

13 June 2023

Dear Hampshire County Council

Planning Application for Proposed Gravel Extraction on Hamble Airfield – HCC/2021/0787

Further to our letter and email in January 2023, I am writing again on behalf of the governors, staff, students and families of The Hamble School in relation to our continuing concerns regarding the proposed CEMEX gravel pits on Hamble Airfield. As we have raised in our previous objections, the boundary of the site is within 50-100 metres of the school and we have serious concerns as listed below.

CEMEX has made no communication with us in the consultation process, despite the fact that Phase 1 of the programme is located within 50 metres of the school site.

1. CEMEX have stated within their documentation that they propose dust mitigation measures to include the use of 3-5 metre bunds being built up around the site perimeter and the use conveyors instead of dumpers for all phases except phase 1. This is a great concern to The Hamble School due the very close proximity of the site to our school. Although we acknowledge that bunds may reduce dust pollution, they are unlikely to mitigate the impact of dust from the quarry on the health of our students entirely. Approval of this quarry, along with the associated increase in environmental pollution does not support Hampshire County Council's published 2020 – 2025 Climate Change Strategy, in which the first key principle relates to carbon hierarchy and the need to "avoid, reduce, replace and offset".
2. Increased HGV traffic on Hamble Lane will lead to the continued reduction in air quality in an area that has already been identified as an AQMA – this is counter to the Climate Change Strategy as outlined above.

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3. Currently on roll at The Hamble School there are 75 students who suffer from breathing related health concerns. Any reduction in air quality, be that diesel particulates from increased HGV traffic, or the dust from quarrying activities will affect these student's quality of life, and therefore their educational outcomes even more greatly than others. This is a concern which has been raised by Blackthorn Health Centre together with a significant number of health professionals who are extremely worried about the impact on our young people's health, should the plan go ahead. Air quality will undoubtedly be affected by the increased movement of HGVs on Hamble Lane during the school day on one side of the school site and the movement of plant vehicles and dust pollutants on the other side of the site. Effectively, the school site will now be surrounded on all sides by air pollutants.
4. The Hamble School benefits from a very open site, with several buildings containing classrooms and departments. This means that students are in the open air every hour to move between lessons and would be adversely affected by a reduction in air quality.
5. There are 7 extra-curricular outdoor activities currently being run by The Hamble School in order to offer students as many opportunities for enrichment and physical activity as possible. These 7 "slots" do not include fixtures, both for our students and for students visiting from other schools. As a school we take the physical education of our students very seriously and students take part in 3 timetabled PE lessons each week. This takes place either outside or within the sports complex, located at the very edge of the proposed site, where doors and windows are kept open for ventilation.
6. During break and lunchtimes, students are outside for 5 hours per week. There is no facility in the school buildings to offer space inside for extended periods of time. This means that students will be exposed to increased air pollution with no alternative.
7. Due to limitations within the existing school buildings, exams for all year groups take place within the sports hall within the sports centre throughout the year. During these times, doors and windows are kept open, both for temperature regulation and ventilation purposes. Any increase in noise will negatively affect students taking part in exams. If students are distracted by noise or are experiencing exacerbated health issues during this critical time in their education, we have significant concerns that there will be a decline in GCSE outcomes for our students leaving them at a disadvantage when they leave to go to college or further education.
8. Of the 7 school buildings on site, 6 have serious temperature regulation and ventilation issues requiring doors and windows to remain open all year round. One building has an automatically opening ventilation system. This means that any reduction in air quality will be experienced within the classrooms as well as around the site externally. At the same time, any increase in noise will affect the lessons for all students daily. There is no alternative to having doors and windows open either to ensure ventilation to reduce transmission of germs in winter months or to control temperature in the summer months. Even if air conditioning units could be installed, which is well beyond the budget of the

school, windows are not all double glazed and buildings are not sound proofed so any increase in background noise cannot be mitigated

