

Presentation to Ellenbrook Planning Enquiry

23/11/2021

All facts presented here are drawn from documentation on enquiry website or recordings of HCC DCC committee proceedings. Opinions are directly formed from those sources.

My name is Simon Willett; I am a local resident living opposite Ellenbrook Fields in Hatfield. My professional back ground is in heavy engineering in the chemical industry dealing amongst other matters, with large scale liquid handling of hazardous materials.

My first point would be to question the subject of this enquiry; to my mind the enquiry should be examining the failure of Arlington/Goodman to complete the establishment of the Ellenbrook Country Park as part of its Section 106 obligations.

The industrial and housing estates that are part of this development are substantially complete and occupied making it highly unlikely that the ultimate sanction will be applied. Arlington are relying on this together with semantic technicalities as a means to dishonestly renege on their obligations, among which, the area under discussion should be completed as a country park and hence the application under consideration here is moot.

Arlington has time and again proved their institutional dishonesty, agreements with Arlington and by extension their commercial partners are not worth the paper on which they are produced.

The appellant, Brett, has already demonstrated their disingenuous nature.

- Their intransigence regarding monitoring of the site for bromate on the basis that not looking equates to not found and therefore not present.

- In a similar vein, their selective timing of sampling the boreholes with large chunks of data missing.
- Manipulation of measurement units in technical reports to obscure contamination levels.
- The so called concession of removing the concrete batching plant from the application when they have known since 2016 or before, that they would never be granted a consumptive abstraction licence in the Colne headwaters.

Since so much of the acceptability and safety of their scheme is based on honourable agreement, any conditional permission must be considered unsound and likely to be ignored as suits.

The applicant continuously attempts to characterise the project as temporary in order to justify its flouting of greenbelt regulation with its excessive site plant (11Ha against Cemex 3HAa in a larger quarry).

Thirty two years, very likely more, is in no way temporary by any normal understanding.

If the quarry proceeds, taken in conjunction with the landowners' obstructive behaviour, there will be two generations who will never see the promised country park.

Furthermore, as is well known by any seasoned construction professional, underground works by their very nature, are unknown quantities. They more often than not overrun by substantial periods.

Even if we allow for the experience of the applicant and difference in natures of the project, it is quite foreseeable that external factors (weather, ground conditions, flooding from climate change and stoppages for product market fluctuations) could see the duration of excavations double.

I would also contend, that if the applicant succeeds in achieving this permission, the lure of further profit from quarrying the eastern end of the site will be impossible to resist, with quarrying activity

sprawling in time and space in the same manner as Cemex Hatfield Quarry, which has been with us for the best part of a century.

Last but by no means least; we come to the issue of the site's pollution with bromate.

We have heard and seen opinions from a number of hydrogeology "experts".

These desk top experts put me in mind of similar desk jockeys that told us it was absolutely fine to clad tower blocks in flammable insulation.

The one clear fact that you can draw from their opinions is that none of the parties involved fully understand the geology, hydrological conditions, the influences on or movement of the groundwater and associated contamination.

Both the EA and Affinity Water make these admissions in writing in documentation relating to remediation notices.

Despite these startling admissions the EA now feel able to maintain that quarrying immediately adjacent to some of the highest levels of pollution found in the plume can be undertaken in a controlled manner.

Results from pumping trials by SLR put the radius of draw-down effects at 250-350 metres (they discount their own 500m plus figures) Even with their massaged numbers this distance puts the quarry well within range of the highest levels of contamination in the plume

Which goes to prove what every small child digging holes on the beach knows, that if they dig a hole in wet sand that hole will fill with water, in this case an 8 million ton hole filling with contaminated water.

The same pumping trials show that if the clay lining of the excavations fail water will pour from the breach at an uncontrollable

rate, swiftly destroying the containment lining, another small Dutch child with a sore thumb comes to mind!

One of the most worrying aspects of this whole affair is that much of the information relating to and subsequent control of the contamination hazard rests in the hands of the EA.

The EA and its predecessors have presided over this unprecedented environmental disaster for more than 40 years.

For 20 of those years they allowed the public water utility to supply water grossly contaminated with bromides and bromates. Indeed, it seems that without the intervention of the WHO, that situation would have continued to this day.

Little is known about the long term consequences of this polluted water and it is staggering that the EA has rejected the assistance of Public Health England in making further assessment.

21 years after the closure of the contaminated Bishops Rise public water supply, the EA have still not arrived at any comprehensive executive plan to deal with what is a continuing and arguably worsening situation. In light of this shambles, I would suggest that the EA is institutionally incapable of overseeing the execution and monitoring of the proposed water management plan.

Perhaps an example of a local incident would :

18 months ago I happened upon a major pipe fracture in some treatment works on the Hatfield quarry. Large quantities of foaming liquid were discharging into the Cut Field Wood Ditch, a main feed water of the Ellen Brook. Being a weekend, with no quarry employees evident, I immediately made contact with the EA emergency number. It took over 40 minutes on the phone for the EA operators to even understand where the incident was located and this was only achieved by my talking them through Google Earth images for locality. They did not appear to have any record of the quarry.

Approximately an hour later, I received a call back from the EA response line requesting that I drive to the front entrance of Hatfield quarry to see if there were any out of hours contact numbers on the quarry signage. Again, absolutely staggering, as the EA would suggest the Hatfield quarry is one of the most highly supervised facilities in the area. I could provide dozens of similar examples of administrative and technical incompetence of the EA related to hazardous fluid spills and ground water that stem from my professional life and my family's involvement with hydroelectric renewables.

During the final DCC meeting at which the decision to refuse the 2016 quarry application was taken, the EA was represented by Mr Keith Spence. Mr Spence provided a litany of evasive, disingenuous and outright wrong answers to questions from the committee; as detailed in my subsequent written communications with the councillors and appended to my objections to the 2021 application.

I would forcefully propose to this enquiry that the EA is not able to assess the impact of this application on the likely behaviour of the plume and certainly is not capable of overseeing and enforcing the necessary controls.

I imagine that Affinity Water agree with my assessment as they have seen fit to bypass the EA and arrange their own affairs with Brett. The secrecy of this agreement is concerning in its own right.

As one of two terminal GI cancer patients in the same family, both consumers of this contaminated water, I now wonder if this contamination is responsible for the imminent early deaths of myself and my brother.

I will never know but by the principle of precautionary safety you must deny this application.