure 9: Quarterly average nitrogen dioxide, measured by diffusion tubes

Levels are measured by the “diffusion tube method”, which gives an average level for the month, but does not show the variation in levels through the month. Processing and analysis of the tubes is carried out by specialist laboratories, which are supervised

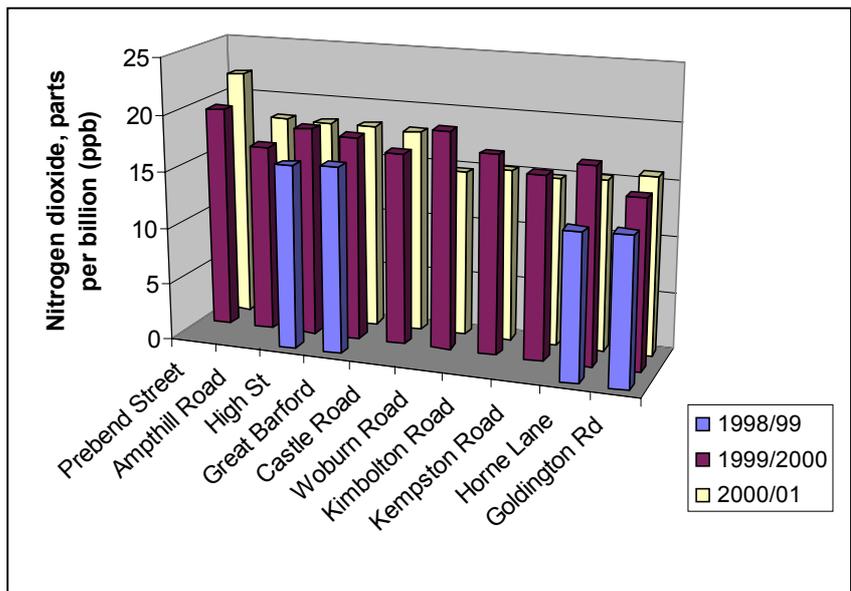


Figure 10: Annual average NO₂ (ten worst affected locations)

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and accredited by NETCEN to attempt to make sure that data is comparable across the country. NETCEN has calculated that in 1999, diffusion tubes from the laboratory used by Bedford Council had a percentage bias relative to automatic continuous monitors of -0.8%

This report only shows NO₂ data going back to April 1998, to avoid the problems of comparability caused by the change of laboratory at that time, as mentioned in the previous report. Because the six new sites were introduced in January 1999, two sets of data are shown in Figure 11, one dating from April 1998 which only includes tubes which have been in situ since that time, and a second line starting in January 1999 including the new sites. It can be seen that the new sites have consistently raised the average over that time, because they are in areas which have higher levels of NO₂ than were previously being measured.

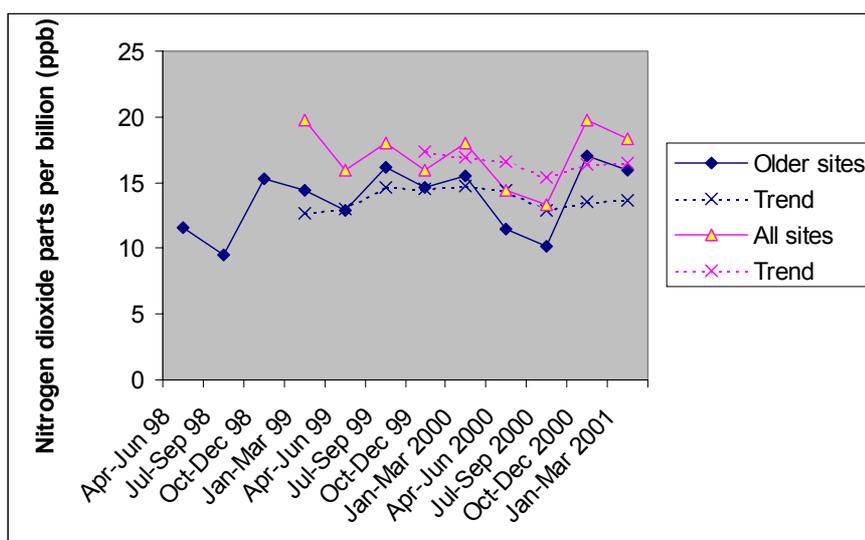


Figure 11: Quarterly Average Nitrogen Dioxide, 1998-2001

Nitrogen oxide pollution tends to be greater in winter, when the weather conditions may lead to the formation of an “inversion layer”. This occurs when cold air close to the ground is trapped by a layer of warmer air higher up, so that the normal air movements are inhibited and pollution does not disperse. The highest monthly averages measured over the period were September 1999 and December 2000, with average values of 22.5 and 21.5 parts per billion respectively. However, the highest monthly value measured at any site during the period was 30 parts per billion at

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Prebend Street in December 2000. The quarterly average values for spring and summer 1999 are probably on the high side, because of technical problems which meant that no readings were taken in May, June and July of that year. Overall, taking into account seasonal variation and a tube accuracy of +/- 25%, there is no clear trend which can be seen in the data over this time period.

