

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

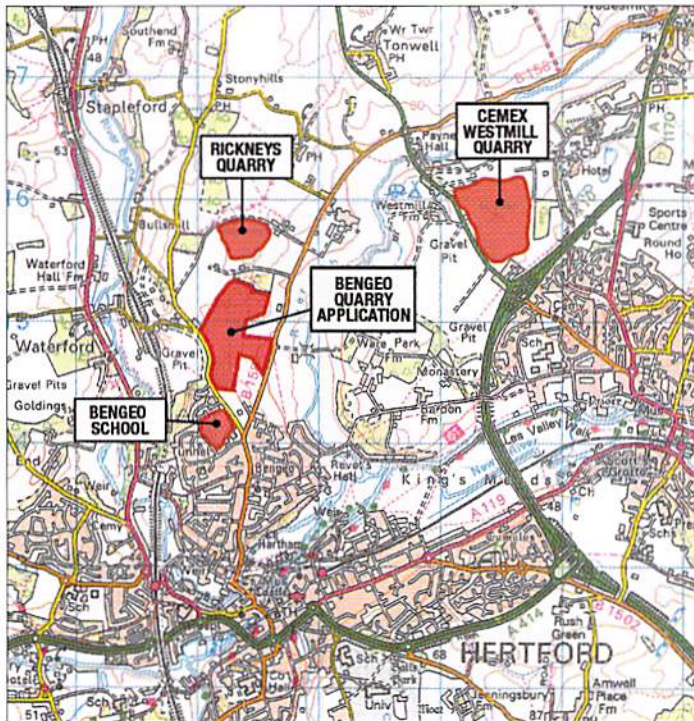
WHY WE NEED TO OBJECT AND WHAT THE CONSULTATION IS ABOUT

**STOP
BENGEQ
QUARRY**

Despite the depth of opposition among local residents, the developers have re-submitted a revised application. Herts County Council (HCC) have opened a new public consultation about this revised proposal with a **deadline of 23 February**. We hope this leaflet will provide the information you need when submitting your response. It is the last time residents can let HCC know our objections. Once the decision is made by HCC Development Control Committee we have no option to appeal.

The strength of local opposition in response to the original application has had an effect. The period and the volume of gravel extraction have been reduced. However, the area of the quarry remains unchanged and the character of the Bengeo Field landscape will be lost permanently. All the original concerns - the threat to **landscape** and **wildlife**, the **health concerns** and the impact of the quarry on the **water supply** and **highways** remain.

Frustrating though it is to have to oppose the Bengeo quarry all over again, if we wish to avoid industrial scale gravel extraction on Bengeo Field it is vital that the concerns of local people are voiced.



KEY AMENDMENTS TO DEVELOPER'S APPLICATION

- The amount of gravel removed will be reduced by 33% from 2.6 million tonnes to 1.75 million tonnes but the area affected by the quarry remains the same.
- The period of the gravel excavation will be reduced from 15 years to around 10 years.
- An originally proposed flat base of 12 metres deep and steep banks at the sides will be replaced by an undulating base with a bank of 8 metres to the north of the site.

For a full update of all changes, please visit our Facebook page or our website <http://stopbengeoquarry.org.uk/news/> and scroll down for all the updates.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

1. Send your comments and objections to the amended proposal by 23 February to **HCC Planning Officer Ms Felicity Hart, Spatial Planning & Economy Unit CHN216, County Hall, Pegs Lane, Hertford, SG13 8DN** or spatialplanning@hertfordshire.gov.uk quoting ref number PL\0776\16 and copy: • Cllr Dr Andrew Stevenson, andrew.stevenson@hertfordshire.gov.uk • MP Mark Prisk, office@hertford-stortfordconservatives.net • Cllr Peter Ruffles, Peter.Ruffles@eastherts.gov.uk • John Wood, HCC Chief Executive & Director of Environment, john.wood@hertfordshire.gov.uk • Jim McManus, HCC Director Public Health, jim.mcmanus@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Non-residents of Hertford can also comment. If you miss the deadline, it is still worth sending your letter but please no later than 3 March.

2. Sign our on-line petition (in addition to sending your letter) and on-line Bengeo Field landscape survey - for details please check our website or Facebook, or email us on info@stopbengeoquarry.org.uk.
3. Donate to support the Stop Bengeo Quarry campaign – to pay for professional advice for the campaign. Payments can be made into our NatWest bank account: Stop Bengeo Quarry Group, sort code 60-10-39, account number 14189135.

