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**MEDIA RELEASE
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BABERGH AIMS FOR A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

Babergh District Council has acquired its first air quality monitoring station – and is making the daily results available to everyone on its website.

Located on the southbound carriageway of the A12 at Lattinford Bridge, the station records the levels of nitrogen dioxide being pumped into the atmosphere around the busiest road in Babergh.

Nitrogen dioxide is an irritant gas which may aggravate the symptoms of people already suffering from various kinds of respiratory problems. Babergh had been concerned for some time at the impact of increasing traffic levels along its stretch of the A12 and in 2001 commissioned an assessment of the resulting air pollution problems. That report identified four areas within 25 metres of the A12 between Copdock and Stratford St. Mary where nitrogen dioxide levels were likely to be above national targets by 2005.

James Buckingham, Babergh's Senior Environmental Health Officer said that "this new monitoring station is good news for residents living near the A12. It gives them the reassurance that the problem of localised air pollution is being taken seriously. The pollution reports may provide the case for steps to be taken to reduce the levels of nitrogen dioxide – should that be necessary."

In the meantime, Babergh continues to monitor air pollution at 15 other locations across the district – albeit using what are known as 'diffusion tubes' – in effect simpler recording instruments. Results from these and the air quality monitoring station on the A12 will be published in the second district-wide assessment of air quality, due for release next year. The results from the A12 station can be accessed at www.babergh.gov.uk/envsvcs/airqual/airqual.htm. ENDS

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