4.4 Smoke and Sulphur Dioxide

The new continuous sulphur dioxide monitoring site was commissioned at Stewartby in October 2000, and has been in operation and producing 15 minute hourly data since January 2001. Results from the monitor at Stewartby show that for the period January-May 2001, the vast majority of readings were in the range regarded by the Government's Air Quality Banding scheme as "Low", with "Moderate" levels measured on one day in January and two in February, and "High" on one day in February. Descriptions of the Bandings for sulphur dioxide, are shown in Table 7.

Table 7:DETR Air Quality Bandings for Sulphur Dioxide

<i>DETR Banding</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>SO₂ 15 minute mean</i>
Low	Effects are unlikely to be noticed even by individuals who know they are sensitive to air pollutants;	<100 ppb (parts per billion)
Moderate	Mild effects, unlikely to require action, may be noticed by sensitive individuals;	100 – 199 ppb
High	Significant effects may be noticed by sensitive individuals and action to avoid or reduce these effects may be needed (e.g. reducing exposure by spending less time in polluted areas outdoors).	200 – 399 ppb
Very High	The effects of sensitive individuals described for High levels of pollution may worsen.	>400 ppb

The existing smoke and sulphur dioxide monitoring site in London Road has experienced technical problems in the last year, and so no data is presented here.

4.5 Air Quality Complaints

The number of complaints and queries received from the public in relation to air quality continued to fall from 460 in 1997/98 to 338 in 1998/99 and 280 in 1999/2000. As mentioned in the previous edition of this report, this drop was largely due to a specific problem which has been resolved. However, the number of

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complaints has risen again slightly in 2000/01 to 309.

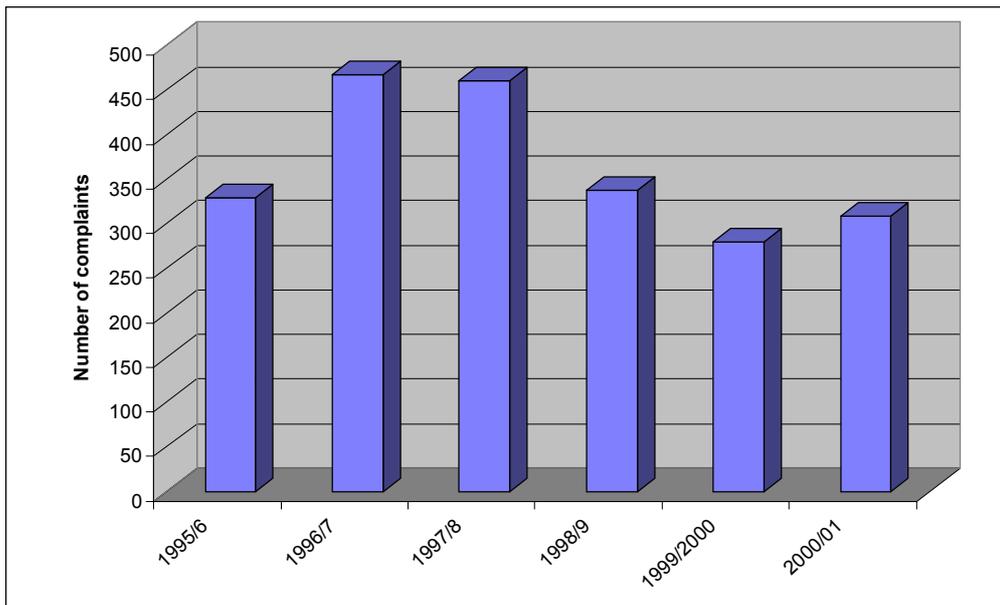


Figure 12: Total complaints about air quality, 1995-2001

When the numbers of complaints relating to air quality are broken down according to type, it is clear that concerns relating to air quality are changing. Although in 1996 and 1997 the largest group of air quality complaints was those concerned with odours, at 54% and 48% respectively, since 1998 it has stayed at around 31%, and has been

