



Reply to: jonah.anthony@hatfield-herts.gov.uk

13 March 2026

Your Ref: APPEAL REF: APP/M1900/W/24/3346607

Joanna Vincent
Gateley Hamer
(via email: Joanna.vincent@gateleyhamer.com)

Dear Joanna Vincent,

APPEAL REF: APP/M1900/W/24/3346607: REPRESENTATION ABOUT RECONVENED INQUIRY - ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS (CD17.01-CD17.05)

Thank you for the opportunity to make representations about the further information provided for the reconvened public inquiry.

We understand that the reason for reconvening the public inquiry is to consider whether the planning proposal can overcome two deficiencies. These are:

- 1) The failure of the initial Public Access Strategy to achieve the convenient cross-park access during the life for the quarry that is envisaged by the 2000 Agreement and MLP Policy 18(x); and
- 2) A failure to integrate the restored phases into the unaffected part of the EP in a timely manner.

In the Town Council's previous responses to Brett Aggregates various Public Access Strategy attempts, we had identified these same failings. Given the multiple attempts Brett Aggregates have made to address these issues in this and previous planning applications and appeal processes, its difficult to see how they can do so successfully through conditions.

Positioning of Lagoons

A major obstacle to integrating the different areas of the proposed Ellenbrook Country Park during and following mineral extraction is the position of the lagoons. Their location creates a permanent and irreversible split in the country park, separating the north of the park from the south and south west of the park. Whilst we can appreciate Brett Aggregates' reasons for positioning the lagoons at this location, it can not be denied that its permanent positioning

prevents the future Country Park from instigating a convenient cross park, north to west, access for the public to enjoy. Unfortunately we do not have the technical knowledge or expertise to identify a suitable alternative location for the lagoons. However if the lagoons are relocated, the Country Park Trust would have the option to move and/or adapt the current fenced area to improve cross park access for the public.

Brett Aggregates have proposed to install a temporary route through the lagoons. However its unclear to what standards that pathway will be maintained at throughout the year; how will it integrate with existing and proposed paths; when the pathway will be available for use by the public (and for how long); and what safety features will be installed to keep users safe from any dangers poised by the lagoons and associated works.

Unfettered, attractive and convenient public access delivered in a timely manner

Given the deficiency in publicly accessible open spaces in the area, the Town Council welcome the acknowledgement from all parties that this is a critical issue and restrictions to this vital community amenity must minimised as far as possible.

Whilst the updated Public Access Strategy includes a number of maps, with paths laid out in various formations, there is no going away from the fact that a quarry on this site will prevent the public from having unfettered, attractive and convenient access across the park.

Firstly its unclear what standards the pathways will be kept to. Whilst there are significant details in the conditions and the original 2000 Agreement [[CD13.1](#)] about land management responsibilities for the owner and Country Park Trust, its unclear where such standards are set out for Brett Aggregates for areas within the quarry site. Should planning permission be recommended and granted, it must contain specific conditions on the quality of the pathways which are being installed and maintained through the quarry site, whilst they are under the control of Brett Aggregates and their agents.

Assuming that the pathways are kept to an agreed standards and remain useable by the public, it will nevertheless restrict where the public can go. Whilst this is unavoidable from a safety perspective, it must be agreed that a quarry will deny the public of unfettered access. Its also very difficult to see how the pathways through the quarry site would provide an attractive route given the vistas that are likely to be available and limited sightlines, disturbance to wildlife (both plants and animals) and exposure to noise and dust from vehicles and quarry activities. Access may be provided, but it would not be unfettered and is unlikely to be attractive.

Incremental Approach To Land Being Incorporated Into Ellenbrook Country Park

Furthermore the pathways' convenience will be determined by how the paths, and any barriers or gates required, are maintained and kept open and operational. With the incremental approach that Brett are proposing as a solution, it would seem that the pathways and land made available to the public, will be constantly changing, with the very real risk that some areas will be delayed in being brought into the areas made accessible to the public, some areas are likely to need to close (even if temporarily) due to safety concerns and access to some areas may need to be abandoned for operational reasons. It is unclear whether conditions could be drafted to ensure enforceable minimal standards of public access is guaranteed throughout the lifetime of the quarry. Who is responsible for ensuring minimal quality of this public access must also be covered, and the pathways proposed may

As one of the parties that nominate a Trustee to the proposed Ellenbrook Country Park Trust, the Town Council has significant concerns about the practicalities and cost of entering into multiple Further Ellenbrook Park Leases to allow for incremental parcels of land to be incorporated and integrated into the Country Park. We also have significant concerns about the costs and liabilities of maintaining and insuring such land whilst the quarry activities are taking place. Its unclear whether conditions can be drafted to adequately address these concerns.

Conclusion

For this reason we do not believe the additional evidence submitted by Brett Aggregates provides sufficient changes for the proposal to overcome the failings identified. We believe the proposal remains contrary to the provisions of Minerals Policy 18 (vii) (Operational Criteria for the Control of Mineral Development) of the Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan Review 2002-2016 Adopted March 2007 and the NPPF (paragraphs 175, 211 (f)), as was the conclusion of the previous Planning Inspector in their Decision Notice for PL\0232/21 to Brett's previous attempt to over come these difficulties.

Jonah Anthony, Town Clerk
on behalf of Hatfield Town Council