9. There are currently 291 students on roll who experience sound sensitivity and would be adversely affected by any increase in background noise.
10. There are currently 106 students on roll with a diagnosis of ADHD or conditions which can affect their concentration and attention. Any increase in noise in the surrounding area will negatively affect their school experience.
11. The school currently works with a number of groups and businesses (including Everyone Active) that use the outdoor sporting facilities on site. Any reduction in public participation - perceived or actual – could result in the loss of contracts for use. This will have a negative financial impact on the school and cause problems for the community.
12. The preschool on site is used by 120. The preschool building and outdoor space are within 100m of the proposed site. These are the youngest members of our community and due to the nature of Early Years Education are afforded “free flow” education, choosing to use either indoor or outdoor space all year round. This is replicated at the primary school, where Year R children are also given “free flow” education. Air pollutants will directly affect their health at the most vulnerable stage of development and could result in parents/ carers choosing to use alternative provision affecting the viability of the setting.
13. Of the 1137 students currently on roll, 47% walk and 18% cycle to school along Hamble Lane. Increase in traffic, particularly HGVs presents an increased risk to these students. 4% of our students travel to school by rail meaning that it is necessary for them to cross Hamble Lane at times when CEMEX have stated they are most likely to have increased vehicle movements. Hamble Lane is already a dangerous obstacle for our students and there have been 2 serious accidents within the last 5 years involving our students. The remaining 26% of students arrive by car and there is a weekly late mark received by 12% of students who have been directly affected by traffic congestion. We fear that an increase in HGV traffic will put our students at greater risk of injury and at the very least will increase the number of students arriving late, something that causes serious disruption to the school day and is a primary focus as part of school improvement as it is known to affect student outcomes.
14. From a recruitment and retention perspective, the vast majority of staff travel to school by car. We know that traffic congestion causes problems for existing staff and the location of the school can put some potential staff off due to the travel constraints. Any worsening of the congestion on Hamble Lane could put off both existing and potential staff leading to an even more challenging recruitment and retention situation.
15. Alongside our concerns relating to the proximity of phase 1 to the school site, we note that the plant site is located at the next closest point. This will be in constant use during the day and will produce both air and noise pollution. Although the school notes that bunds will be erected and phase 1 will eventually be used as water reservoirs, these measures will not eradicate the issues. We are also concerned about the deep-water

reservoirs in such close proximity not just to our school, but to the primary school. It is well reported that children are drawn to sites with water and there have been a number of unfortunate accidents in recent years where drownings have occurred. We are not confident that Cemex will adequately secure the site to prevent trespass from young people.

16. Although the school notes CEMEX's reassurances in its original proposals and in the more recent communications, there is no precedent for a gravel pit being processed so near to a school. This means that we are unable to access data for actual impact on a similar site.
17. There is a very real possibility that due to parents moving their children to other schools away from the pits, staff leaving due to increased traffic/ air quality concerns and reduced income, the school is no longer viable. Hampshire will then lose the only school to provide secondary education within the peninsula.
18. If parents/ carers choose to move their children to other schools, it is noted that the nearest schools to the majority of our catchment area are within the boundary of Southampton City Council – Weston Secondary School, Oasis Mayfield and Oasis Sholing. This means that there is a real potential that Hampshire County Council could see a significant number of students choosing to attend Southampton schools over the next 7-10 years, rather than a Hampshire school.

I trust that you will seriously consider our concerns during deliberations over the planning permission and would welcome any communication with you to discuss any of our points further prior to the panel meeting.

Yours faithfully



Mrs H Craggs

Co-Vice Chair of Governors



Miss L Cambridge

Headteacher

If, at any time, you should require special arrangements to be made when visiting the school and/or in order to participate fully in supporting your child at school (e.g. an accessible venue for meetings, if you are a wheelchair user, assistance with translation of documents or enlarged copies of communications etc.), please do not hesitate to let us know.