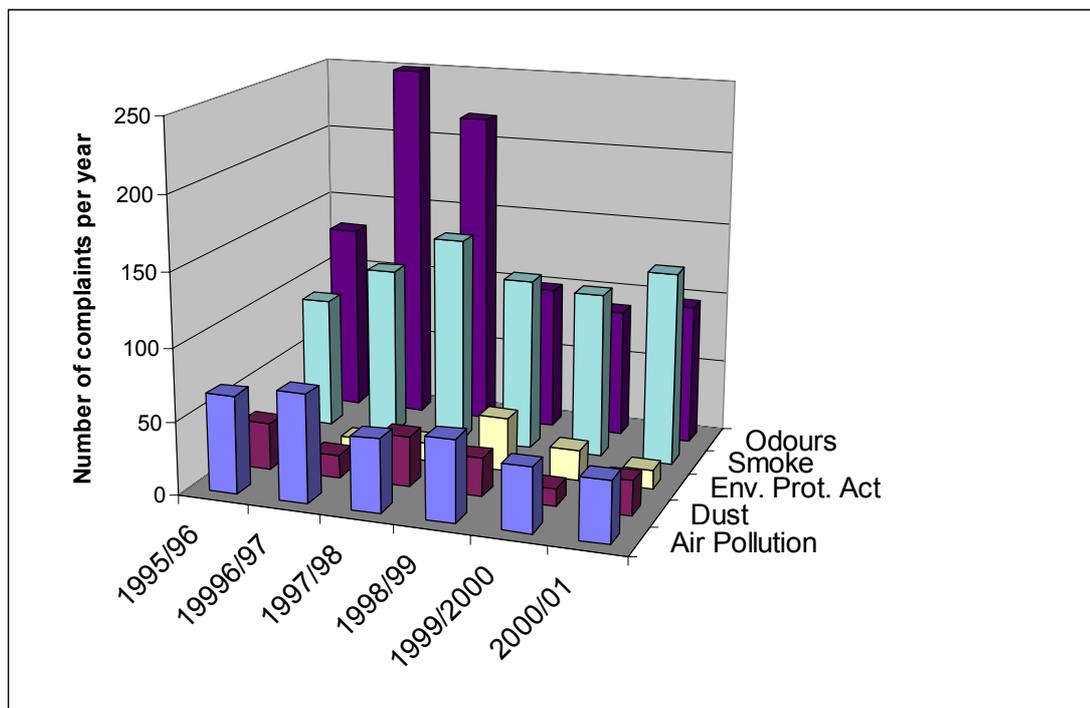


Figure 13: Complaints about air quality, by category

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overtaken by smoke, which has increased its share from 31% in 1997/98 to 35% in 1998/99, 41% in 1999/2000 and 43% in 2000/01. However, the overall number of smoke-related complaints in 2000/01 (133) is lower than the total for 1997/98 (143), so this change has more to do with a fall in complaints about odours and other categories than an overall increase in smoke. The number of complaints about dust, which fell from 35 in 1997/98 to 26 in 1998/99 and 12 in 1999/2000 has risen again to 24 in 2000/01. The number of enquiries relating to the Environmental Protection Act has also fallen, from 37 in 1998/99 and 21 in 1999/2000 to 13 in 2000/01, the same

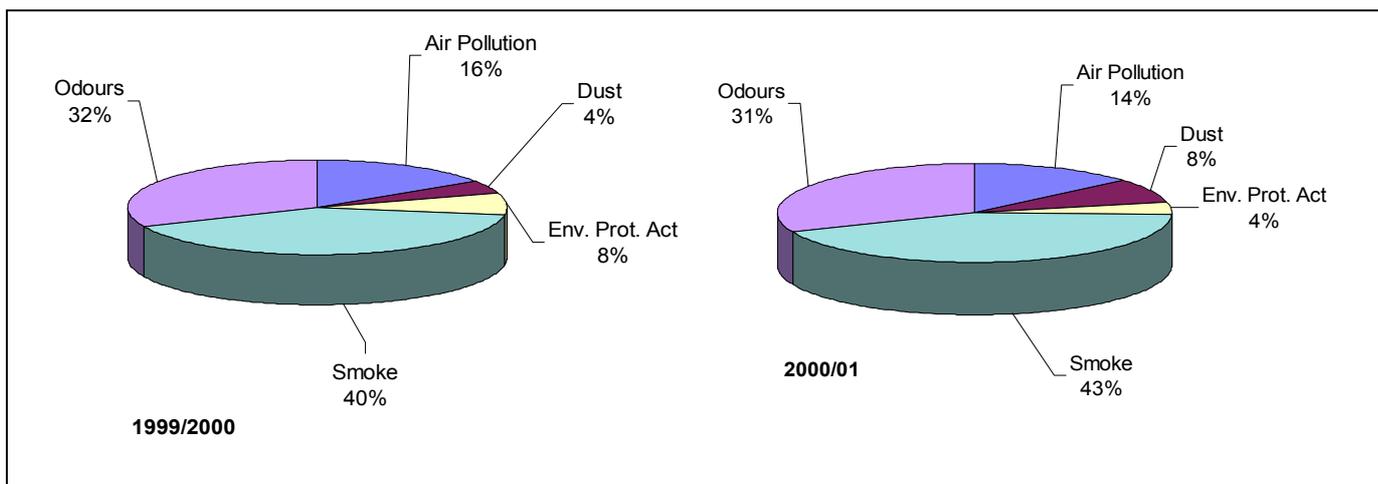


Figure 14: Share (%) of Air Quality Complaints by Category

4.6 Regional Air Quality Monitoring Website

In June 1999, the fourteen Local Authorities in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire launched a combined website for air quality. The site (address: www.seiph.umds.ac.uk/hbnet.htm) is administered by the South-East Institute of Public Health, which is also responsible for the London Air Quality Monitoring Network. It presents pooled data from air quality monitoring equipment at all sites managed by Local Authorities in the two counties, allowing members of the public to have access to real-time air quality information.



5 Water



5.1 Drinking Water

The mains water supply for the Bedford district is provided and managed by Anglian Water (AW). The National Drinking Water Inspectorate is responsible for inspecting the quality of drinking water to ensure that it meets regulations, and the Environment Agency is responsible for surface and groundwater (controlled waters), water quality monitoring and control, resource management, flood defence, fishery management, conservation and recreation.

The Council has a responsibility to make sure the mains water supply is safe to drink. It does this by regular scrutiny of analysis results and sampling when necessary, for instance, when a complaint is received.

