APPEAL AGAINST REFUSAL OF PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW QUARRY ON LAND AT THE FORMER HATFIELD AERODROME

APPLICATION REFERENCE: PL/0232/21;

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APPELLANT: Brett Aggregates Limited

ADDRESS OR LOCATION AND THE NATURE OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT: Land at Hatfield Aerodrome, Off Hatfield Road, Hatfield, Hertfordshire

All representations must quote the appeal reference: **APP/M1900/W/24/3346607**

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Response from Ellenbrook Area Residents Association with regard to the new Public Access Strategy

1. Ellenbrook Area Residents Association do not believe that the new public access strategy plans (produced by Brett in response to the concerns raised by the Secretary of State) provide satisfactory access routes across the quarry area.

2. In November 2025 the Secretary of State requested that the Inquiry be reopened to consider points regarding the public access as described below:

> *At the inquiry, the impact of the proposal on public access to Ellenbrook Park (EP) was discussed. The Inspector notes that the Hatfield Aerodrome Supplementary Planning Guidance states that a balance should be struck between maximising the use of the mineral resource and protecting the amenity of residents and users of the park. However, he considers that the proposal has not effectively struck a fair balance. This relates specifically to:*

a) a failure of the Public Access Strategy to achieve the convenient cross-park access during the life of the quarry that is envisaged by the 2000 Agreement and MLP Policy 18(x), in part due to the proposed rerouting of the two paths which currently cross the site linking Sleepshyde with Salisbury Village in Hatfield;

b) a failure to integrate the restored phases into the unaffected part of EP in a timely manner, in part due to the positioning of the lagoons, which means that when the worked-out areas to the west are restored, it will not be possible to integrate them into the unaffected part of the park to the east through extensions to it, until the quarry is in its final stages of restoration.

3. Ellenbrook Area Residents Association do not believe that the new proposals by Brett, (including both phasing options), provide a satisfactory solution to the Secretary of States concerns.

3.1. The main issue is that the proposed lagoons block the provision of attractive, unfettered routes across the park from Ellenbrook / Salisbury Village to Smallford. The lagoons are also a barrier which do not support successful reintegration of the restored phases into the country park.

3.2. It is our belief that because the lagoons occupy such a large area in a strategic position that blocks access to the park from the East (Ellenbrook and Salisbury Village), that without their relocation it is impossible to support convenient East West access. As the lagoons cannot be moved due to the advice from the Environment Agency, (that the lagoons should be in their current location to provide a buffer for the bromate plume), it is difficult to see how a satisfactory solution can be found.

3.3. Brett's proposals have attempted to resolve the Inspectors concerns by providing additional paths across the quarry site including a path between the two lagoons. Extra pathways and incremental work processes do not resolve the issues.

4. The following are reasons why we believe that the new strategy (either option 1 or 2) does not achieve convenient cross park access and does not successfully integrate the restored phases.

4.1. Lack of attractive and unfettered routes

- The routes across the park are required to be attractive and unfettered (as described by the Inspector at the first Inquiry). The new public access strategy with paths next to or near to quarry workings and bunds (3-5m high mounds of earth) are neither attractive nor unfettered.
- Footpaths will be narrow and will not afford an attractive visual amenity. They will be bordered by bunds and fencing.
- The current pathways across the whole quarry area provide a very wide variety of vistas and unique environments in which to walk, with a blend of flora, fauna and diverse wildlife to enjoy. The new paths will not offer the same opportunities, and will get progressively worse as the quarry progresses during its lifetime.

