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Application Reference: PL/0232/21

Land at the former Hatfield Aerodrome, Hatfield Road, Smallford, AL4 0HP

Re: Town and Country Planning Act 1990 – Section 78 Appeal by Brett Aggregates Ltd

Objection to variation of public access arrangements to Ellenbrook Park

I am the County Councillor for Colney Heath and Marshalswick, the majority of the quarry site and Smallford are within the division I represent. Since 2017, when I was first elected to the county council, I have objected to the applications to quarrying on this site.

Colney Heath Parish, in which Smallford lies, has several active and former quarry sites, including a quarry on land immediately adjacent to this site. Residents are used to the traffic quarries generate and most of the time quarrying activities pass unnoticed. Also, many residents are familiar with using publicly accessible paths across and around those active quarry sites.

However, this site is different, it is part of the Ellenbrook Country Park, which was created as part of the conditions for the development of the former Hatfield Aerodrome. For over 25 years residents have enjoyed being able to walk and cycle across this open space. Whilst I acknowledge the conditions for the establishment of the country park included the possibility of quarrying, the development of the country park and the increase in residential development adjacent to the site over the last 25 years means the site is no longer suitable. It is now an important public amenity that should not be lost.

As the Inspector will be aware, the park is used by residents to walk, run and cycle for leisure purposes. It also provides a safer route than the Hatfield Road to commute between St Albans and Hatfield. Therefore, it is important, as the

reopening to the inquiry demonstrates, to have a good public access arrangements. The proposals from Brett do not achieve that.

Those proposals are focused on the network of formal paths, but presently residents enjoy wider access than just those paths. They also enjoy that access without the presence of heavy machinery and HGVs that quarrying will bring. This is a particular concern at the various locations where residents and machinery will have to cross paths.

Users of the country park also enjoy an open landscape, which the introduction of bunds will destroy. The presence of two large lagoons is significantly different to the existence of the fenced area for cattle. Those lagoons will permanently split the park into two with only relatively narrow routes connecting the two sections. The fenced area does not visually split the park in the same way that the lagoons will.

My view is that it is not possible to have safe, attractive, unfettered access to the country park if there is a quarry. The current network of paths is not ideal, but as someone who has cycled across the country park, including to attend the previous public inquiry, improving those paths does not require a quarry.

However one tinkers with the layout of the site and the phasing of the activity it will still be a quarry and not a country park.

Therefore, I request that you examine the evidence carefully and then determine that this site is not suitable and the application should be refused.

Yours sincerely,

John Hale