

**Chief Executive and Environment
Director: John Wood**

Mrs Sue Tiley
Via email

**Spatial and Land Use Planning
Minerals and Waste Team**
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Date : 13 June 2014

Dear Sue,

**Potential housing allocation North West of Hatfield (Hat1)
Minerals Issues**

I have been sent a copy of some information submitted by Gascoyne Cecil Estates/Cemex in relation to mineral planning on land north west of Hatfield. I confirm that I had previously been given this information (without the covering letter) following a meeting that the county council had with the parties stated.

As you are aware the county council has a particular interest in housing allocations in Welwyn Hatfield due to the possibility that these sites may be mineral bearing land. The county council as minerals planning authority has a responsibility to safeguard minerals and ensure that they are not needlessly sterilised.

The county council has had several meetings with you, land owners and mineral operators regarding a number of potential allocations in the borough and has been provided with some additional information regarding minerals.

The county council has the following understanding with regard to this particular area;

- mineral extraction could take place prior to housing development,
- the amount of mineral that could be extracted is reduced due to the presence of the bromate plume,
- options have been assessed for a new plant site,
- housing development would be for the later part of the local plan period and the development would be housing led – i.e. if the site wasn't allocated within the Welwyn Hatfield local plan then the mineral would not be worked.

Given this, the county council wishes to maintain its stance, without prejudice, with regard to mineral sterilisation.

The site lies in very close proximity to the BAe site which is identified as a Preferred Area for mineral extraction in the adopted Minerals Local Plan. Whilst the county council do not wish to see minerals sterilised unnecessarily, it equally would not wish to prejudice the delivery of such preferred areas. Given this close proximity, there would also need to be very careful consideration of cumulative impact.

The county council is in the process of working up the timetable to review the adopted Minerals Local Plan and would need to consider the implications of mineral sterilisation related to potential housing allocations together with the timely working of the identified preferred areas as part of the plan review process.

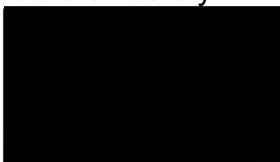
As requested, I have sought advice from Development Management colleagues who have raised the following points:

- The location of the access may be difficult,
- There are amenity and highways issues with each of the options presented,
- The landscape is naturally flat, which may impact on final land form which could be achieved,
- The flat landscape may hinder screening of operations,
- The use of inert waste to create a suitable final landform may create its own issues (origin of waste, import of material, lorry movements, impact on amenity),
- The need to phase such a development and the total mineral extracted may impact on the overall aggregate market – drop in sales may lead to slow extraction or more sterilisation,
- Areas may need to be sterilised to create the final landform for development,
- An EIA would be required,
- Presence of the Bromate plume may constrain activities,
- Water use may be an issue (particularly due to the bromate) for washing etc..Hydrology and hydrogeology considerations,
- The position of the silt lagoons,
- Concerns regarding potential delays to working and restoring Symondshyde.

With little information it is difficult to provide detailed comments that would constitute pre-application advice. It is more appropriate to set out the general understanding of the site issues and the principles of non-sterilisation together with the appropriate application of the adopted Minerals Local Plan policies (e.g. cumulative impact).

The county council suggest that a meeting between Welwyn Hatfield Planning officers and HCC Development Management officers may be the appropriate way forward.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Julie Greaves
Team Leader - Minerals and Waste Planning