4.2. Proposed unsuitable pathways

- Some pathways will be gravel, most will be grass, regularly used paths will be unusable in Winter months
- One of the main routes across the park now is the old concrete taxiway. This route is very popular due to:
  - its proximity to Ellenbrook,
  - its surface (great for bikes, buggies, mobility scooters, wheelchairs and disabled users)
  - it provides a useable surface in inclement weather
  - it provides a clear sight line and therefore is safe

  Only roughly 40% of the taxiway will remain up to the end of the sports pitches, and it will be replaced by alternative routes comprising narrower gravel paths or grass paths, potentially uneven and waterlogged in winter, with some close to main roads. These new paths will not be suitable for many of the current users due to the lack of suitable surface, especially for people with children or those with mobility issues, in particular the paths are unsuitable for wheelchairs and other mobility aids and for elderly visitors.

- The existing pathways provide long sightlines and therefore feel safe for users, unlike the new pathways which are often bordered by bunds, are narrow, and do

not have the long sightlines. This is particularly an issue for lone and elderly visitors to the park.

4.3. Unsuitable pathway through the lagoons

Brett have proposed a new pathway that will go through the lagoons. This is unsatisfactory for the following reasons

- There will only be a narrow grass pathway (approx. 3m) between the two lagoons, this is in contrast to the very wide pathway along the concrete taxiway currently enjoyed by most visitors to the park.
- In Winter months this pathway will be unusable as the grass surface will turn to mud, similar to the grass pathways on Ellenbrook Fields at the moment resulting in long diversions around the lagoons.
- This narrow pathway will be bordered by very deep lagoons with only a small fence separating the path from very deep water, creating a potential health and safety risk

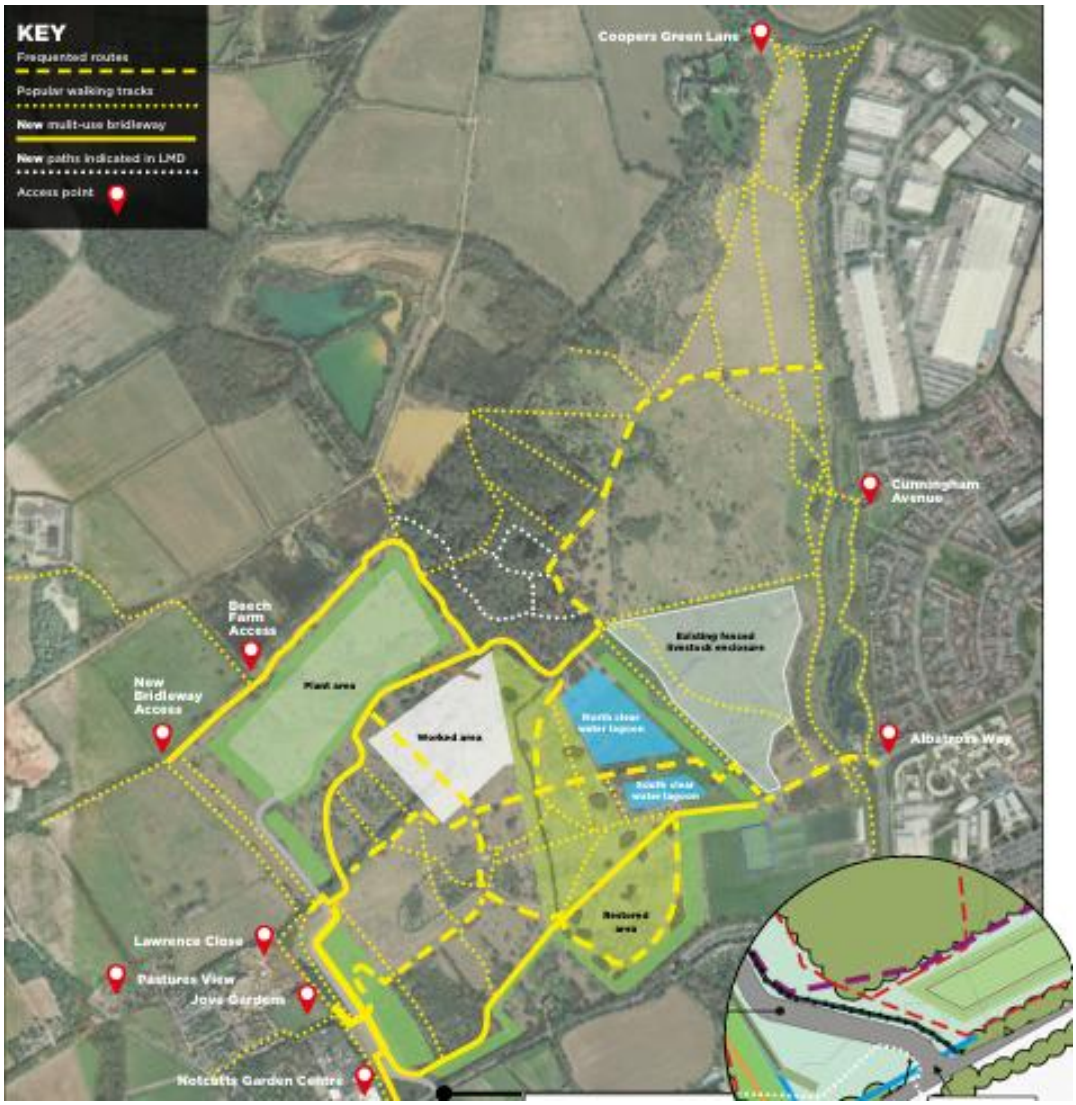
4.4. Proximity to quarry workings and traffic routes

