

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Question 1	Alastair Cook to ask Cllr Graham McAndrew, the Executive Member for Environmental Services
<p>Have the cumulative effects of the traffic and therefore pollution being generated by 4000 plus houses, a new Aldi on the Gates site and two proposed logistics centres (St James, Wren) been assessed with regards to impact on the already unacceptable pollution levels at the Hockerill junction?</p> <p>Response</p> <p>May I first thank Alastair Cook for his question.</p> <p>My portfolio covers Environmental Sustainability, while my colleague, Cllr Jan Goodeve, covers planning, however, I am happy to answer this question.</p> <p>When developing the council's District Plan in 2018, the cumulative impact of development on the allocated sites was investigated. This predicted no undue air quality pressures as a result of the Plan, once factors such as anticipated traffic patterns, improving vehicle emission standards and the likely uptake of alternatives to car use were taken into account.</p> <p>That said, applications for major development across the district, and <i>all</i> development in the Air Quality Management Areas in Bishop's Stortford, Sawbridgeworth and Hertford, must submit an air quality assessment as planning policy expects the applicant to demonstrate how the proposal would have at least a neutral, if not</p>	

a positive, impact on local air quality. Redesigns and mitigations can be insisted upon as a condition of planning consent in line with both national guidance and the more stringent air quality guidance found in the council's Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document.

I am very pleased that in the context of new development and although there remain traffic pressures at the four-way Hockerill junction, smart traffic light phasing installed by Hertfordshire County Council, regular East Herts Council anti-idling campaigns and lower emissions from more modern vehicles have together resulted in emissions dropping at the junction from 63 micrograms per cubic metre in 2017 to 48 in 2021.

We will, of course, continue to monitor pollution at the junction and work the Highways team at Hertfordshire County Council to identify any works, especially as pollution is still above the nationally set level of 40 micrograms per cubic metre. We are keen to ensure air quality gains during the pandemic are not reversed and I am hopeful, given the year-on-year reductions over the last decade, that pollution levels will continue to drop.

Finally, I think two important developments should hasten the reduction in air pollution at Hockerill and indeed elsewhere in the district. First, from 1st April, East Herts will have the most stringent taxi emission standards in the county and second, in February our bid for Defra funding for active travel planning was approved. This will see £126,000 spent on working with schools, local businesses and the town councils in the three AQMAs to support people make local journeys without their cars. The grant will also fund the installation of real-time air quality monitors in each AQMA to enable residents to take informed choices about whether to add to

local pollution, or not, by varying their journeys and means of transport.