**STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET PARISH COUNCIL (SMPC)**

**Essex County Council consultation on Mineral Extraction (QUARRIES) in Stansted & Elsenham**

**Have your say!**

Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council (SMPC) is responding to Essex County Council’s (ECC’s) Essex Minerals Local Plan Review 2025 to 2040. This is a consultation document asking for views on 52 potential sand and gravel extraction sites over Essex.

There are two sites on the list which will directly impact our Stansted community. One in Elsenham next to an existing site, Highfield Quarry at Pledgdon Green, and one in Stansted on the Cambridge Road between Orford House and Sworder’s Auctioneers and near the Aubrey Buxton Nature Reserve.

SMPC does not support the development of either of these sites, the main reasons for which are mentioned below. SMPC encourages you to ‘have your say’. You can do this by logging on to [www.essex.gov.uk/minerals-review](http://www.essex.gov.uk/minerals-review), there you will find the Candidate Site Assessment document and RESPONSE forms. Alternatively, you can email ECC at [mandwpolicy@essex.gov.uk](mailto:mandwpolicy@essex.gov.uk)

On your email, reference sites A76 ‘Elsenham’ and A75 ‘Land at Orford’. Please include your name and address and reasons for objecting. Feel free to use any of the objections highlighted by SMPC.

These quarries could be active for 15 years or more

Have your say and help SMPC protect our community!

The Consultation closes **19th March 2024.**

**Site A75 – Stansted – Land at Orford**

The Consultation document produced on behalf of Essex CC, identifies major issues with this site related to Landscape & Visual Sensitivities, Biodiversity, Historic Buildings, Flooding, Access, Public Rights of Way, Geo-environmental, Hydrology, Soil Quality, Health & Amenity and Airport Safeguarding.

Along with these SMPC highlights the following specific concerns:

* Access and exit to and from the quarry site will be via the B1383 which is a main North/South transport route and passes directly through the centre of Stansted. Stansted’s roads are already suffering with the constant stream of gravel trucks going through the village. These issues are well known by Essex Highways. Adding another estimated 200-300 heavy vehicle movements per day, with all the associated pollution and safety issues, will be a disaster, is completely unacceptable and would compound an already intolerable traffic situation.
* Public Rights of Way (PROW) and Bridleway. There are three PROWs and one Bridleway, these would need to be relocated. From Cambridge Road (B1383), these are generally accessed directly across the road from Pennington Lane (an Essex designated ‘Protected Lane’). If they are relocated, then pedestrians and horse riders alike would need to travel along the Cambridge Road, this is dangerous and unacceptable.
* Along with the risks associated with relocating the PROWs, mineral extraction in this location would result in the loss and enjoyment of what is an important and valued amenity for the community.
* Coming from the north, the B1383 is a major ‘Gateway’, into Stansted. Locating a mineral extraction site here, on what is a rising slope, would be a major blight on the landscape, the ‘landscape and visual sensitivity’ is huge.
* The lane opposite the site, known as Pennington Lane, is a single track road and an Essex designated ‘Protected Lane’, this is due to its nature and ancient history. It is likely that quarry vehicles will be tempted to use this lane to avoid any bottle necks on Cambridge Road in Stansted, particularly adjacent to the Tesco store. This would ruin the quiet nature of the lane and cause damage. The lane is used predominantly for recreational use, e.g. dog walkers, joggers, children learning to cycle etc. Heavy vehicular use would also be a danger.
* In Uttlesford District Council’s (UDC’s) emerging Local Plan, the land opposite the site on Cambridge Road is designated for a new housing estate of c. 250 houses. Locating a mineral extraction site opposite would have a major impact on the new residents and could impact the sale of such houses.
* Linked to the above development is a proposed ’20 Acre Country Park’, which would be directly opposite the site. This would ruin the peace, tranquillity and enjoyment of this proposed amenity.
* The site is approximately 450 metres from the Aubrey Buxton Nature Reserve, this is a very sensitive area for flora and fauna and a valued community amenity, this would be at severe risk.
* There are several dwellings and business premises adjacent to this site, these will be adversely impacted from airborne dust and noise from the mineral extraction processes and transportation activities.
* By their own consultants’ assessment this site is far from ideal. Of the 16 criteria applied in the RAG assessment as to the likely impact of the development on the site and surrounding areas, only three are “green”, two are “green/ amber” six are “amber”, four are “amber/red” and one red with the red classification being its likely impact on Stansted airport through bird strikes.

**Site A76 – Elsenham**

The Consultation document produced on behalf of ECC identifies major issues with this site related to Landscape & Visual Sensitivities, Biodiversity, Historic buildings, Flooding, Transport, Public Rights of Way, Hydrology, Soil Quality, Services & Utilities, Health & Amenity, Airport Safeguarding.

Along with these, SMPC would like to highlight the following specific concerns:

* This site was already the subject of a planning application in 2014 which was refused and a subsequent Appeal which was dismissed, nothing has changed so should not be considered.
* The impact on the land will be extensive, the report understates this impact.
* Elsenham’s and Stansted’s highways are already suffering with the constant gravel trucks going through the villages. These issues are well known by Essex Highways. Adding another estimated 200-300 heavy vehicle movements per day will be a disaster and completely unacceptable to an already intolerable situation.
* The impact on air quality in Stansted, and in particular that on Grove Hill, a likely route for heavy vehicles, will be disastrous and will make a bad situation even worse.
* The access to the site is via a single-track private road currently serving the Golf Club. It is constrained and shared with recreational users. These amenities will be adversely impacted.
* The site is located immediately adjacent to several existing dwellings, mineral operations will create considerable dust, noise and other airborne mineral particles