

JULIA LOPEZ MP
Hornchurch & Upminster



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Helen Oakerbee
Director of Planning & Public Protection
London Borough of Havering
Town Hall
Romford
RM1 3BD

JL29685
22 October 2024

Dear Helen,

I write in reference to planning application P1251.24 for sand and gravel extraction at Rainham Lodge Farm.

As you will no doubt be aware, this development has attracted significant opposition from local residents since it was first proposed in 2022 and I have had extensive exchanges with residents since then. Throughout this period I have represented their very serious concerns to the applicant so that they may reflect on and seek to mitigate them. While I do note that there has been some improvement to the plans through this exchange, the local community remains fiercely opposed to the quarry.

Now that formal planning consent has been sought, I am writing formally to provide the planning committee the full picture from residents, alongside highlighting my own concerns as to how the development will negatively impact upon the community. I am aware that the Hornchurch & Upminster Conservative Association are writing separately to provide a petition with over 400 signatories against the development. Enclosed with this letter you will find copies of the comments that I have received directly from constituents. I have included the names of correspondents in cases where those comments have already been provided directly to the Council and I have anonymised comments where it is not clear that copies have already been provided to the Council, I would be happy to obtain the necessary consents to disclose names if requested. Case references have been retained in all cases.

I have summarised some of the key areas of concern below:

Air Quality

One of the primary concerns throughout this process has been the impact that mineral extraction could have upon local air quality, especially given the site's close proximity to thousands of residents.

I am aware that a presentation prepared by the local community group organised in opposition to this development, Say No to the Quarry, have provided estimates showing that in 2020, 17,615 residents lived within a one mile radius of the site, with that population forecast to grow to 21,052 by 2025.

There is a view that the proposed water spraying to mitigate against dust pollution will not go far enough to address this issue and that this pollution may seriously impact upon residents' ability to quietly enjoy their homes, gardens, the open spaces in vicinity of the site or to air their laundry.

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There is also considerable concern at the potential impact upon public health associated with the spread of particulate matter, both from the airborne dust generated by the extraction and the increase in HGV movements with associated PM2.5 pollution.

Transport

A persistent worry is the volume of HGV movements that the development would add to Berwick Pond Road and Warwick Lane if granted consent. You will be aware that some of the key junctions nearby have poor visibility, with tight bends that will become more dangerous with more frequent heavy goods vehicle movements.

In their Transport Statement Brett advise that the development would deliver an average of 11 two-way HGV movements between the Rainham Lodge Farm and Rainham quarry sites. The Statement further advises that, by 2028, the development could increase HGV movements along Berwick Pond Road (South of the site), Warwick Lane (West of Rainham Quarry Access) and Launder Lane by 28.95%, 24.34% and 23.23% respectively.

This represents a considerable increase in HGV traffic volumes along roads that are presently unsuitable for this. I note that the applicant is proposing to undertake a range of improvements to mitigate against some of the most dangerous points along the carriageway. However, I share in the view expressed by the Say No to the Quarry group and constituents that these measures cannot adequately mitigate against the increased risk posed by such large volumes of fully-laden HGV movements. This is especially true when contemplating the increased risk posed to cyclists using this section of highway.

Constituents have also highlighted with my office concerns that the safety of the highway may be further reduced by the impact of dust and sediment tracking from HGVs transporting the extracted minerals to the Rainham Quarry site for processing, an issue further compounded by the lack of surface water management systems. This has the potential to create slippery conditions for both motorists and cyclists during wet or winter conditions.

Noise

Linked to concerns about how dust pollution will limit the ability for residents to enjoy their homes, constituents have noted that the noise pollution generated by the site's operation will have a similar impact.

I am particularly mindful of this given the proposed hours of site operation of 07.00 – 18.00 Monday to Friday and 07.00 – 13.00 on a Saturday. Such hours would expose nearby residents to 11 hours of noise disturbance on weekdays, scarcely limited to six on a Saturday.

I would be grateful if specific consideration would be given to limiting the site's hours of operation, noting that planning consent does not normally permit loud works to commence before 8am, and would request that, if consent is granted, that respite periods be stipulated.

Impact upon wildlife and natural environment

Constituents have also noted that the noise pollution associated with the site's operation may disturb wildlife in the area, noting that there are natural habitats, including the Ingrebourne Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest, Berwick Glades (managed by Thames Chase) and Hornchurch Country Park.



A wide variety of protected species have been identified within the surrounding area including badgers, bats, newts, water voles and owls. I am concerned that the combined impact from the noise, dust and light pollution from the sites operation may disturb and harm the ecology around the site. In earlier correspondence, the operators of the Hacton Park Corner Farm Livery Yard highlighted particular concern about the particle, Respirable Crystalline Silica, and the impact on the health and wellbeing of its horses and nearby residents.

I am grateful to you and members of the Strategic Planning Committee for considering this submission. While I acknowledge the requirements placed upon the Council to provide a landbank for the extraction of aggregates, I would ask the Council to heed the deeply-held concerns of my constituents when considering this application, who request that consent is denied.

Should the planning committee come to a different view, I would ask that robust conditions are imposed, with close monitoring of noise and dust pollution to ensure that it is kept to an absolute minimum with pauses required if thresholds are breached; restrictions in the site's operating hours, with respite periods; safety measures implemented on the carriageway along Berwick Pond Road and Warwick Lane.

With best wishes,

Julia Lopez MP

Member of Parliament for Hornchurch & Upminster