- Footpaths will be close to quarry workings, or the access road (with lorries), or internal roads (with dumper trucks), or the plant site (not attractive or unfettered).
- There will be crossings to navigate and vehicles to be mindful of, reducing the freedom of users to roam around the park, particularly an issue for children and dog users. Gates on crossings will also be an issue for elderly and disabled users.
- Users will be forced to take lengthy diversions around the active quarry areas.
- Huge bunds at the Smallford end alongside the main access road will not support attractive unfettered access and will be difficult to traverse for visitors with mobility issues.

4.5. Lack of integration of the restored phases into the unaffected part of Ellenbrook Park

- It is clear from the plans produced by Brett that the lagoons will remain a significant barrier to the integration of restored phases throughout the entire lifetime of the quarry. This is clearly shown in page 9 of the Public Access Strategy.
- In addition to the lagoons there is also a very large “worked area” marked on the same map on page 9 of the Public Access Strategy which will be in place for most of the quarry’s lifetime and which is also a significant barrier to the integration of the restored areas.
- Combined with the plant site there will only be relatively narrow gaps between the plant site, “worked area” and lagoons effectively blocking integration of the

restored areas. This is clearly illustrated in the drawing below from Brett's Public Access Strategy.



- It is unlikely that the proposal to undertake quarrying as an incremental work process will be successful due to the practicalities involved in handing back land (legal, health and safety, cost)
- The statement that 85% of the park will be accessible throughout the proposed project is incorrect. This figure is based on the entire country park area and includes areas that Brett has no control over.

5. Photographs / pictures to show pathways on Ellenbrook Fields, pathways at a local quarry and an AI image of what a pathway may look like when the quarry is in operation.

5.1. Photographs of Ellenbrook Fields Feb 2026 demonstrating the current condition of grass and gravel paths.

5.2. Photographs of a quarry at Tyttenhanger

Fenced path between lagoons

Fenced reedbed deep water

5.3. AI generated picture

The following **AI** generated picture shows a potential illustration of a route during Phase A, which will partly run alongside the A1057, bordered by a large bund 4m high, a pathway, a ditch, and quarry workings. This example does not support an attractive unfettered route across the park.

6. Conclusion

Ellenbrook Area Residents Association do not believe that the proposed Public Access Strategy provides convenient cross park access during the life of the quarry.

We also believe that it fails to integrate the restored phases into the unaffected part of EP in a timely manner.

Submitted by Ellenbrook Area Residents Association

Mar 2026