

Write your objection letter today

The Common Field Betchworth has been included in the Preferred Options for the Surrey Minerals Plan. IF approved by the Government, Brockham and Betchworth could be consigned to at least a further 40 years of blight from sand quarrying. Time is running out for you to object to the inclusion of the Common Field in the Plan and it is essential that you pick up your pen and paper or mouse and keyboard and WRITE TODAY. In fact get everyone in the family to write - the number of individual letters will be logged so EVERY LETTER COUNTS. Don't leave it for someone else to object.

We publish below some key arguments that CAMEL have identified which may help you construct your objection letter to the Preferred Options for the Surrey Minerals Plan.

Hydrology: The impact of quarrying on water resources

1 CAMEL warned of the threat of a depleted water table over eight months ago. We are now officially suffering the worst drought for over 100 years and hosepipe bans will be in force for the foreseeable future. Research by CAMEL has shown that Park Pit, another sand quarry little more than 1.5 kilometres away is pumping 1.6 million gallons of water a day into the River Mole as waste. This abstraction of water has to stop now if water resources are to be preserved for domestic supplies. IF abstraction is stopped, water levels at the Common Field would rise. This means that to make sand extraction viable, some quarrying will need to take place below the water table OR water will have to be pumped out of the quarry to get access to the sand. The problem with extraction below the water table is that the hole has to be filled with 'backfill'. This 'backfill' is supposed to be inert (i.e. harmless to the environment). Who is going to ensure that this is the case? Surrey County Council have indicated they do not have the manpower to ensure adequate supervision of these operations.

Pollution: The impact of quarrying on the environment

2 CAMEL highlighted the impact of toxic leachates from nearby landfill sites at Shagbrook, which released ammonia into the domestic water supply. The Common Field is about 1.25km due south of Pebble Hill landfill site which sits on the chalk aquifer. Leachate from Pebble Hill is likely to enter the aquifer and contaminate the water held there. Quarrying below this site could result in areas of contaminated open water, threatening the safety of nearby residents and widening the contamination of the environment and the nearby River Mole.

Ecology: The destruction of habitat for a protected species

3 The Common Field is a breeding ground for skylarks which have been given the highest conservation priority by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. Skylarks are in global decline. Quarrying will not only remove a vital area of land, but the impact of noise and pollution will destroy this valuable habitat for ever and hasten the decline of this rare species.

Transport: Increased HGV traffic inevitable

4 The development of the proposed Olympic Village for the 2012 Olympic Games in East London will require sand from the local area either for direct use in the construction of the Village or to replace sand from other sources. HGV traffic leaving the Reigate Road quarry will be directed through Reigate onto the M25. In addition, hundreds of tonnes of backfill are still required to restore the existing quarry which will add significant volumes of extra HGV traffic on the A25.

Landscape: Visual blight for decades

5 The existing quarry has been expanding dramatically for the last decade and has not been restored. Further extensions to this quarry have been granted and with the Common Field will scar the Surrey landscape for generations. Adjacent to an Area of Great Landscape Value, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and sited between TWO Conservation Areas open cast quarrying, the planting and construction of 'bunds' will destroy the natural Surrey landscape for at several generations.

If you do not want your legacy to Brockham and Betchworth and future generations to be the blight of sand quarrying and irreparable damage to the environment and habitat **WRITE TODAY** with your objections to: Roger Hargreaves, Head of Planning, Surrey County Council, County Hall, Penrhyn Road, Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey KT1 2DN

To continue campaigning, CAMEL urgently needs funding to commission technical reports. Please send donations to CAMEL, c/o More Place, Wonham Lane, Betchworth Surrey RH3 7A