The Council also has other specific responsibilities under the Water Industry Act 1991, the Private Water Supplies Regulations 1991, and the Water Quality Regulations 1991 and Amendments. Firstly, it is responsible for inspecting a number of businesses and dwellings in the district which have private water supplies. These are where water is obtained from a source other than the AW mains, which may be from a spring, well or surface water. It is also responsible for inspecting premises where water from the mains is used as an ingredient in the manufacture of foodstuffs, although these are no longer routinely sampled, but only in response to a complaint or where there is a concern about food safety.



Water samples are subjected to a number of bacteriological and chemical tests. Bacteriological tests include monitoring for the

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presence of total coliform and faecal coliform bacteria, which are extremely sensitive indicators of potential contamination. The chemical contaminants which are of most concern are nitrates, which enter the water supply from agricultural fertilisers, lead from pipes, and pesticides. Table 8 shows the number of tests carried out in the two years on the different types of water supply for which the Pollution Control Section is responsible.

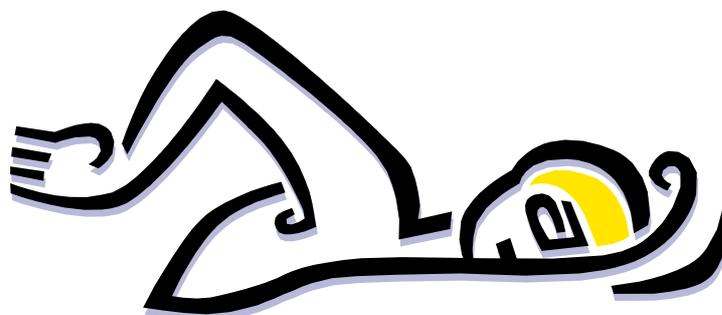
Table 8: Monitoring of Water Carried out by Pollution Control, 1997 to 1999

Category	1999/2000			2000/01		
	No of Tests	No of Passes	%age Passes	No of Tests	No of Passes	%age Passes
Private Water Supplies	29	23	79%	20	14	70%
Swimming Pools	115	103	90%	110	97	88%
Lake	2	2	100%			
Mains Water in Food Production	16	16	100%	*		

* No longer routinely sampled

5.2 Recreation

Under the 1976 Health and Safety at Work Act and the 1990 Environmental Protection Act, swimming pools which are owned by the Council are monitored at regular intervals. Pools in private ownership but which have public access are rated according to the technical management systems, use and past history, and monitored accordingly. During 1999 and 2000, 225 tests were carried out on pools in the district.



5.3 Complaints and Queries

In addition, Pollution Control are responsible for responding to complaints and enquiries concerning water. Twenty five complaints were received from the public concerning water between April 1999 and March 2000, and eighteen between April 2000 and March 2001, down from a peak of 37 in 1997 and 36 in 1998. The number of complaints is continuing to fall, with the highest monthly value over the two year period being 7 in July 1999, although it has not exceeded 8 in a quarter or 2.6% of all complaints during that time. Complaints and queries about water tend to be higher in the summer months, and often relate to specific incidents.

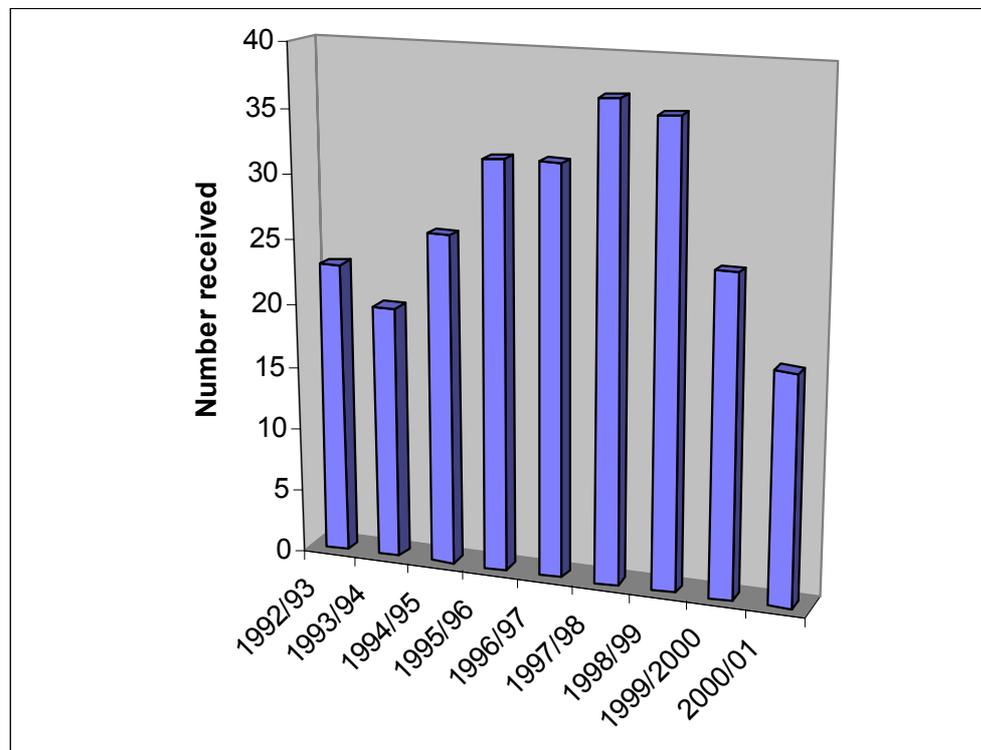


Figure 15: Complaints About Water Quality

6 Land

Contaminated land refers to places where previous uses of the land (which may have been considered perfectly legal and acceptable at the time when they occurred), have led to pollution of the soil. Examples include the dumping of chemicals or waste, or the toxic by-products of mining and extraction industries. Such pollution may be impossible to remove completely, and can persist for centuries, so that, although such activities are now tightly controlled, we still have to cope with the legacy. This may constitute a threat to the health of people using the land, damage to buildings and/or services, and potentially wider environmental risks, such as contamination of water supplies through the leaching of toxic chemicals.