JOIN US AND SHOW YOUR SUPPORT AT HCC DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

HCC Development Control Committee will meet on Wednesday, 22 March, 10am at County Hall to decide whether they will approve the Bengeo quarry application. We will represent the Stop Bengeo Quarry objections. Please come and show your support. If the hearing is delayed, the next Committee meeting is on 26 April 10am - please look out for updates in local shops and notice boards.

KEY CONCERNS ABOUT THE REVISED BENGEO QUARRY APPLICATION

Impact on landscape and amenity

- While the quarry is active the area will be an inaccessible gravel pit.
- The pleasant rural character of this part of town - visible from Hertford, the B158 and the surrounding countryside - will transform a natural landscape to a man-made forever.
- The landscape survey and events organised provide evidence that hundreds of people use the Bengoe Field for recreation and value the landscape.
- The byway across the Bengoe Field will at best be a desolate track through a quarry, transformed from a health walk to a health and safety hazard.

Dust, noise and health concerns

- The UK Health and Safety Executive says breathing crystalline silica particles (a natural substance found in most rocks, sand and clay) can cause lung disease, including silicosis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and lung cancer.
- The National Planning Policy Framework states that planners must “ensure in granting planning permission for mineral development there are no unacceptable adverse impacts on... human health” and in response to the proposal to build this quarry within a few hundred metres of a primary school, Natural Health England said the developers must show there will be no “additional emissions including dust or particulate matter which could adversely affect the local community”. Neither of these conditions are met by the revised proposal. The developers have not submitted health impact or noise assessments.
- The air quality assessment concludes the risk to the health of children at the school and local residents is negligible but the report’s conclusions are based on what the report authors claim are “robust assumptions”. There is no attempt to measure or predict or even estimate what the actual dust emissions from the quarry will be. Given the uncertainty and the risk to the health of vulnerable children as well as adults with respiratory issues, the proposal cannot be permitted to proceed without this information.
- The Institute of Air Quality Management points out that “dust impacts will occur mainly within 400m of the operation”. Bengoe School is 320m from the proposed quarry and 30m from some houses, which could represent an unacceptably high risk to health.
- The quarry developers have said that the noise levels will be very close to the legal limit. This noise would affect residents from 7am-6pm on Mon-Fri as well as 7am-1pm on Sat.

Negative impact on the ecology and wildlife

- An independent environmental assessment of local wildlife should be conducted to address concerns about the following key species: skylarks, brown hare and badgers. The suggestion that brown hare and skylarks move to other areas fails to take responsibility for the wildlife.
- Concerns about the impact on the adjacent precious ecology

of St. John's Wood and the possible impact of groundwater levels have not been addressed. In the new plans an 8 metre bank to the south of the wood is retained but there is no assessment of its impact on local hydrology.

- Any trees on or near the site will struggle to survive with significant earthworks and changes in soil level taking place in very close proximity to them.

Highways and traffic concerns

- The application takes no account that the lorry movement will not be spread evenly throughout the day. There is likely to be a big impact of queuing lorries waiting for the entrance to open during the morning rush hour and have a potentially dangerous impact on children arriving at Bengoe Primary School. The presence of additional gravel lorries would only compound this problem should Rickneys reopen before its 2017 deadline.
- The developer assumed that traffic patterns would be the same all year round.
- The reduced extraction of gravel won't impact on traffic congestion or road safety since the rate of extraction would be unchanged.
- In our view the B158 is not safe enough to cope with an average extra 100 HGV movements a day. No mention is made as to how the applicant would monitor and enforce this vital movement restriction.
- The site would be accessed from a new access junction in a dip in the B158 Wadesmill Road opposite the footpath from Watermill Lane. The HCC specification for Preferred Area 2 in its Minerals Local Plan requires that the whole area is accessed via the existing Rickneys pit access road.

Water supply concerns

- Six million litres of water a day come to Hertford from boreholes at the Wadesmill Road pumping station. Extraction so close to the boreholes is a clear risk of pollution to Hertford's water supply and has been identified by Hafren Water, consultants to the quarry developer.
- By the time pollution is detected, lasting damage may well have been done to the aquifer. Monitoring is not the main issue, prevention is the key.
- Assessment of the chance of successful prevention of pollution requires a detailed map of the buried chalk surface and survey of the size and orientation of fractures within the chalk aquifer. These have not been presented.
- The sand and gravel proposed to quarry is not essential for the local or national community. What is essential is that we have an uncontaminated supply of water to Hertford.
- The Environment Agency advised HCC that monitoring of the potential pollution will be sufficient.

Need of gravel

- The County Council is obliged to maintain a landbank of sites with planning permission that meet demand for sand and gravel for at least 7 years. With the recent approval of the Hatfield Aerodrome quarry, the Herts County Council's landbank is 21.22mt, which meets demand for over 15 years.