HATFIELD AERODROME

Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Section 78

Application for the establishment of a new quarry on land at the former Hatfield Aerodrome, including a new access onto the A1057, aggregate processing plant, concrete batching plant and other ancillary facilities, together with the importation of inert fill materials for the restoration of the minerals working

Application Ref. 5/0394-16

Section 78 Appeal against refusal of planning permission by Hertfordshire County Council.

Appeal Ref. APP/M1900/W/21/3278097

Gregor Mutch Response to Proof of Evidence submitted by Christopher James Tunnell Issued 19th October 2021

Document - BAL2/2

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4th November 2021

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 I am Gregor John Mutch. I am employed as Director for Strategic Lands and Planning for Robert Brett and Sons Limited. I am also a Director in Brett Aggregates Limited.

1.2 This document forms a rebuttal to section 5.2 of the Proof of Evidence submitted by Mr James Tunnell dated 19th October 2021, subtitled Green Belt Issues.

1.3 My response addresses three points in Mr Tunnell's proof which require correction

1.3.1 A misconception on alternative approaches

1.3.2 Visual impact of mineral stockpiles

1.3.3 The size of the processing area which is temporarily removed from Green Belt.

2.0 Misconception on Alternative Approaches

2.1 There is a misconception running through Mr Tunnell's Proof of Evidence that there are better alternatives to working the deposit other than working in campaigns using articulated vehicles to a surge stockpile.

2.2 The proposal to work the mineral in campaigns is <u>not</u> *"a matter of convenience for the operator"* as stated in Paragraph 189 nor *"a consequence of the preferred working approach"* as in Paragraph 174. It is a necessity. There is no alternative other than to work the mineral in campaigns. This has influenced the site layout and method of extraction.

2.3 The Lower Mineral Horizon cannot be extracted throughout the year due to the hydrogeology and can only be worked according to seasonal aquifer conditions. (Paragraph 3.50 of Planning Statement CD1.1)

2.4 This very significant point was appreciated by the Council Officers when they considered the application and recommended approval but has not been appreciated in the arguments subsequently made for the Appeal. (Paragraph 178).

2.5 Mr Tunnell makes his case for the use of a field conveyor in Paragraph 184 and 185. His assumption is that the site could be continuously worked throughout the year and that the material is being hauled over a long distance. This is not the case. Extraction has to be in seasonal campaigns with excavated minerals being transported over a short distance of on average 550m. The impracticality of using a field conveyor to transport the minerals has already been addressed in my Proof of Evidence.

3.0 Visual Impact of stockpiles

3.1 Minerals can only be extracted during a window of approximately six months of the year (see point 2.3 above). This necessitates the need for a larger than normal stockpile to store material awaiting processing. The stockpile must have sufficient material to process through to the next extraction campaign.

3.2 Mr Tunnell makes reference to the visual impact of 10m high stockpiles in paragraphs 120, 151, 164, 165, 184 of his Proof of Evidence. There is however a draft planning condition (see below Condition 7) that limits the height of the stockpiles to a maximum of 5m. This was included by the Council in the officer's report dated 24 September 2020 (CD1.7) and states that it is *"in the interests of visual amenity and the openness of the Green Belt".*

Page 50 Condition 7

The maximum heights of storage bunds and stockpiles shall not exceed:

- *3m - top soil*
- *4m - sub soil*
- *5m – stockpiles (minerals)*

Reason: in the interests of visual amenity and the openness of the Green Belt.

4.0 Size of Processing area

4.1 The size of the proposed processing area is partially governed by two factors

4.1.1 The need to retain sufficient feed stock to process across the months where the Lower Mineral cannot be extracted. i.e., between campaigns

4.1.2 The limited 5m height of the surge stockpile.

4.2 The processing area on the proposed site has five elements to it.

4.2.1 The stockpile required to hold unprocessed material that will maintain the business between campaigns

4.2.2 The aggregate processing plant

4.2.3 The finished stock area

4.2.4 The concrete batching plant

4.2.5 The settlement lagoons.

4.3 Comparison is made in Mr Tunnell's Proof of Evidence (paragraphs 168, 186, 187) to the Cemex Hatfield Quarry being only 3 hectares compared to the proposed site's 11 hectares. This is not correct nor is it a justifiable comparison as Mr Tunnell has only includes items 4.2.2, 4.2.3, and 4.2.4 above in relation to the Cemex site.

4.4 A more accurate comparison on a like for like basis of the Cemex Hatfield Site taken from measurements from Google Earth shows that it is in excess of 10 hectares.

4.4.1 Operational Area at loading end to field conveyor including surge stockpile and vehicle parking to feed the field conveyor 3.1 hectares.

4.4.2 Active silt settlement lagoon. (Discounting silt lagoons that have been already been filled.) 2.2 hectares.

4.4.3 Processing plant, ancillary businesses, and freshwater lagoon 4.8 hectares. This conflicts with Mr Tunnell's 3 hectares referred to in Paragraph 168 and 187 of his Proof of Evidence.

4.4.4 This excludes the 3.5km length of the field conveyor (not 2km as quoted in Paragraph 186) bisecting the Green Belt.

4.4.5 It also excludes other currently active operational areas.