



27 February 2018

Air Quality Hearing Statement
Regarding North Hertfordshire District Council Local Plan (2011-2031)

Dear Inspector,

I am writing to object strongly to the planned east of Luton development under the NHDC local plan (2011-2031), I have done so previously to NHDC on many other matters, I now write to object on the additional matter of air quality.

I have lived in the east of Luton area all my life (34 years), I have noticed over the past five to ten years that traffic in the areas around the airport and Wigmore area are reaching staggering levels. This is worrying for a number of reasons, yes it does impact our day to day life sitting in traffic trying to get to places, but also it's causing a decline in the quality of air we breathe in the built up areas around the congested road network, I can literally smell the fumes when I walk to work.

Walking to work has been something I have had to start doing for practical reasons rather than fitness reasons, my commute has finally started taking me just as long to drive due to traffic as it does to walk, I'm not talking just around the corner either. The air smells tainted with exhaust smoke and diesel fumes regularly, the state of the traffic has caused me to start walking, but I actually question if this as healthy as it should be for me.

The NHDC documents regularly refer to "mitigation" measures to alleviate congestion and air pollution, the truth is the area is already past broken, people are using the paths and cycling as they have no choice, unless they are happy to sit in traffic for extended periods(further polluting)Why on earth does the council believe that a few bus routes and cycle lanes will mean everyone who lives in one of the proposed thousands of homes will stop driving?

The councils are obviously paying lip service to many important aspects regarding the plan, air pollution being a rather large example of this, with them not even considering it in the initial plan, or having any active air quality monitoring sites in the vicinity of the huge development proposal and airport. No data is better than bad data I'm sure in their case.

Reading "An Overview of Local Air Quality in the District of North Hertfordshire" there are a couple of paragraphs that stuck out for me:

“1.3 The significant source of local air pollution in the district is from the exhaust emissions of road vehicles and so this is the source that the local plan needs to be concerned about. The most significant types of local air pollutants emitted from vehicle exhausts are nitrogen dioxide (NO2) and particulate matter (PM)”

“1.4 The highest levels of air pollutants are typically found in areas of higher traffic congestion and the greatest likelihood of public exposure is where homes are in close proximity to the roadside.”

With these concerns being quite obvious why are they choosing to ignore and carry on regardless with a plan to put another 2100 homes directly on the edge of town, bringing with them many thousands more cars, to sit in traffic churning out more fumes.

A quote from the 2017 Air Quality Annual Status Report shows that NHDC are very aware of problems regarding air quality:

Pg6 conclusions and priorities

“it is apparent that North Hertfordshire still faces an air pollution problem that needs to be addressed”

I feel they seem to block this out or completely oversee it when making plans, conveniently.

I have serious concerns that my future children will be the ones that pay for the mistakes and omissions the councils are making in these areas. I again quote the NHDC 2017 Air Quality Annual Status Report:

Executive Summary: Air Quality in Our Area Air Quality in North Hertfordshire District Council

“Air pollution is associated with a number of adverse health impacts. It is recognised as a contributing factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer. Additionally, air pollution particularly affects the most vulnerable in society: children and older people, and those with heart and lung conditions.”

I actually think Luton is a great town, yes it does have some faults, I really just hope that these poorly conceived plans are not another nail in its undeserving coffin.

Yours sincerely,