Box 6 What is.....

Contaminated Land

Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 provides, for the first time, a statutory definition of “contaminated land” which is based on risks of significant harm to human health and the environment, or pollution of controlled waters.

The Act defines contaminated land as “land which appears to the Local Authority to be in such a condition, by reason of substances in, on or under the land, that:

- a) Significant harm is being caused or there is a significant possibility of such harm is being caused; or
- b) Pollution of controlled waters is being, or is likely to be, caused.”

Land is defined as contaminated land if there is “significant pollution linkage”. This requires evidence of the presence of a contaminant, a receptor and a pathway linking the two.

New regulations for the identification and remediation of contaminated land came into force in England on 1st April 2000, under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The new regulations introduced for the first time a statutory definition of “contaminated land” (see Box 6) Local Authorities are required to prepare a written strategy, to describe how they will go about surveying/classifying sites, assess risks, and deal with any potential problems. This report will be published by the end of June 2001, and will be available to the public for consultation.

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Certain types of contaminated land, known as “Special Sites”, will fall under the responsibility of the Environment Agency. When it has been determined that an area falls into the category of “contaminated land”, the Local Authority will work initially with the Environment Agency to decide whether or not it is a “Special Site”. The relevant enforcing authority (the Environment Agency for “special sites”, the Local Authority for all others) will then establish who is responsible for remediation of the land, consult and decide what type of remediation is required, and ensure that the remediation is carried out. The Council will then keep details of remediation on a public register.

The legislation puts the onus on all other regulations/statutes being met first, before action is taken under the contaminated land regulations. For example, the redevelopment of land for domestic housing is covered by planning legislation. Where there is concern about past uses of the land, the Council may attach conditions to the granting of planning permission, requiring the developers to make sure the land is suitable for use. In the case of industrial land use covered by the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control Regulations (IPPC, see Box 8), before and after surveys are required to assess the impact on the site.

Closed landfill sites have been monitored for levels of methane and carbon dioxide as part of the Council’s responsibilities under the Environment Act 1990, to identify nuisances and risk to public health. Activities at the operative landfill sites in the district are also followed, although the main responsibility for control of these sites rests with the Environment Agency.



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The number of queries received by Pollution Control concerning polluted land has been relatively stable over the last two years, at 58 in 1999/2000 and 59 in 2000/2001, returning to the same level as 1996/97, after a jump to 66 in 1997/98 and a fall to 42 in 1998/99. Since 1992, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of queries received, with a maximum of 20 between January and March 1998, and although the yearly total fell back to 42 in 1998/99, this is still much higher than five years ago. Roughly 4% of all queries are concerned with contaminated land. The Council now charges for commercial enquiries where information is retrieved from records.

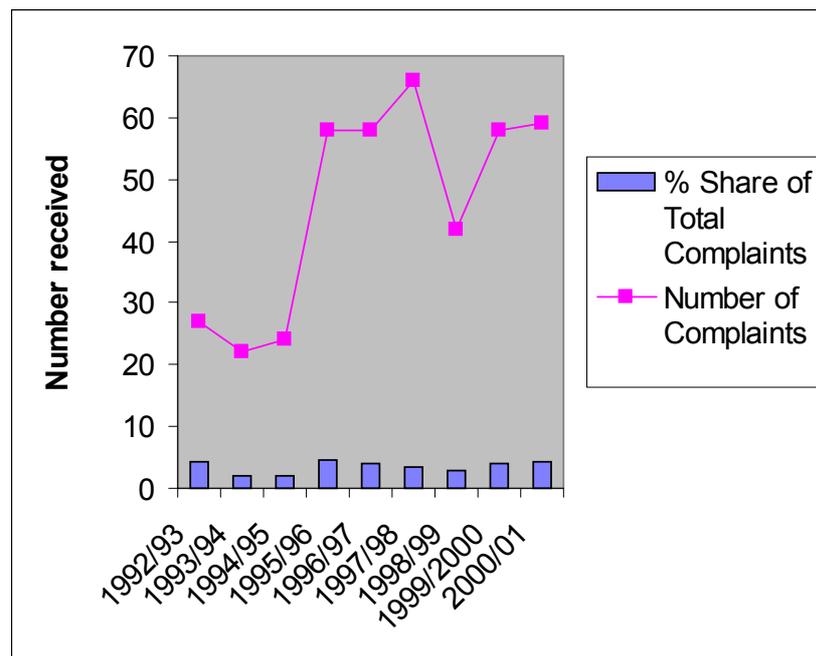


Figure 16: Complaints about contaminated land



7 Radiation

Natural radiation has always been present in the earth, our food and water and the air we breathe. It is estimated that approximately 86% of all human exposure to radiation is attributable to natural sources, almost 14% to medical sources such as X-rays and cancer treatment, and less than 1% to other man-made exposures such as weapons testing, fallout from nuclear accidents, discharges from the nuclear industry, and occupational exposures (see Figure 17).

