



Improvements to airport air quality monitoring

Improvements have been made to how air quality is monitored at Kent International Airport.

A new system is now being used to provide consistent, reliable and verifiable data, with which to monitor air quality throughout Thanet. Benzene diffusion tubes located in both Manston and Minster are being used to monitor levels. These tubes are checked monthly, with the results published on the [Air Quality in Kent and Medway website](#) at

The decision to use diffusion tubes was taken, following advice from Government air quality experts, as the system previously being used was a complex and sophisticated piece of equipment that was not appropriate for monitoring a small regional airport.

Advice was taken about how air quality is monitored at major airports, with Heathrow and Gatwick both using the diffusion tubes, rather than the continuous monitoring. The monthly diffusion tubes are also the accepted standard nationally for measuring the annual mean level of benzene, which is the measure that councils are obliged to record.

Nitrogen dioxide is still continuously measured from two sites in Manston and Ramsgate. Results from this monitoring shows that nitrogen dioxide was below the average mean objective between August 2008 and August 2009.

Benzene levels within Thanet, as measured through diffusion tubes, are well below the National Air Quality Objective, meaning that there is no issue regarding pollution with benzene.

Penny Button, Environmental Protection Manager, said: "We are confident that these changes will still provide a good level of air quality readings and certainly ones that are in line with the accepted standard nationally. When we looked into this and discovered that we were using a different way of monitoring air quality than Heathrow and Gatwick, which are major airports and have considerably more flights than we get here at Kent International Airport, it's clear that we needed to find a new way of monitoring in the future. Our investigations suggest that this way will be more reliable and I'm sure that's something that local people would welcome."

All air quality monitoring data from Thanet can be found at on the [Air Quality in Kent and Medway website](#).

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