

Letter from Grant Shapps MP to Herts County Council Development Control Committee (to be sent 30/10/23)

Monday 30th October 2023

By email

Dear Councillor XXX,

I'm writing in my capacity as Welwyn Hatfield's Member of Parliament, in conjunction with the Ellenbrook Area Residents Association, to implore you to vote against the application for a new quarry in Ellenbrook Fields (PL/0232/21) at the meeting of the Development Control Committee tomorrow. This letter has been co-signed by just some of the hundreds of my constituents who feel as strongly as I do.

Hatfield residents are distraught at the idea you might approve this disastrous, ill-conceived and wholly inappropriate plan. As well as the multitude of technical planning reasons as to why this plan should not even be in front of you for consideration, some of which I have outlined below, you should be aware many residents feel the applicant has behaved underhandedly and failed to consult local people at every stage of this process – despite having been told to do so by the Inspector at the Planning Inquiry into the previous application by Brett Aggregates.

Further, this area has taken far more than its fair share of mineral extraction over the years, and it's of great concern that HCC has chosen not to consider the alternatives available across the county. The council has identified two more sites in Hatfield out of three potential sites across all of Hertfordshire as being suitable for mineral extraction during its most recent draft Waste and Minerals Local Plan. How can this possibly be fair?

Among the great number of technical reasons this plan should not pass are:

**Green Belt** - Ellenbrook Fields provides a fragile Green Belt barrier between St Albans and Hatfield, and should be protected at all costs. Now - not in 40 years' time. Quarrying and subsequent Green Belt destruction on this area will effectively join the towns of St Albans and Hatfield. Any application to quarry on Ellenbrook Fields will go a long way to destroying Green Belt, rather than preserving it. Furthermore, the application does nothing to demonstrate any "very special circumstances" sufficient to outweigh the harm this would cause to the Green Belt for the next four decades.

**The Bromate Plume** - The proposed site sits close to the largest known bromate contamination in Western Europe. Quarry working in the lower mineral horizon risks drawing in bromate contaminated water into the site and contaminating clean water in the upper aquifer. The risk this poses to the public water supply and potentially public health is, obviously, massively significant. The negligible change made in stand-off distance in the latest application completely and utterly fails to

address or mitigate the spread of the Bromate Plume. It should be noted that any remediation work that has been carried out to try and remove bromate that has already leaked into our water sources remains unsuccessful, despite years of attempted dilution and millions of litres of wasted water.

**Loss of access to Ellenbrook Park** - To snatch this adored local green space away from Hatfield for as long as 40 years would be completely unforgivable. The planning permission for Salisbury Village was granted in 2000, contingent on the S106 agreement that an Ellenbrook Country Park Preservation Trust would be formed to protect the green space from plans like this. It's unacceptable that the S106 agreement has been allowed to drift for so long, and the idea that Ellenbrook may lose this coveted local amenity is hugely offensive.

**Excessive HGV traffic on the A1057** - If approved, this plan would bring with it an average of 16 HGV movements per working hour. The noise and air quality issues this presents would be massively damaging to the hundreds of properties on and near the A1057, and the ill thought-out access point to the Quarry poses serious risk to road users and the likelihood of significant delays in the surrounding areas.

**Grave danger to local wildlife** - The dangers this plan would pose to the local flora and fauna which call Ellenbrook home should be reason enough to reject this proposal outright.

**Silica dust** - The silica dust often displaced onto areas near quarries of this type is very hazardous. The proposed site's proximity to residential areas, a primary school and the University's sports facilities puts many local people in the firing line, and risks a great number of health complications for residents, children and students.

I could go further - there are a great number of compelling reasons to refuse this plan.

To summarise; to support this application would not be a brave and bold decision, it would not be good for the county, and it would not be the right thing to do. It would be to tell the thousands of people this affects that the science doesn't matter, the planning rules don't matter, and that their wellbeing doesn't matter.

I urge you in the strongest possible terms to vote against the proposal tomorrow.

I would welcome a further discussion with you on this important topic - you can contact me by email on [grant@shapps.com](mailto:grant@shapps.com), or via my Hatfield office on **01707 262 632**.

Yours sincerely,

**The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP**  
**Member of Parliament for Welwyn Hatfield**

P.S. I have co-signed this letter with just some of the hundreds of Hatfield residents who've expressed their vehement opposition to this plan.

*Co-signees' names to be listed below.*