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SO23 8UD  
28<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

Dear Lisa

Subject: Planning Application Reference HCC/2021/0787 Proposed Extraction of Sand and Gravel at Hamble Airfield, Hamble.

Following our recent meeting, I am writing on behalf of the Parish Council to highlight its concerns regarding the negotiations that we understand are taking place to secure highway mitigations for this application.

The consultation response provided by Hampshire County Council's Highway Authority on 30 January 2023 suggested that it would not object to the application provided that a package of highway mitigations was agreed and funded by the applicant. These would be secured by planning conditions and, where necessary, as planning obligations.

The consultation response concluded:

*The off-site impacts have been assessed and demonstrate that the additional trips, though temporary in nature, would impact the operation of the network which is already operating at or close to capacity. The highway authority requires that a suitable level of contribution is provided to enable access improvement schemes to come forward to help offset this impact, together with planning conditions to limit HGV movements at school start and finish times.*

We have previously written to draw attention to the fact that the response gives no indication of what "a suitable level of contribution" would be, or more importantly the nature of the "access improvement schemes" for which it is necessary to secure funding. The highway authority has failed to provide any explanation to the community - or to the local planning authority - to enable them to assess whether this mitigation has been achieved.

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Having been advised that discussions were proceeding with the applicant, we wrote to Ben Clifton, Strategic Transport Manager at Hampshire County Council (HCC), on 24 March 2023 to ask if the details of the measures being discussed could be shared with us. He replied on 3 April 2023 to the effect that these discussions are confidential and that only the end result would be disclosed.

The Parish Council does not consider this to be an acceptable way for the highway authority to discharge its responsibilities, or for the planning application to be determined.

By failing to provide details of the works it considers necessary to ensure that the application is acceptable, the highway authority has made it impossible for any third party, including the local planning authority, to assess whether the mitigation offered is, in fact, sufficient or necessary to address those concerns.

The highway authority intends to present only a package of measures which it is willing to accept to mitigate the impact of the application. The local community will have no basis on which to assess or make a judgement on whether it is reasonable for it to have done so. More importantly, you will have no basis as case officer to discharge your duty to ensure that the application is acceptable in policy terms. It will be impossible for you or the members of the Regulatory Committee to properly scrutinise any mitigation package if the highway authority simply 'signs off' its own negotiations and does not provide any benchmark against which you are able to test their judgement.

It is important for public trust and scrutiny that the relationship between the County Council as highway authority and as local planning authority is transparent and open. To date we do not believe this has been the case.

Without prejudice to the serious (and continuing) shortcomings in the process so far, the final package of measures requested by the highway authority should be notified to us and to the community and we should be allowed sufficient time to comment on its merits. It is reasonable for us to have the opportunity for our transport consultant to assess the measures proposed to ensure that they address the safety and capacity issues associated with the application and if we do not believe they do, for a further period for these discussions to take place. This cannot remedy the failure of the highway authority to demonstrate that it has secured the measures it considers necessary, but it will allow us to assess the impact of the works which are proposed.

Can I ask that we receive a reply to this letter addressing the issues raised before the package of measures is published so we can assess what stance the highway authority and the planning authority are taking regarding this request. I am sure everyone is keen to see the application concluded as soon as possible given the timescales so far and the uncertainty that it has created, but it is as important that all parties have confidence in the process to avoid the prospect of future challenge – which will be costly and damaging to all parties.

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The Parish Council regrets having to make this representation so late in the process; we would ask that when the report is written for the Regulatory Committee that our concerns about the openness and timeliness of responses from the highway authority are noted. The failure to meet the two consultation deadlines, the complete inadequacy of the first response and the failure to engage with us in these final stages, which given the comprehensive concerns raised on behalf of the community about safety and congestion is at best disappointing.

We look forward to receiving a response and would ask that this letter and any reply are published along with our other representations.

Yours sincerely

*Amanda Jobling*

Clerk

Hamble Parish Council

cc. Cllr Edward Heron – Executive Lead Member for Transport and Environment Strategy HCC

Paul Holmes MP

Ben Clifton – Strategic Highways Manager HCC