

LAND AT HATFIELD AERODROME, OFF HATFIELD ROAD

HCC ref: PL/0232/21

PINS ref: APP/M1900/W/24/3346607

CLOSING STATEMENT on behalf of HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL for reconvened inquiry 21-23 April 2026

Introduction

1. The background to the reconvened inquiry and HCC's overall position was set out in opening. The inquiry has now heard evidence in the form of roundtable sessions to the matters on which the Secretary of State has asked to be informed as well as a detailed conditions session.

Main Issue 1

2. HCC's position remains that both the Revised Scheme and the Original Scheme comply with planning policy, and, specifically:
 - (1) Accords with Policy 18(x) of the MLP in
 - (a) ensuring that retained public rights of way are not adversely affected whilst ensuring good quality, safe, convenient temporary alternative provision is made in two necessary instances with long term reinstatement¹;
 - (b) enhancing the public rights of way network through the creation of new rights of way and the improvement of public access²;
 - (2) Accords with the principles of the SPG in striking a balance between maximising the use of the mineral resources and protecting the amenity of existing residents and users.³

¹ CD17.13 §22

² CD17.13 §29

³ CD17.13 §44-45.

3. At the inquiry, the Appellant presented details of what is now proposed under the Revised Scheme. They continue to promote both options (in terms of phasing sequence) and as a result each will need to be considered by the Secretary of State.
4. HCC agrees that both Options 1 and 2 of Revised Scheme improve public access when compared to the Original Scheme and welcomes the further post-consultation changes made in terms of a commitment to maintaining multi-user access at all stages of the mineral extraction: see Appellant Opening at §21, this was discussed at the inquiry and is to be secured under the revised suggested conditions.
5. The Inspector raised the question of the degree to which the lagoons can be appropriately landscaped so as to improve the amenity of users of routes crossing between them or in their vicinity. As Mr Owen commented, and the Appellant's witnesses confirmed, there is scope for some changes to the lagoons and/or screening/planting but this is "limited". It is limited by the necessary size of the lagoons, their functional requirements and the relatively tight area they occupy between the bunds and working areas. Having said that, HCC remains of the view that the lagoons (and their location) are acceptable.
6. No other issues were raised by interested parties which caused HCC to change its view. As such, HCC's position remains that the Revised Scheme builds on the Original to deliver a policy-compliant public access scheme.

Main Issue 2: conditions

7. HCC commends the agreed revised list of proposed conditions to the Secretary of State. The changes are needed to ensure that the Revised Scheme is properly secured and to ensure (where appropriate) that additional points raised at the inquiry or in the consultation are picked up.

Main Issue 3: DoV/s.106

8. As confirmed in opening, HCC does not consider that any change to the signed DoV⁴ is required by the Revised Scheme. It also does not consider that any changes need to be made to the s.106. No party at the reconvened inquiry disagreed.

⁴ INQ 43

Conclusions

9. In the circumstances, HCC's overall position on the appeal remains as set out at the first inquiry.

Matthew Dale-Harris

Landmark Chambers

23 April 2026