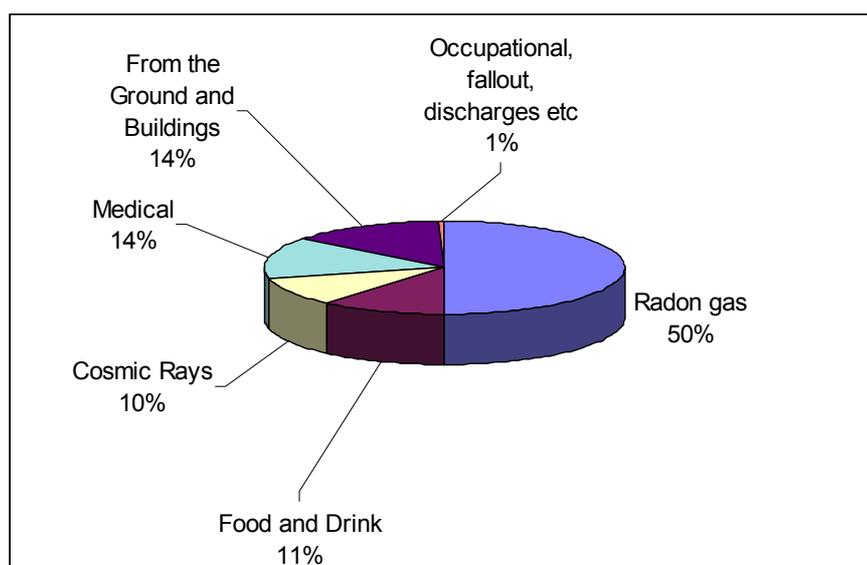


Figure 17: General Sources of Radiation (Source: National Radiological Protection Board)

However, the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in the Ukraine which occurred in 1986 led to concern about levels of radiation. In response to this, in 1988 the Radioactive Incident Monitoring Network (RIMNET) was set up in order to monitor levels of gamma radiation at 46 locations throughout the country.

Independently of RIMNET, in Bedfordshire the local authorities set up a monitoring scheme co-ordinated by Bedfordshire County Council Emergency Planning. The aim of the scheme is to provide baseline information against which future trends could be compared in order to provide early warning of any changes and potential problems. Two monitoring sites are located within the Bedford Borough area, and levels are consistently within the recommended range. The incident which occurred in Japan in September 1999 did not have any effect on local radiation levels.

The most significant source of radiation exposure is from radon gas (see Box 7). Two recent surveys have led to changes in the building regulations relating to radon. The first, carried out by the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) is based on statistical analysis of radon measurements of existing houses grouped by 5km squares. The second, carried out by the British Geological Survey (BGS) has produced a set of maps based on geological radon potential, showing 5km grid squares which are underlain by geological conditions which might indicate potential radon occurrence.

Box 7 What is...

Radon

Radon is a radioactive gas produced from the radioactive decay of radium and uranium in the soil and rocks. It occurs everywhere, although the amounts vary according to location, and particularly the type of rock. Radon escapes from the soil into the atmosphere, and in the open air it is very quickly dispersed. However, in enclosed spaces, such as houses, it can reach quite high concentrations. Radon is the most common source of radiation to which we are exposed. Radon decays to form radioactive particles which may be inhaled, exposing the surfaces of the lungs to radiation and increasing the risk of developing lung cancer.

Under Building Regulations BR211 *Radon: guidance on protective measures for new dwellings. 1999*, local authorities have a responsibility for investigating any new homes for which planning permission is requested, or for which planning changes have been requested, to see whether they fall within an area where radon might be a concern. If the site falls in an area indicated as such by the BGS map, a geological survey must be carried out to determine whether radon is a risk, and appropriate protection measures must be implemented.

There are a few areas in the Bedford District which are shaded on the BGS map. If a site falls within a shaded area it does not necessarily mean that it needs radon protection. The level of protection needed is site specific and can be determined by reference to the relevant radon potential map followed by a geological assessment of the site.

Radon may also affect water supplies, and although none of the public water supply in the Bedford area is affected, some private water supplies may be located in areas indicated by the BGS map. Where this occurs, testing and remedial work can be carried out, but there is no evidence to suggest that this is a major problem in this area. The Council will test private water supplies during 2001/02.

8 Future Developments

8.1 Continuous Air Quality Monitoring

As mentioned in Section 4.4, continuous monitoring equipment has been installed at Stewartby, and is being used to give real-time data on sulphur dioxide and ozone levels. It will continue in operation at Stewartby for a year, in order to collect enough data to validate the modelling work undertaken for the Council by external consultants as part of the Review and Assessment. The data will be used as part of the second Review and Assessment of air quality (see Section 4.1), which must be completed by the end of 2003.



