

Location

The field lies on the western edge of Betchworth village, east of Dorking, west of Reigate, south of the A25 and the existing Reigate Road Quarry, with the Old Reigate Road forming its northern boundary.

Description

The land is the north-east section of an open arable field between the villages of Betchworth and Brockham. The field itself is rectangular but is split into two parts by Kiln Lane, which runs from the Old Reigate Road to Brockham. This land lies on the eastern side of Kiln Lane and is crossed by a bridleway which leads south from Old Reigate Road. A public footpath runs along the eastern boundary and connects Old Reigate Road to The Street in Betchworth. Fronting The Street but backing onto the eastern boundary, are a number of residential properties and their gardens. The Acorns Infant School and Betchworth and Buckland Nursery lie to the south-east. On the northern side of the Old Reigate Road facing the field are the post office, Atkinson House (a residential care home), and to the north-west Elm Villas. The field is grade 3 agricultural land. Betchworth Conservation Area lies to the south of the main field. The field slopes gently from the north east corner towards the south-west.

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| Estimated yield: | 0.55 million tonnes of soft sand |
| Area: | 4.6ha |
| Planning designations | Green Belt |

Land east of Brockham and extending over to Reigate Heath was identified as a study area in the *Surrey Minerals Local Plan 1993*, but no prospect areas were identified for the Reigate Road Quarry. Much of the existing quarry has yet to be restored and there are valid planning permissions to work further parts of the quarry. In order to limit landscape, transport and amenity impacts, proposals to work this land would not be granted planning permission to work simultaneously with other extensions and must be part of a phased scheme of working and restoration for the entire quarry.

Planning applications to work this preferred area should address:

Access and traffic

Direct access from Old Reigate Road or Kiln Lane is not appropriate. Access should be from the existing quarry to the north, by means of a tunnel under the Old Reigate Road. Applications should address the environmental and landscape impacts, potential delay to working and restoring the land to the north of Old Reigate Road, land stability issues, highway safety and transportation impacts on local roads associated with constructing the access.

In order to avoid increases in HGV traffic on this part of the A25, working should be phased with the working of the overall quarry plan. Applications should demonstrate that there would be no significant increase in overall HGV movements from the quarry.

Local amenity and phasing

An assessment should be made of the potential environmental impacts of noise and dust and the visual impact of working the quarry to assess what planting, unworked margins and bunding would be required for properties to the north and east and for surrounding roads and footpaths. This assessment should be carried out in advance of any planning application so that additional planting has time to mature.

Proposals should also address any potential impacts of working and mitigation measures on the nearby school, nursery and residential care home. It may need to include measures to avoid site preparation and bund construction or removal during the working school day. Working within the site should be phased so as to minimise the impact on nearby properties.

Hydrology

The land is within a major aquifer and Betchworth Stream lies to the east and the River Mole to the south. Proposals should include a hydrological risk assessment including investigation of the impacts of removing the unsaturated and saturated zone on the hydrology of the area, and the effect of quarrying on groundwater flow.

Ecology

The site has no ecological designations, but the site may contain features and habitats that are important locally. It is thought that the field may contain skylarks, a priority species. The ecology and biodiversity of the site should be assessed and mitigation and enhancements addressed in working and restoration schemes.

Conservation Area

Betchworth Conservation Area lies to the south, and further to the south-west Brockham Village is also protected as a conservation area. Proposals should demonstrate that working will not have an unacceptable impact to the visual setting and character of these designations. The siting of noise and soil bunds, or any stockpiles of material will need careful consideration in relation to the location and setting of these conservation areas.

Archaeology

The land is an example of an unenclosed medieval common field, within an area where previous archaeological finds have been of importance. Prior archaeological assessment, and if necessary evaluation, would be required as part of any proposal.

Local footpaths

The bridleway across the field would need to be diverted. A separate footpath and bridleway should be maintained during any working for the safety of users, and the existing footpath should be safeguarded from workings.

Landscape

The land to the north of the A25 lies within the AONB and AGLV. The field and existing quarry are visible to the north from the Surrey Hills AONB and North Downs Way. Much of the existing quarry has yet to be restored and there are valid planning

permissions to work further parts of the quarry. Proposals should not result in unacceptable increases in the visible area of working quarry, when viewed from these important vantage points. Proposals would need to address this and ensure that working would not unacceptably harm the character of the AONB and AGLV.

The land itself is open, but forms part of a field that has low broken hedgerows running along the boundaries. Workings would be visible from nearby properties and from local footpaths and the roads around the site (Old Reigate Road, Kiln Lane and the footpath along the eastern boundary). Workings could be screened by planting and bunding, but proposals should be sensitive to the existing open character of the land. The use of seeded soil bunds on boundaries to provide screening that could be removed on restoration restoring openness should be considered. In addition hedgerow planting along the road verges of the wider field to screen the quarry should be provided.

Utilities

An electricity cable runs through the preferred area, and would require relocating or a suitable stand-off.

Restoration

This field is open attractive landscape of importance to the local community. Restoration could involve inert fill restoring ground levels back to the original, to recreate the open landscape of the Common Field and include measures to remove any screening and bunding. Restoration options are covered in more detail in the *Mineral Sites Restoration SPD*.