

M.A.P.A.C

The Manchester Area Pollution Advisory Council

Environmental Noise Survey 1999

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SUMMARY

- A** The report presents the results of the environmental noise survey in terms of how residents describe the area in which they live, varying from very noisy to very quiet, and compares 1999 data to previous surveys conducted in 1985 and 1992.

- B** Respondents were also asked to indicate the types of noise they had recently heard at home and the level of annoyance of different sources of environmental noise.

- C** The most annoying source of noise continues to be road traffic with neighbour noise being the second most annoying source.

- D** There has been a shift in how respondents describe their area with 58% indicating they consider their area to be quiet. (56% in 1992; 31% in 1985).

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Committee notes the contents of this report.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Noise complaints continue to form a large proportion of the overall number of complaints received by Environmental Health Departments throughout the country.

Transportation noise, industrial and commercial noise and neighbourhood noise are amongst the noise sources often complained about.

- 1.2 In 1985 and 1992 Manchester Area Pollution Advisory Council (MAPAC) conducted surveys to evaluate the opinions of residents within the area on a range of environmental noise sources.
- 1.3 The aim of the 1999 environmental noise survey was to establish any changes in opinion since the previous surveys of 1985 and 1992. Consequently the survey used the same methodology as the 1985 and 1992 surveys, with a postal survey aiming to analyse 1000 complete forms.
- 1.4 This report outlines the methodology used for the survey, evaluate the responses and provides comparisons with the previous studies.

2. METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 Details of the methodology used in this survey are provided in Appendix 1. The fourteen local authorities in the MAPAC area were responsible for drawing the sample from the electoral register, sending out the questionnaires and reminders, and collecting together the returned replies. All the completed data was then sent to Bolton MBC for collation of the results.
- 2.2 The size of the samples of residents in each area depended on the number of electors and was drawn randomly from the electoral register. A total of 1243 forms were distributed and all authority with the exception of one, were able to complete the task.

3. QUESTIONNAIRE

- 3.1 The questionnaire, together with an explanatory letter was sent out the 1 September 1999 with a reminder being sent two weeks later. The September

timing of this survey was chosen to mirror the previous surveys of 1985 and 1992 in order to obtain attitudes at the same times of year.

The questionnaire asked various questions of people's attitudes towards different types of environmental noise and annoyance, with the same questionnaire format as used previously.

4. LEVEL OF RESPONSE

- 4.1 The overall level of response was disappointing, with an average return rate of 47%, providing 584 completed forms for analysis. highest return rate was for Macclesfield Borough Council, with 78% and the lowest was for Stockport with 28%. Warrington Borough Council were unable to complete the survey.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Area Description

Table 1 and Graph 1 show the difference in response between the 1985, 1992 and 1999 survey, for the question asking individuals to describe their area.

Table 1 : Description of Area

Area Description	1985	1992	1999
Very Noisy	5%	8%	7%
Noisy	55%	30%	27%
Quiet	31%	56%	58%
Very Quiet	9%	7%	8%

5.2 Noises Heard

The percentage response for those noises which had been heard recently are given in Table 2 below for across the MAPAC region. Again comparison results for 1985, 1992 and 1999 are provided.

Table 2 : Noises Heard Recently at Home ?

Noises Heard Recently	1985	1992	1999
Road Traffic	48%	48%	44%
Neighbours	29%	38%	33%
Aircraft	33%	39%	37%
Motor Cycles (on road)	46%	30%	26%
Motor Cycles (on land)	13%	9%	9%
Trains	12%	9%	9.5%
Entertainment	11%	6%	8.5%
Industry	11%	7%	10%
Schools	6%	6%	8%
Other			19%

Graphs 2 to 15 show the percentage of people bothered by different environmental noises for the individual local authorities which participated in the survey, as well as the overall result for MAPAC

5.3 Level of Annoyance from Difference Sources of Environmental Noise

Residents were requested to indicate the level of annoyance they perceived for the difference sources of environmental noise. The of response varied from:

- *'not at all bothered'*
- to
- 'very bothered'*

and a weighting level of **'1'** for a little bothered, **'2'** for quite bothered and **'3'** for very much bothered, was given to each result provide an annoyance index. Each type of environmental noise was then given a rating according to the level of annoyance.

Table 3 shows the differences between the three surveys. Graph 16 shows these results in bar chart format. Chart 1 shows the annoyance indices for each local authority and each environmental noise source

Table 3 : Differences between the annoyance index for the 1985, 1992 and 1999 surveys

Type of Noise	1985	Rank	1992	Rank	1999	Rank
Road Traffic	0.83	1	0.87	1	1.16	1
Neighbours	0.45	3	0.56	2	0.81	2
Motor Cycles (on roads)	0.76	2	0.50	3	0.74	3
Aircraft	0.43	4	0.47	4	0.68	4
Entertainment	0.20	6	0.17	5	0.53	5
Motor Cycles (on land)	0.23	5	0.15	6	0.34	6
Industry	0.13	7	0.13	7	0.33	7
Trains	0.13	8	0.11	8=	0.28	8

The questionnaire also asked for the level of annoyance on "other sources of noise which residents wished to include. People were annoyed by barking dogs, children playing and alarms in similar proportions to the previous 1985 and 1992 surveys.

Other sources of noise included: delivery vehicles, construction noise, sirens, the police helicopter.

These sources of noise did not result in significant levels of annoyance

5.4 Differences Between Local Authorities

The comparison between local authorities shows once again that the most annoying sources of noise do not vary significantly with road traffic being most annoying. Neighbour noise continues to be the second most annoying source amongst the respondents to the survey.

5.4.1 Most Annoying Source

Type of Noise	No. Local Authorities 1985	No. Local Authorities 1992	No. Local Authorities 1999
Road Traffic	10	11	12
Aircraft	2	2	1
Neighbours	0	1	0
Motor Cycles (on road)	3	0	0
Schools	0	0	0

5.4.2 Second Most Annoying Source

Type of Noise	No. Local Authorities 1985	No. Local Authorities 1992	No. Local Authorities 1999
Neighbours	2	6	6
Motor Cycles (on road)	10	4	4
Road Traffic	3	2	0
Aircraft	0	2	2
Industry	0	0	1

5.4.3 Third Most Annoying Source

Type of Noise	No. Local Authorities 1985	No. Local Authorities 1992	No. Local Authorities 1999
Neighbours	8	6	4
Motor Cycles (on road)	1	5	3
Motor Cycles (on land)	1	1	2
Aircraft	2	1	1
Road Traffic	2	1	1
Industry	1	0	0
Entertainment	0	0	1
Schools	0	0	1

6. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

6.1 The survey has shown that in 1999, 27% of residents described the area as noisy compared to 30% in 1992 and 55% in 1985. A large percentage of individuals describe their area as being quiet; 58% 1999, 56% in 1992 compared to 31% in 1985.

6.2 From the annoyance index, it is clear that road traffic noise cont to be the most annoying source of noise. Neighbour noise is again the second most annoying source. Aircraft noise in some areas of MAPAC region has made a significant impact on the survey results. 'Other' sources of noise, not specifically categorised in the survey included: alarms, dogs, children playing.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This survey has shown that by working together MAPAC local authorities can obtain key comparative information in terms of environmental noise.
- 7.2 Of the main categories, road traffic is again highlighted as the most annoying source of noise; with neighbour noise annoyance being described as the second most annoying category.
- 7.3 These results may prove useful for MAPAC Noise Working Group in undertaking benchmarking and best value exercises in the future.

8. RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 It is recommended that Committee notes the contents of this report.