The equipment is portable, and can be relocated to any site where there is a concern about air quality. When sufficient information has been obtained from the Stewartby site, it will be relocated to an alternative site, possibly near the A1, in order to measure nitrogen dioxide for the second Review and Assessment. The data obtained from this will be used to validate the findings from the first Review and Assessment.

During 2001, consultation responses to the first Review and Assessment will be reviewed, and, if appropriate, the Review and Assessment Report will be amended in light of the comments received.

8.2 IPPC- Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control



In 1996, a Directive on Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (96/61/EC) was formally adopted by EU Environment Ministers. This new approach will extend the principles developed in the existing system of pollution control.

The new system will replace the current system of authorised processes, and switch the current emphasis on **control** of pollution to **prevention** of pollution by

larger installations. New regulations will be introduced which focus on waste minimisation, energy conservation and condition of land. Most of the emphasis will be on large installations which will continue to be under the control of the Environment Agency. However, processes which are currently regulated by local authorities will be split into two groups: directive sites, which will be affected by the new legislation, and residual sites, smaller current sites which will not be affected by waste minimisation / energy conservation requirements. The Directive should have been implemented into UK national legislation by October 1999, but was enacted in late 2000.

The new standards are currently being phased in on a process-by-process basis, and are unlikely to affect processes in this area under Local Authority control until 2002, unless a new process is introduced into the area before then.

Box 8 *What is ...*

Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control

Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) will replace the existing system of authorised processes (see Box 5).

Like the old system, IPPC is a tiered system. Industrial processes are divided into three groups, and split between Environment Agency and local authority control.

- Environment Agency controlled sites: large installations, for which the current regulations will be extended to include waste minimisation, energy conservation and condition of land.
- Directive Sites: Currently controlled by local authorities, but also affected by new waste minimisation and energy conservation requirements.
- Residual sites: Smaller sites currently controlled by local authorities, but not significantly affected by the new regulations

8.3 Contaminated Land Strategy

The new contaminated land regulations came into force on 1st April 2000 (see Section 6), and a report on the new strategy for Bedford, published on 1st July 2001, is available on the Pollution Control website (see Page 42 for address).

The strategy will begin implementation in 2001, to identify plots of land which may have been “contaminated” in the meaning of the Act (see Box 6). The work will begin with a desk study to identify potential problem sites, followed by site visits and

risk assessments of sites. The proposed timescale for the work is shown in Table 9, but this timetable is provisional, and will be subject to review annually, dependent on the workload involved.

Table 9: Provisional timetable for contaminated land strategy

Activity	Timescale
Research historical records	July 2001 –Dec 2002
Define information management needs	Ongoing system commission Sept 2001
Data Entry	April-December 2002
Phase 1: Preliminary risk assessment	January-October 2003
Inspection Schedule	
Priority A	Nov 2003 – Oct 2004
Priority B	Nov 2004 – Oct 2005
Priority C	Nov 2005 – Oct 2006
Review of existing strategy	Annually October-November

8.4 Major New Development

Pollution Control will be closely involved with the planned redevelopment of the former Elstow Storage Depot as part of the Elstow Garden Village, a major planning development to provide 4,500 new dwellings.

As this is a “brownfield” site, there may be pollution implications of past land contamination, as well as impact on air quality and noise issues.



8.5 Best Value

Bedford Borough Council, along with all other Local Authorities, is currently undergoing a major administrative review of its organisation and working practices. The Local Government Act of 1999 placed a duty of Best Value on all Local Authorities from 1st April 2000, to replace the system of Compulsory Competitive Tendering with a rigorous system of performance management. The aim of Best Value is to encourage a more business like attitude in local government, and the Council is required to carry out fundamental reviews of all its services over a five year period.

This is being carried out on a department-by department basis, and the first year has been very successful, resulting in service improvements and savings of approximately £660,000. Key objectives which have been defined for Pollution Control are:

- “To ensure that levels of environmental pollution, through the exercising of statutory powers, are kept to a minimum;
- To implement a routine monitoring programme which assesses levels of pollution;
- To implement the Council’s Air Quality Strategy.”



The review of Pollution Control is scheduled to start in April 2002, reporting in 2003. Best Value requires Councils to continuously improve their services and to ensure that good value for money is being provided, and may lead to a major restructuring of the work and organisation of all departments of the Council over the next few years.

8.6 New Computer System

In the meantime, a new computer system is being introduced, which will affect Pollution Control through changes in the method of recording incoming work. It will also include a Geographical Information System, to help with the mapping of pollution problems and complaints.

9 How We Can Help Each Other

This report has described some of the on-going monitoring work carried out by the Pollution Control staff at Bedford Borough Council, but much of what is done is driven by public concerns and complaints. Our role is very much one of providing a service to the community, and we are striving to make the service we provide a closer reflection of the community's wants and needs. We welcome feedback and involvement from members of the community, to help us to do our job better and to know whether we are getting things right.

If you wish to raise an issue, you can do so by contacting the Pollution Control Section at the address and telephone number given on Page 42. Pages 42 and 43 also have a list of names, addresses and websites of other organisations and bodies who may be able to help with information and advice on a range of environmental issues.

In addition to raising issues, it is important to be aware of the contribution we may all be making to environmental problems. This can be on the very local level of an

activity which seems harmless to you but may be annoying for your neighbours, to the contributions we may all make to more widespread national and even global problems.

