



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

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23 February 2022

Proposed Mineral Extraction at Hamble Airfield – Letter of Objection
Application Reference: HCC/2021/0787

Dear Peter,

I write to set out my formal objection to the proposed application for mineral extraction at Hamble Airfield by Cemex.

As well as holding very serious concerns myself about this application, which I will detail below, I also want to put on record the level of opposition to this proposal by my constituents. Many hundreds have contacted me over recent weeks to highlight their legitimate and informed grievances about this application, which I am sure will be reflected in the number of submissions made to the County Council's consultation.

It is incumbent upon Hampshire County Council to not only reflect on the volume of objections received but also to consider the range of issues raised. There is also a clear local consensus. Parish councils, local Councillors and the Member of Parliament are all in agreement that this development should not be allowed to go ahead. This demonstrates the strength of feeling and highlights that the community is united in its opposition to this plan.

My substantive arguments against this application are set out in detail below.

1) Traffic and congestion considerations

The existing road network serving the Hamble peninsula is already under extreme pressure as a result of the overdevelopment that has been allowed to take place by the Borough Council, particularly on Hamble Lane. Congestion is a major issue and it is not uncommon for residents to be stuck in traffic for 30-60 minutes during peak times. The planned gravel extraction site would make this problem much worse with large lorries using Hamble Lane up to 90 times per day initially, rising to 140 in the latter years of this project. I consider this impact on traffic and congestion to be unacceptable.

There is also important planning precedent to be taken into consideration by Hampshire County Council. The proposed housing development at nearby GE Aviation, which was refused planning permission partly on Highways grounds, had this decision endorsed by the Planning Inspectorate. This was despite Hampshire Highways offering no objections. Given that the Planning Inspectorate has recognised the acute congestion problems in the Hamble peninsula, it is my view that Hampshire Highways should be much more robust in defending this part of my constituency from inappropriate and unsuitable development.

2) Proximity to local schools

Hamble Airfield seems a very poor choice of location for mineral extraction given how close this site is to Hamble

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Primary School and Hamble School. The associated impacts on air quality, noise and traffic movements could all have a major effect on local children attending school. There have been a number of road traffic accidents at Hamble School involving school children. Granting planning permission to allow 90-140 HGVs to operate on the same road as this school with this accident record seems highly dangerous. This is also particularly important when considering the traffic assessment around 'peak time' for the mineral extraction facility.

Cemex have regularly stated that operations at the site will avoid 'peak hours' but this does not accurately reflect the 'peak' usage of Hamble Lane, which includes the start and finish of school. Therefore, in reality 'peak time' on Hamble Lane can start from as early as 3pm during term time, as opposed to the current assumption of peak time.

3) Environmental concerns

While discussing the impact on local schools, it is also important to consider the impact that this development will have on local residents in terms of noise, air quality and other environmental considerations. I believe both the construction and operation of this mineral extraction facility will have significant adverse effects on Hamble residents and this is reflected in the range of noise, air quality and environmental assessments that have been carried out so far.

This is inevitable when a site that is located in the middle of a village is selected for such an intense and intrusive form of development. It cannot be properly mitigated because it is a fundamentally unsuitable location. This is precisely why this site shouldn't be used for such purposes.

4) Loss of green space and public amenity

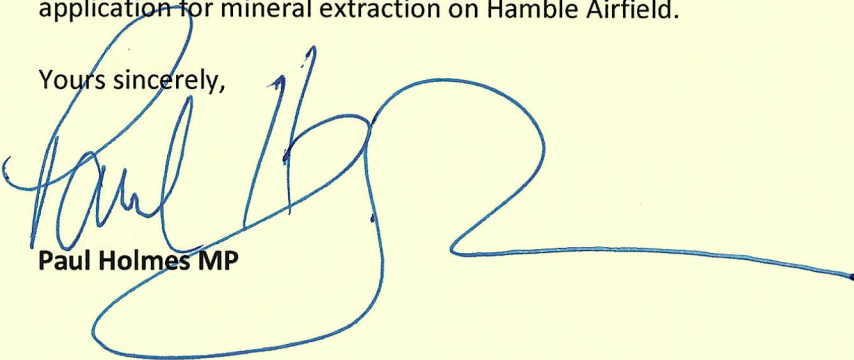
It is important to recognise that Hamble Airfield is also a valued piece of green land that is well used by local residents for leisure and recreation purposes. So far, the applicant has focused on how the site will be restored but this does little to address the fact that they would be taking away this public amenity from the community in Hamble for 12-15 years. I do not believe that making public land unavailable for residents for over a decade to allow mineral extraction meets any meaningful definition of sustainable development.

5) Previous site allocation

The previous allocation of Hamble Airfield in Hampshire County Council's Minerals and Waste Plan should not be used as an excuse to allow this unsuitable development to be approved, particularly without thorough assessment of its planning merits. To my mind, Hamble Airfield has always been unsuitable for this type of development. However, it is self-evident that the suitability of this site has diminished further in recent years due to way that the Peninsula has been developed.

In light of these planning considerations, which cannot be overcome or properly mitigated, I believe this application should be refused. Furthermore, I also believe that this site should be deleted from Hampshire County Council's Minerals and Waste Plan. It is imperative that Hampshire County Council make the correct decision and reject this application for mineral extraction on Hamble Airfield.

Yours sincerely,


Paul Holmes MP