

As I sit down to write this speech I feel at a bit of a loss, I just don't even know where to begin. Quite frankly I am floored that we are even at this point, that the applicants seem so hellbent on taking our precious fields for themselves, and that this area was ever considered as part of the Minerals Plan, and that it hasn't been outright shut down due to the risk of the Bromate Plume and the information that has come to light since it was identified as a preferred site.

My name is Harriet, I am 34 years old and I have two young children, one of whom was born 14 days ago. I have been involved in the ongoing fight against this application, and against the new application that has been submitted by the applicants.

To start with, I would like to make comment on how shocking the administration and handling of this application and the new application have been. Hertfordshire County Council should be ashamed of how difficult they have made it for residents and interested parties to contribute meaningfully to this Inquiry, and to have clarity on response times for the new application. The portal that you asked to be set up in September took weeks to materialise, emails asking for clarity to Planning Officers have gone unanswered, timescales for the new application have been confused and have changed more than once. A disproportionate amount of effort has had to go into gathering information and chasing answers. This is summed up by the fact that two weeks ago, I was sitting in a surgical gown, ready to be taken into theatre for a caesarean, and I was made aware that the Planning Officer at HCC had changed the timeframe for response on the new application AGAIN, and instead of focusing on the arrival of my child, I was sending messages to other residents asking for them to follow up and get clarity so we could ensure that locals got the chance to submit their comments in a timely fashion. As far as I know, that email asking for clarity, also went unanswered. A recurring theme. It seems, from the residents perspective, HCC seem to be putting blockers in our way with these applications, rather than being facilitators in letting this be a fair process. The cynic in me asks why this could possibly be the case, and it raises some real worries about democracy. Particularly when I remember back to the hearing in early 2020, when the Planning Officer identified reasons why the application should be granted. Something which is not his job to do.

Paired with HCCs incompetence, is the applicants submitting another application at the same time as the Inquiry. This attempt to drown residents and local interested parties should be looked upon in a very dim light. There were hundreds of pages of information submitted for the new application, along with hundreds of documents that have needed to be reviewed for this Inquiry. Subjecting locals, who have full time jobs, families and other commitments to two lines of fire at once, with deadlines within days of each other, is despicable, and shows the contempt that the applicants must have for residents on the doorstep of their desired quarry, with their attempt to either bully or drown us into submission

Putting to one side how appallingly these applications have been managed by HCC, I would like to speak as a resident, a frequent user of Ellenbrook Fields, and a mother of young children.

The impact of having yet another quarry, within half a mile of my front door, should not be underestimated. The cumulative impact of having such a high concentration of quarries in our small area of Hatfield seems completely unfair and unnecessary. The number of HGVs on the road already is high, considering it is running through a predominantly residential area. By granting this application, the roads will be overrun with huge vehicles, making it increasingly dangerous for cyclists, other road users and pedestrians. The placement of the entrance to the quarry is mindboggling, and completely ill thought out. The fact that the applicants think that it is appropriate is indicative of the lack of understanding about the local area. The traffic at rush hour from the end of Ellenbrook Lane, to the roundabout at Smallford is standstill, it takes 15 minutes to drive one mile

when trying to get my daughter to nursery. Adding into the mix HGVs trying to turn right across traffic, right by a blind bend, is a recipe for at best further delays, and at worst, a serious accident. No up to date traffic surveys have been undertaken by the applicant, since 2016 I believe. Things have changed since then. The applicant can try and shift the blame onto Covid all they like, but this feels like a convenient argument to not provide clear and transparent data for decision making. This lack of up to date, clear and accurate data is a recurring theme across both applications. If it is so difficult for the applicant to provide this pre application, why would we trust the same party to be on top of any Bromate appearing on site, when they have so far failed to provide accurate and up to date readings covering all necessary area. If this application is granted, the applicants are only held to account by a private agreement with Affinity Water. A private agreement. Not subject to public scrutiny, when the public will be very much affected by the loss of yet another precious water source. This is something else I am raising a sceptical eyebrow at.

The loss of Ellenbrook Fields while it is dug up would have an extraordinarily detrimental impact on local residents. It is one of few open, green spaces that are freely accessible, in an area which is increasingly built up. I have never seen the fields so busy as I did during Lockdown, giving residents a safe place to exercise, get fresh air and escape the confines of their four walls. There are many routes, areas, and terrains to explore, meaning you can have a different walk every day of the week. The applicants may argue that they are letting residents still access the fields while they are quarrying, but this appears to be one large loop, rather than providing many areas. When I was 9 months pregnant, or whilst recovering now from a caesarean, I certainly will not be doing a large loop of the fields. For those who are physically unable to do a large loop, this quarry would take away enjoyment of exploring the fields, and would mean you would need to go back on yourself rather than do a shorter route or loop. This loss of accessibility is due to be for 32 years, at a minimum. To put that timescale into reality, by the time these fields will be given back to the community, my children will be my age, and I will be retired. This is not temporary, this is decades that the local community will lose out for. We moved to this area, overjoyed at the large, slightly wild green space on our doorstep, and we use it multiple times a week, for dog walking, for exercise, for space for our toddler to run around safely. We, as residents, were promised this land, some of which has been built on for the business park, the Salisbury Village development, and the University Sports grounds. However, what these developments do not do is add dust and pollution to the level that the quarry will. I bumped into a new resident of Ellenbrook Lane whilst out with my daughter, who moved to the area from Harrow, and he was overjoyed at the change in his wife's asthma and breathing. He was excited at the change that would be ahead for her quality of life. The applicants are threatening this by adding dust into the atmosphere, right next to a primary school, right next to a sports ground, and right next to residents homes. This is increasingly likely as it sounds as if they will be concentrating their efforts during the dry months. This means, no washing drying outside, no windows open without bringing the dust inside, dirty windows. Small things you may think, but impacting directly, and negatively on locals.

I believe that the local residents associations and Dr Rivett have shown that doubt should be cast on the reliability and knowledge that the applicants, the EA and Affinity Water have about the Bromate Plume. This carcinogenic substance has already taken one water source out of action, remediation efforts have made no difference, and here we are, locals, laymen, having to fight tooth and nail to protect our water! What on earth has happened to Affinity Water, to the EA, why is it down to us to do the research, assess the risk and plea with you. These agencies are sending mixed messages, 'Adapt or Die' – but also dig up permeable land and replace with less permeable Clay?! This roll over attitude to the applicants is confusing and frustrating and means as a resident I have completely lost faith that anyone is truly working for the people.

So, Inspector, I plead with you, to not grant permission to this application, or any further iterations of this application. We are exhausted, we keep fighting to keep this land, we keep trying to protect the interests of local residents, we have sunk hundreds of hours into this, researching, finding facts, working for the local people. I only wish that we could have relied on the agencies that promise they do this to have done the same. The loss of this space would be devastating, and the impact of the quarry activities would be immeasurable. 32 years, at a minimum. In 32 years I've gone from a toddler- the same age as my eldest child, through primary school, through secondary school, graduated university, gone to Australia to travel and work, I've built a career, I've found a husband, got married, had two children, bought two houses. 32 years. My lifetime so far. What a length of time to be classed as 'Temporary'