If you're planning a large social event, an information leaflet is available covering noise, health and safety issues. Contact Pollution Control for details.

Sometimes, a little forethought and consideration is all it takes to avoid unpleasantness and bad feelings.

Equally, if you are unhappy about something your neighbours are doing, a friendly, direct approach may be all that it takes.



Box 8

Good Neighbours' Guide

Noise

- If you're having a party, warn your neighbours in advance, and turn the music down after 12 o'clock.
- Keep stereo and TV speakers away from partition walls, or use headphones, and keep the volume down, particularly late at night.
- Carry out noisy chores, such as mowing the lawn and vacuuming, during normal daylight hours, bearing in mind that your normal getting up time may not seem so civilised to your neighbours!
- If your dog barks when left alone, arrange to leave it with a friend.
- Move noisy household equipment, such as washing machines, away from partition walls.
- If you have a burglar alarm, make sure it is well maintained, and leave a key with the neighbours if you are going away. A code of practice and guidance can be obtained from Pollution Control.
- Make sure car alarms are fitted with cut-outs and installed correctly.

Bonfires (and Barbecues)

- Let your neighbours know in advance if you are planning a bonfire.
- Only burn dry material.
- Compost biodegradable material, and never burn household rubbish, rubber tyres, or anything containing plastic, foam, paint or treated wood.
- Don't light a fire when the air is damp and still so that the smoke cannot disperse, or, alternatively, when the wind is likely to carry the smoke over other people's property.
- Never leave a fire unattended.

Driving

- Avoid unnecessary journeys - the majority of car journeys are less than 2 miles, and short journeys use a lot of fuel. Walk, cycle, or use public transport wherever possible.
- Make sure your car is properly maintained, and check tuning, tyre pressures and emissions regularly.
- Switch off the engine when you are stuck in traffic.
- If your car has air conditioning, avoid using it unless absolutely necessary – it can reduce your fuel efficiency by up to 30%.



For Further Information...

Local Advice

Pollution Control Section, Bedford Borough Council, Town Hall, St Paul's Square, Bedford MK40 1SJ	For general environmental complaints, queries and advice.	01234 267422 www.bedford.gov.uk/bedford/environhealth/pollution.asp
Bedford Borough Council	Collection and disposal of waste (special collections).	01234 221708
Bedfordshire County Council, County Hall, Cauldwell St, Bedford		01234 363222 www.bedfordshire.gov.uk
Citizens Advice Bureau, 38, Mill Street, Bedford		01234 354384

National Government Bodies

Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	National environmental statistics, policy.	0171 8903000	Currently to be found at: http://www.environment.dtlr.gov.uk/index.htm
Environment Agency, Bedford Office, Howard House, St Johns St, Bedford	General enquiries.	0645 333 111	www.environment-agency.gov.uk
	To report incidents.	0800 80 70 60	
Health and Safety Executive	Regulation, health and safety at work.	01582 444200	www.open.gov.uk/hse/hsehome.htm
Office of Water Services (OFWAT)	Complaints re level of service, charges	0121 625 1300	roof.ccta.gov.uk/ofwat/contact.htm

Transport Issues

The Highways Agency	Strategic road schemes, maintenance.	0345 504030	www.highways.gov.uk
Vehicle Inspectorate, RTE Divisions, Leicester GVTS, 40 Cannock Street, Barkby Thorpe Road, Leicester LE4 7HY	Reporting smoky diesels.	0116 276 2411	



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Noise

The Noise Abatement Society, PO Box 518, Eynsford, Dartford, Kent DA4 0LL	Self help group.		
Mediation UK, 82A, Gloucester Road, Bishopston, Bristol B57 8BN	Details of local mediation services.	0117 9241234	
The British Tinnitus Association, 14-18, West Bar Green, Sheffield S1 2DA	National charity providing advice and support for sufferers.		
Building Research Establishment, Garston, Watford, Herts WD2 7JR	Advice on sound insulation.	01923 664664	www.bre.co.uk

Air Quality

National Air Quality Line	Daily national air quality information.	0800 556677 Ceefax 196	
Herts And Beds Air Quality Site	Regional continuous monitoring data	01234 227269	www.seiph.umds.ac.uk/hbnet.htm
South East Institute of Public Health		01892 8903000	www.seiph.umds.ac.uk/brief
The University of Western England (UWE) Air Quality Site	Consultants to DETR, coordinate air quality information nationally	0117 976 2716	www.uwe.ac.uk/aqm/centre
AEA Harwell (UKAEA)	National air quality data	01235 820220	www.ukaea.org.uk/sites/harwell

Other Organisations

National Society for Clean Air and Environmental Protection, 130 North Street, Brighton BN1 1BG	General information.	01273 326313	www.mistral.co.uk/cleanair
National Radiological Protection Board, Chilton, Didcot, Oxon OX11 0RQ	Radon testing (chargeable), and advice.	01235 822742	www.nrpb.org.uk
M.O.D. Secretariat (Air Staff) 2B, Room 8249, Main Building, London SW1A 2HB	To report low flying military aircraft.	0171 2186020	
National Farmers Union (NFU)	Best practice (agriculture)	01234 352381	www.nfu.org.uk