



Mr Melvin Middleton
The Planning Inspectorate
c/o Joanna Vincent
Programme Officer
Gateley Hamer

Dear Sir

APP/M1900/W/21/3278907 – Proposed Quarry at Hatfield Aerodrome

I am writing regarding the above, the site for which is also known as Ellenbrook Park. The park is a well loved and important open space for the residents of Hatfield, St Albans and beyond.

On 11 November 2025, a letter was issued by MHCLG indicating that the Secretary of State had concerns about some elements of the proposal, namely that the proposals did not strike a fair balance between the use of the mineral resource and the amenity of park users, specifically:

- i. 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;
- ii. 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.

As a result, the Secretary of State wished to reopen the inquiry in order to invite further evidence on the following matters:

- a) the potential for changes to phasing or redesign, or any other provisions, to lead to improved public access to Ellenbrook Park, including to the unaffected eastern part of the Park [which falls within Welwyn Hatfield Borough];

- b) implications arising from any changes or provisions identified above, including any implications for the submitted Environmental Statement and signed Deed of Variation;
- c) the proposed amended and additional conditions set out above.

These three issues were confirmed as the subject for the re-opened inquiry at the Case Management Conference of 15 December 2025 and subsequent note.

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council has consistently objected to the proposed development, and copies of our letters of objection will have been provided to the inquiry. Whilst we maintain our objection, we do not wish to repeat the details of this at this time.

The Council's presence at, and involvement with, the inquiry has been limited to the issue of the need for a Deed of Variation (DoV) to the original Section 106 from 2000, and this issue was the subject of a session at the inquiry on 27 November 2024. Following this session, a Deed of Variation was signed between all necessary parties in December 2024. This Deed modifies the original Section 106 and establishes a timetable for outstanding works to the park, and sets out a sequence of events which will lead to the park being leased to the Ellenbrook Trust for management in the long term.

As such, our comments at this time will be limited to the impact on, and any need for amendments to, this signed Deed of Variation (matter (b) above). We are aware that some in the local community have concerns about the proposed phasing and public access strategy, and may well make these points to the inquiry through this consultation. As the Council is primarily concerned about the Deed of Variation and the long term management of the park by the Trust, we do not propose to comment specifically on this matter (matter (a) above) though as noted above, our previous objections to the proposal remain.

The Council believes that the degree to which the new information and proposed changes would require changes to the existing conditions and the introduction of new conditions are a matter for Hertfordshire County Council as the Minerals Planning Authority, and so the Council does not intend to comment on this matter (matter (c) above).

Having reviewed the proposed phasing plan and changes to the public access strategy, we feel that they can be accommodated within the agreed Deed of Variation, and that nothing in the amended proposals will prevent the sequence of events set out in the Deed leading to the long term management of the Park by the Ellenbrook Trust. As a result, we do not believe that the Deed of Variation will need to be revised.

Because of this view, we do not feel that it is necessary for the Council to appear as a party at the reconvened inquiry in April, but we reserve the right to do so should it be proposed that issues will be covered which the Council would wish to make further representations on.

Classification: Unrestricted

I trust that this is helpful but if you would like to discuss further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Wilson

Matthew Wilson
Assistant Director (Planning)



**WELWYN
HATFIELD**